

PAN Merseyside multi-Agency Child Exploitation Protocol 2024

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PAN Merseyside Multi-Agency Protocol Safeguarding children & young people from
Child Exploitation (CE)

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1. Introduction

Child Exploitation, whether sexual or criminal, is child abuse. Children who become exploited face huge risks to their physical, emotional, and psychological health and well-being.

All agencies across Merseyside are fully committed to safeguarding children and young people from being sexually exploited or criminally exploited, whilst disrupting and prosecuting individuals who have exploited them. This Protocol provides a set of multi-agency principles for tackling Child exploitation across Merseyside. An overarching term of Child Exploitation will be used throughout this Protocol to encompass both criminal and sexual exploitation of children in our area.

The Protocol details how through the Multi-Agency Child Criminal & Sexual Exploitation meetings (**MACCSE**) we can reduce the harm posed to children from Child Exploitation alongside safeguarding procedures. The protocol also details how working as one team we will utilise all available resources to identify, pursue and bring to justice those who exploit children within our communities through the Multi-Agency Response to Threat Harm Risk (**MARTH**) process.

This protocol will be governed via the Strategic MACCSE Governance Group (SGC), which will oversee six themes for delivery. Each delivery theme will have a tactical lead in each agency, who will report to the MACCSE SGC, and a work plan will be developed against these delivery themes.



1.1 Why do children become exploited?

The common issues and reasons can be due to a number of factors, including vulnerabilities identified and being targeted by the abuser. Children who run away or go missing from home, care or education are recognised as being more at risk of being targeted as a victim of exploitation.

Evidence is clear that a missing child is believed to be at risk from Child Exploitation, irrespective of the length of time they are away from home or a caring environment (Plass, 2007; CEOP, 2011b).

It is often the case that children do not perceive themselves to be victims, as they consider they have acted voluntarily. The reality is that their behaviour is not voluntary or consenting.

The PAN Merseyside Missing Children Protocol outlines the work that the partnership undertakes to safeguard children who have been reported as missing from home, care, or education.

1.2 Vulnerability Factors

There are common vulnerability factors in children that can lead to them being more likely to be exposed to exploitation, and common signs and behaviours displayed by those who are already being exploited. The following are some of the typical vulnerabilities in children prior to abuse:

- Living in a chaotic or dysfunctional household (including parental substance use, domestic violence, parental mental health issues, parental criminality)
- History of abuse (including familial child sexual abuse, risk of forced marriage, risk of 'honour'-based violence, physical and emotional abuse and neglect)
- Recent bereavement or loss
- Gang association either through relatives, peers, or intimate relationships (in cases of gang-associated CE only)
- Attending school with children who are exploited
- Learning disabilities
- Neurodiversity
- Unsure about their sexual orientation or unable to disclose sexual orientation to their families
- Friends with children who are exploited
- Homeless
- Lacking friends from the same age group
- Living in a gang neighborhood
- Living in residential care
- Living in a hostel, bed and breakfast accommodation, a foyer or homeless
- Low self-esteem or self-confidence
- Young carer
- Siblings involved in Criminality and/or exploitation

The following are some of the signs and behaviour are generally seen in children who are already being exploited:

- Regularly missing
- Parents / Care not reporting young person missing
- Drug or alcohol misuse
- Has extra money/new items/ 'gifts' that cannot legitimately be accounted for/received from unknown sources
- Change in physical appearance or behaviour
- Pregnancy, termination or repeat testing for sexually transmitted infections
- Young person has been coerced to take/share indecent images
- Arrested/Involved in criminality
- Found / travelling out of Borough
- Multiple mobile phones
- Young person feels indebted to an individual or group
- Family or young person having to move or leave their home
- Items missing from home
- Young person carrying / concealing weapons
- Absent from school / Non-school attendance

- Services have not been able to engage with child
- Self-harm indicators and/or mental health concerns and/or suicidal thoughts/attempts
- Injuries – evidence of physical or sexual assault
- Relationship breakdown with family and or peers
- Association with older and/or risky peers
- Change in education attendance/Change in education provider/Missing from education/Non-attendance in education
- Not in Education or Training (NEET)

If professionals are undecided on whether the child is vulnerable or being exploited, then the Signs of Child Exploitation Guidance Checklist (Appendix F) can be used to determine whether further advice of support is needed.

[#LookCloser To Spot Exploitation | The Children's Society](#)

1.3 Definitions

The below nationally agreed definitions will be utilised across Merseyside

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 under the age of 18 into sexual 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 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 Criminal Exploitation

Child Criminal Exploitation occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of a person under the age of 18 and may coerce, manipulate, or deceive a child under that age into any 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 and/or
- (c) Through violence or the threat of violence.

The victim may be exploited even if the activity appears consensual (i.e. moving drugs or the proceeds of drugs from one place to another). Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. (Home Office 2018)

Child Financial Exploitation

Child Financial Exploitation is a form of abuse. It occurs when an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to encourage or compel a child under 18 to undertake a financial activity that benefits the perpetrator or facilitator. The perpetrator (s) might coerce, control, or manipulate or deceive the young person. This activity is often criminal and therefore a form of Child Criminal Exploitation and includes but is not limited to money laundering and wider fraud. (Children Society

2024)

CSE by Organised Network

“An organised network is characterised by two or more individuals (whether identified or not) who are known to (or associated with) one another and are known to be involved in or to facilitate the sexual exploitation of children. Being involved in the sexual exploitation of children includes introducing them to other individuals for the purpose of exploitation, trafficking a child for the purpose of sexual exploitation, taking payment for sexual activities with a child or allowing their property to be used for sexual activities with a child.” (Independent Inquiry Child Sexual Abuse Report – CSE by Organised Network Investigation Report Feb 2022)

County Lines

County lines is 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. (Home Office 2018)

County lines is a form of Child Exploitation (CE). It is a major, cross-cutting issue involving drugs, violence, gangs, safeguarding, criminal and sexual exploitation, modern slavery, and missing persons. The response to tackle it involves the Police, the NCA (National Crime Agency) and a wide range of Government departments, local government agencies and VCS (voluntary and community sector) organisations. County lines activity and the associated violence, drug dealing, and exploitation have a devastating impact on children, vulnerable adults and local communities.

Cuckooing

Cuckooing, also known as ‘forced home invasion’ is a tactic used by criminals, typically drug dealers, to take over the homes of vulnerable individuals, such as care leavers or those with addiction, physical or mental health issues and use the property as a base for criminal activity. This is a common characteristic of the county lines business model and can occur in a range of settings such as rental and private properties, student accommodation, prisons, and commercial premises.

Modern Slavery Act 2015

Section 2 Human Trafficking

A person commits an offence if the person arranges or facilitates the travel of another person to exploit them. It is irrelevant whether the exploited person, adult, or child, consents to travel. A person may arrange or facilitate another person’s travel by recruiting, transporting, or transferring, harbouring or receiving them, or transferring or exchanging control over them.

‘Travel’ means arriving in, or entering, any country, departing from any country and travelling within any country. A person who is a UK national commits an offence under Section 2 regardless of where the arranging or facilitating takes place, or where the travel takes place.

A person who is not a UK national commits an offence under Section 2 if any part of the arranging or facilitating takes place in the UK, or the travel consists of arrival in or entry into, departure from, or travel within the UK.

In determining whether a child is a victim of trafficking, their consent to being trafficked is

irrelevant and how they are trafficked is also irrelevant. Only the act and the purpose need to be present. It is not necessary to prove coercion or any other inducement.

Exploitation alone does not constitute trafficking – there also needs to be recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a person.

Slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour is, or a crime under Section 1 Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Contextual Safeguarding

Contextual safeguarding, sometimes referred to as 'Harm outside the home' is the exploitation and abuse of children, young people, and adults where the exploitation comes from outside the home. Extra-familial harm is defined as risks to the welfare of children and young people that arise within the community or peer group, including sexual and criminal exploitation.

It includes child sexual exploitation, missing children, gangs, county lines, radicalisation, modern slavery and all forms of criminal exploitation. There are clear links across these areas, and it is vital that people, whether professionals or members of the public, know what to look out for and how to respond.

It recognises that the different relationships that young people and vulnerable adults form in their neighbourhood, schools and online can feature violence and abuse.

The risk for children, young people and adults can range from being denied the opportunity to make their own decisions, being in debt, threatened, coercion to commit criminal acts including violence and abuse, to becoming victims of violence including serious injury, rape, and death.

For children, young people and adults affected by contextual exploitation and abuse they will have experienced trauma and may be in a state of hyperarousal. This will impact on them in a number of ways, including their:

- Emotional, physical, and mental well-being
- Behaviour - Involvement in offending, going missing, use of alcohol, drugs, etc.
- Family relationships adversely affected
- Ability to access education and other services adversely affected
- Willingness to trust and engage with adults reduced

Cross Border Exploitation

When local authority or Merseyside police start to identify a potential cross boarder exploitation issue then that local authority or Merseyside police should convene a cross-border exploitation discussion. Each local authority should have a named lead who has the authority to make decisions, and they need to ensure that they regularly attend those meetings to provide consistency in developing the information/intelligence.

National Referral Mechanism

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a framework for identifying and referring potential victims

of modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support. Modern slavery is a complex crime and may involve multiple forms of exploitation.

It encompasses:

- human trafficking
- Slavery, servitude, and forced or compulsory labour

An individual could have been a victim of human trafficking and/or slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour.

Victims may not be aware that they are being trafficked or exploited, and may have consented to elements of their exploitation, or accepted their situation. If you think that modern slavery has taken place, the case should be referred to the NRM so that the Single Competent Authority (SCA) can fully consider the case. You do not need to be certain that someone is a victim.

[National referral mechanism guidance: adult \(England and Wales\) - GOV.UK](#)

The Multi-Agency Child Criminal & Sexual Exploitation meeting (MACCSE)

Child Exploitation takes place in local communities and information is often known to the full spectrum of statutory and voluntary sector agencies should be used to highlight the threat, establish and reduce risk. It is anticipated that an improved intelligence picture will enable effective action in a greater number of cases of child exploitation, thereby reducing the harm that would otherwise be caused to the young victims and their families.

A MACCSE meeting will provide the framework to allow regular information sharing and action planning to tackle child exploitation across Merseyside. Representatives from a range of statutory, voluntary and community sector agencies will attend the meeting.

Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Assessment tool and MACCSE meeting Template

The Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Assessment Tool and MACCSE meeting templates have been updated and agreed to by all five Merseyside authorities.

It has been agreed that authorities can design their Child Exploitation Assessment tools on liquid logic to triangulate the child and family assessment summary to prevent duplication on the child and family sections only.

A Child Exploitation Assessment Toolkit can be found on each Local Authority website

Multi-Agency Response to Threat, Harm, Risk (MARTHUR)

MARTHUR is designed to safeguard children within our communities by identifying and pursuing those who exploit them.

MARTHUR provides partner agencies the opportunity to determine enforcement, preventative, and

diversionary activity in response to:

1. Those persons or networks that are involved in exploiting others for criminal purposes
2. Locations of concern linked to Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) or Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

From a multi-agency perspective, partners will be able to:

1. Take Action themselves.
2. Take Action in conjunction with other partners.
3. Provide or pro-actively gather further information or intelligence to assist in carrying out the above actions.

Agenda items will be nominated using information or intelligence; or highlighted through the Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACCSE) process and associated safeguarding forums.

Consideration should be given to MARTHR Referral if a perpetrator/adult of concern is identified.

2. Protocol Aims and Purpose

This PAN Merseyside Multi-Agency Protocol seeks to unify a process of recognition, risk assessment, referral and discussion amongst professionals utilising a single process and document set for all. This Protocol aligns with local geographical area arrangements to safeguard children and sets out a clear pathway by which to ensure all organisations unify to provide the best service possible for all children and young people who are at risk of being exploited across Merseyside.

The aims and purpose of the Protocol procedures are to:

- Identify those who are at risk of, or who are being sexually and/or criminally exploited, by sharing information at an early stage and assessing risk using a consistent Child Exploitation Multi- Agency Assessment Tool.
- Apply pro-active problem solving to address the risks associated with victims, perpetrators, and locations and to ensure the safeguarding and welfare of children who are or may be at risk from exploitation.
- Take proactive action against those who are intent on sexually or criminally abusing and exploiting children and young people.
- Ensure timely and effective interventions are offered to children and families to safeguard those vulnerable to exploitation.
- Ensure partnership agencies work collaboratively to safeguard children who are being or are at risk of being exploited.
- Promote positive physical and emotional health and well-being of individuals identified as being at risk of child exploitation by ensuring appropriate therapeutic, sexual health and pre-trial therapy support is available to those children and young people who have experienced exploitation.
- To use data and intelligence to develop an understanding of child exploitation taking place across Merseyside, implement disruption tactics and ensure services are commissioned which can meet

identified needs.

3. Principles for consistently tackling Child Exploitation across Merseyside

The following is a list of principles that each geographical area will ensure are included within their local area child exploitation procedure and operational partnership pathways:

- When a child has been exploited, it is **never** the child's fault. (Please see Appendix B) for the language agencies should use to ensure that they describe a child's behaviour and or presentation.
- All agencies across Merseyside should use an eVPRF or Multi-Agency Referral Form to make a referral to the Front door/MASH.
- Referrals should always be made to the local geographical area where the child is currently residing.
- If the child is 'looked after' and placed out of their Local Authority geographical boundary, the child's allocated social worker from their home authority must always be informed that an eVPRF or MARF has been made in relation to Child Exploitation concerns.
- Upon receipt of the eVPRF or MARF in relation to Child Exploitation concerns, the local response will ensure a multi- agency information sharing and/or meeting takes place, in accordance with the level of risk initially identified. If there is risk of significant harm then a sec 47 strategy meeting must be convened which involves social care, police and partner agencies working with the child/family and CE flags can be actioned from this meeting for police and CSC systems.
- A Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Assessment Tool must be undertaken for all children:
 - Where there are signs of exploitation, but this needs further exploration.
 - When there are clear indicators that would suggest that the child is being exploited but this needs further exploration.
 - Where there is evidence that the child is being exploited.
 - Where there is evidence that the child is being exploited and there are concerns that they are presenting a risk of harm towards other children.
- A Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Assessment Tool must be completed in a multi-agency forum, and not by a single agency alone and it must include all multi-agency information including police.
- The child and their family's views must be sought to inform the completion of the Multi-Agency Assessment. It is good practice for the child and family to be part of this multi-agency meeting.
- If concerns are identified regarding compromised parenting and the parent/carer is believed involved in the exploitation of the child, the local area child protection procedure must be followed.
- If through completion of Child Exploitation Assessment tool that any cross geographical border links are identified, contact must be made with the local CE police lead and the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) / Front door in the other Local Authority.
- If the child has been arrested for having possession of drugs/firearms in another geographical area, Merseyside Police should contact the investigating police force to discuss whether there is evidence of 'County lines' criminal exploitation of the young person.

- Every agency has a responsibility to disrupt County lines. Merseyside Police will be the lead agency when a child is criminally exploiting other children and/or involving them in 'County lines.'
- The Child Exploitation Assessment and plan must always include ways to strengthen the child's resilience and protective factors as a form of 'pulling them away' from the exploitation risk.
- The Child Exploitation Assessment MUST link with the existing plan for the child (i.e., Early Help Plan, Child in Need Plan, Child Protection Plan or 'Looked After' Child's Care Plan).
- All Child Exploitation Assessments assessed as maybe or being exploited should be reviewed every 12 weeks. The MACCSE chairs however can set the review time period depending upon
- the level of risk and balancing the volume of cases within the MACCSE. Six-month reviews can only be used in some circumstances: i.e. Child in custody.
- If the Child Exploitation Assessment tool is submitted into MACCSE and the child is deemed to be a risk of exploitation towards other children, additional consideration is required on what prevention/disruption can be actioned in MACCSE.
- If any significant intelligence / safeguarding concerns are identified before the due review date a multi-Agency meeting must be reconvened to discuss the new information, and the Child Exploitation Assessment tool must be re-considered and updated accordingly. If there are significant harm concerns this meeting must be convened as a Strategy Meeting with police, social care and partner agencies.
- When a child is made subject of a Child Exploitation Assessment under MACCSE the decision for flags to be put on the system and removed will be via the MACCSE process. If Social Care is required to close a case prior to a MACCSE review and there are no signs of exploitation, then a discussion can take place with the Local Authority CE lead on the most appropriate action.
- At each multi-agency review, the Child Exploitation Assessment and plan should be re- analysed to ascertain if any new intelligence/concerns have been identified, as well as considering new protective factors.
- The child will only cease being subject of the MACCSE and Child Exploitation Assessments when the risk has been deemed by the multi-agency partnership to have reduced sufficiently and would indicate that a multi-agency plan is no longer necessary. A Child Exploitation flag can only be removed when this is the case. The decision to REMOVE a flag will be made in the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACCSE) meeting. If Children Services need to close a case and there are no exploitation concerns, then a decision can be made by the CE local authority to remove the flag. 'If Police decide to remove a Child Exploitation flag, the flag will still remain on Police systems for a further six-month period before expiry.'
- If a Child Exploitation Assessment tool is submitted into MACCSE and is assessed as a 'child, we are worried about and may return to MACCSE in the future' then consideration is required on what prevention strategies can be put into place.
- **Repeat Child Exploitation Referrals** - A repeat CE Referral is defined as when a child is no longer in the MACCSE process, and a new CE concern has been raised in the following 12 months which requires a Child Exploitation Assessment.

- **Links with other safeguarding children concerns i.e., MARAC / Radicalisation / Trafficking etc.** If there are concerns regarding any of the above issues, a referral should be made via the relevant local pathways. The Child Exploitation Assessment should ensure the referral is reflected.
- When modern slavery is suspected consideration of submitting a National Referral Mechanism for (NRM). Merseyside Police process will be to record the offence of modern slavery on Niche using the occurrence type 'Child Exploitation' and the officer in charge of the investigation or the CE Coordinator would complete and submit the copy of the NRM that has been completed in a multi-agency forum, ensuring a copy is forwarded to the relevant Local Authority Children's Social Care.
- **Intelligence:** Where an agency has intelligence, this should be shared with the police by:

Tell us online reporting: The Merseyside Police website is the quickest, easiest, and most reliable way of sharing information with the police. As a partner agency simply go to the website and click 'Tell Us About' button. www.merseyside.police.uk

Or Crimestoppers, an independent charity who helps to solve crimes. Crimestoppers have an anonymous 24/7 phone number **0800 555 111**, that agencies can call to pass on information about crime. Alternatively, people can send Crimestoppers information anonymously via their [Giving Information Form](#). **Crimestoppers should only be used for intelligence submissions where details of a child are not known. Safeguarding concerns in relation to identifiable children need to be submitted via the process outlined above.**

Partners Intelligence Portal: <https://www.merseyside.police.uk/partners/partner-services/>

4. **Process: What to do if you are worried about a child being at risk of exploitation.**

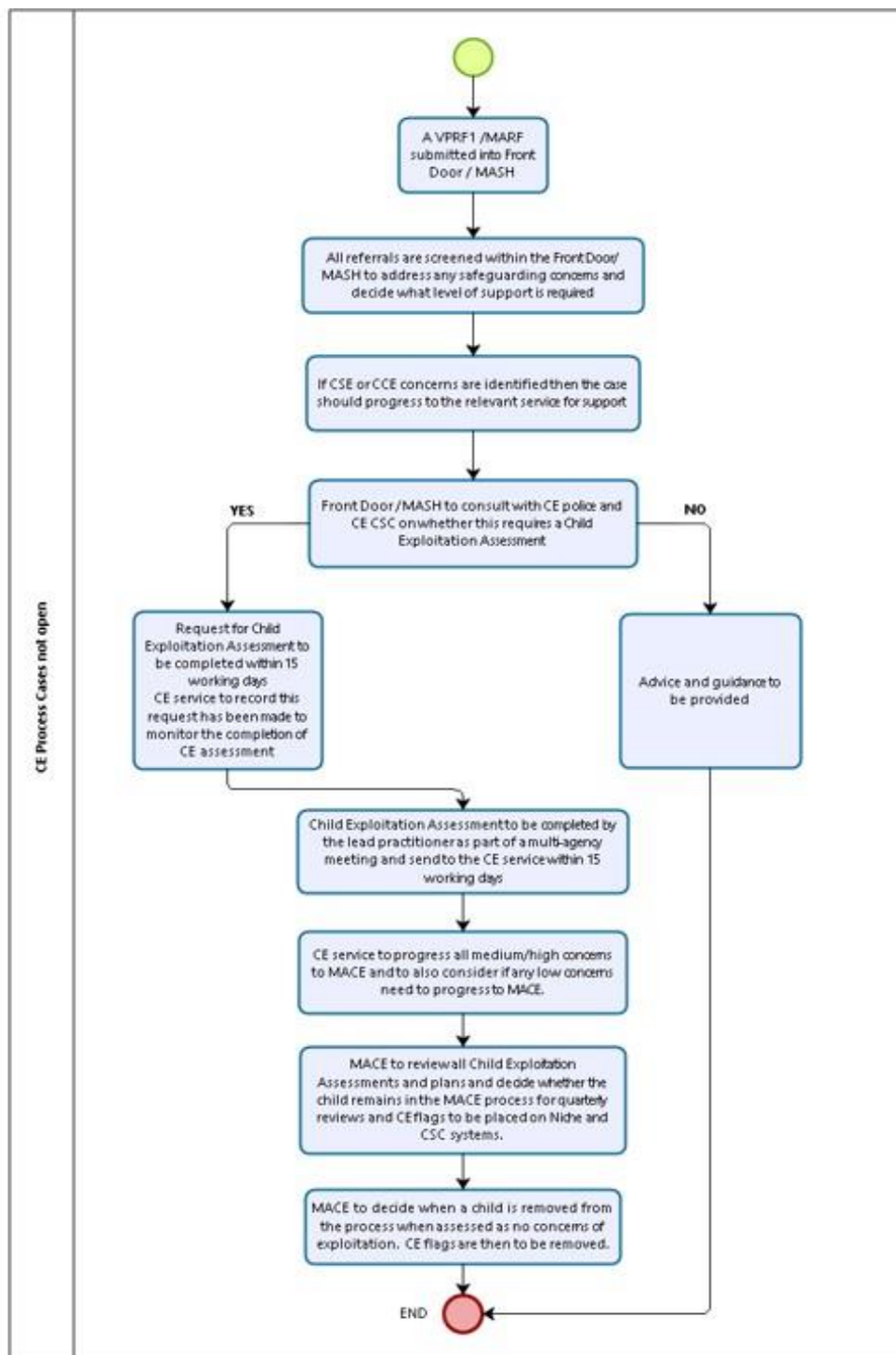
4.1 If a child is not open to Children Services

If a child is presenting with signs of being exploited, then a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) or eVPRF must be completed and sent to the MASH/ Front Door of the local authority where the child resides. The MASH /Front door will screen the referral, and a decision will then made to the level of presenting need and refer the child to the appropriate level of service if required:

- No further action
- Signposting
- Early Help
- S17 Initial assessment
- S47 Child Protection

If the child is the responsibility of another local authority, then contact will be made with the responsible authority to ascertain what action is being taken.

Process for children not open to Children's Services



*If CSC need to close a case prior to a MACE meeting and there are no exploitation concerns discussion to be held with the CSC CE lead

*If a sec 47 strategy meeting is required due to exploitation safeguarding concerns then CE flags can be placed on Niche and CSC systems prior to MACE

Timescales can be extended to fit in with the Child & Family Assessment if CSC are completing both assessments at the same time.

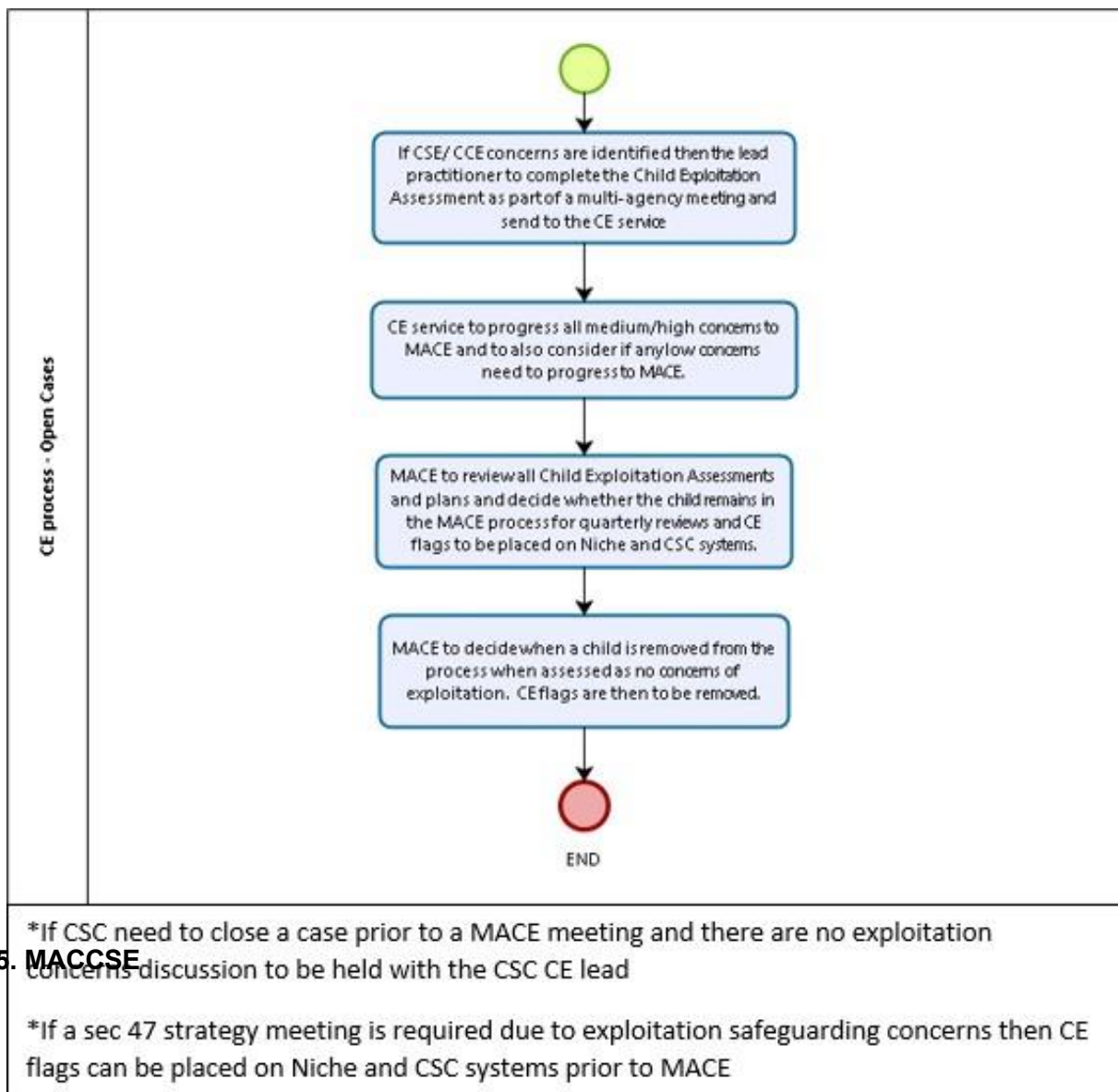
4.2 If a child is open to Children Services

If a child is presenting with signs of being exploited, then the lead practitioner (social worker) completes a CE assessment and process to MACCSE. A Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) or eVPRF must be completed and sent to the MASH/ Front Door of the local authority where the child resides. The MASH /Front door will ensure the referral is sent to the allocated social worker.

The risk of harm to the child needs to be re- assessed in the light of the new information, a discussion held with the relevant team manager and a decision will then be made to the level of presenting need and refer the child to the appropriate level of service if required:

- No further action
- Signposting
- S17 assessment
- S47 Child Protection

Process map for children open to Children Services – No child should be closed from MACE without multi-agency review, unless in exceptional circumstances.



5.1 MACCSE principles

The MACCSE meetings held in each of the local authority areas of Merseyside will be jointly chaired by Merseyside Police (Detective Inspector) and a Social Care Senior Safeguarding Manager for the Local Authority (higher than a CSC Team Manager Grade).

A MACCSE meeting will provide the framework to allow regular information sharing and action planning to tackle child exploitation across Merseyside. JTAI guidance 2020 highlights key questions that can be used as preparation for MACCSE chairs and/or a quality assurance checklist (See Appendix A).

Police and partner agencies will share intelligence within the MACCSE (See Appendix D) Key Questions for Information Sharing and CE Intelligence/Information Sharing via MACCSE Process.

Every MACCSE meeting requires attendees to sign a confidential statement

The meeting will discuss concerns about child exploitation that have already been reviewed by the local CE MASH/ front door. Representatives from a range of statutory, voluntary and community sector agencies will attend the meeting.

The meeting will consider each referral against intelligence held by the range of agencies represented at the meeting and intelligence provided by additional agencies unable to attend meetings but required to provide intelligence in every relevant case.

The MACCSE will ensure that a Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Assessment and plan has been completed, detailing the tactical response to be provided by relevant agencies.

The MACCSE meeting will have the potential to call upon the diverse skills and experience available amongst its members.

In conjunction with dealing with individual cases of child exploitation, the meeting will be a forum for information sharing to increase the understanding of the threat posed by child exploitation across Merseyside.

The child's welfare is paramount. The MACCSE process will supplement safeguarding processes by contributing information gathered at the MACCSE to meetings where the child's plan is being discussed.

The MACCSE will not supplant, replace, or override current safeguarding procedures.

Cases involving children who are at imminent risk should not wait for the MACCSE meeting. The child or young person should be referred to the Front Door/ MASH immediately to ensure safeguarding procedures commence, as is usual practice in respect of safeguarding concerns. The MACCSE process will run alongside the safeguarding process to ensure all information in relation to child exploitation is collated at a central point.

At the MACCSE meeting, agency representatives will be asked to use their professional knowledge and expertise to assess the young person using the Child Exploitation Assessment to safeguard the victim, ensure the appropriate services are in place and target the perpetrator.

The actions allocated and information received at the meeting will be fully documented in the minutes of the MACCSE meeting and saved on the child's file.

Due to the volume of cases in the local authority of Liverpool, it is not feasible for every medium/high case to be discussed at MACCSE. However, the MACCSE principles will be followed at the relevant multi-agency meeting, Child in Need or Child Protection. There will be a confidential slot at the beginning of the meeting where partner agencies will share intelligence, and cases will be reviewed every 12 weeks.

Liverpool MACCSE will discuss child exploitation cases where the plan is not reducing risk and **all** cases where the risk has sufficiently reduced for the case to move out of the CE pathway and the flag removed. The decision to remove the flag will be made at MACCSE. The MACCSE meeting will maintain oversight of the National Referral Mechanism Referrals.

All five authorities have responsibility for ensuring MACCSE chairs and representatives are trained in their responsibilities outlined in the MACCSE Terms of Reference. Each local authority must also provide training for all multi-agency practitioners on the MACCSE and their contributions when a Child Exploitation Assessment tool is being completed.

5.2 MACCSE Terms of Reference

MACCSE Terms of Reference

Group	Multi-Agency Child Exploitation MACCSE
Chair	Jointly chaired by CSC (senior manager level) and Detective Inspector
Membership	
Organisations	Organisation
Children Service Teams	Council
Early Help Service	Council
Youth Justice Service	YJS
Sexual Health	Health
Health	Health
Local policing	Merseyside Police
Catch 22	Pan Merseyside Catch 22
Safeguarding Lead	Education
CAMHS	CAMHS
Crime and Communities	Community Safety Partnership
Probation	Probation
CE Coordinator	Merseyside Police
Post 16 ETE	ETE post 16
Drugs services	Voluntary
CE team member (if applicable to area)	CE team
Co-opted Members	
Title	Organisation
Licencing	Council
Housing	Housing

Purpose

The aim of the MACCSE is to provide a framework and governance to promote a clear consistent response to concerns in relation to child exploitation in Merseyside.

Key Objectives

The MACCSE provides:

- a framework to allow regular information/intelligence sharing and action planning to tackle CE from a range of statutory, voluntary and community sector agencies,
- a governance structure to ensure all maybe or being exploited concerns about child exploitation have been assessed and responded to appropriately via safeguarding and enforcement agencies,
- a process to ensure a certain standard is achieved in relation to the CE assessment and that CE identified needs have been responded to via the lead practitioners plan,
- a forum identifies and respond to gaps in provision and to escalate any identified concerns within agencies,
- a meeting to share wider intelligence sharing of the CE risks and needs across Merseyside and to build upon intelligence to enhance safeguarding and disrupt perpetrators,
- a process to identify any child who presents as a victim of exploitation and also a risk towards other children to ensure risk is identified and managed appropriately,
- a meeting to focus on the 4 P objectives (prepare, prevent, pursue and protect),
- a forum to recognise good practice to share learning and ensure services try all approaches to engage children being exploited,
- to consider our transitional pathways for anyone turning 18 years old who are still assessed as being exploited,
- to monitor NRM referrals in terms of multi-agency involvement, criming, investigation, result and outcome for perpetrators, and
- to ensure all CE perpetrators that present a threat, harm and risk will be brought to the attention of local policing for a range of disruption opportunities to be considered. Feedback from these contextual safeguarding forums (ie. MARTHR) to feed back into the MACCSE.

The MACCSE meeting will not supplant, replace or override current safeguarding procedures. Cases involving children who are at immediate risk, should not wait for the MACCSE meeting.

Governance

The MACCSE will report/ escalate to the local authority strategic group responsible for Child Exploitation and the Pan Merseyside Strategic MACCSE.

The MACCSE chairs will escalate any identified concerns within the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

Role of members

Members of the meeting will be responsible for the multi-agency oversight of all CE assessment and the child's plan. (In Liverpool, MACCSE will be responsible for oversight of cases that are not progressing in terms of reducing risk).

Members are expected to read all the paperwork that is sent out prior to the MACCSE and attend the MACCSE to express individual agency's opinion on:

- any missing information
- whether the exploitation level is appropriate
- the standard of assessment and plan being appropriate

Members are also expected to:

- Be the single point of contact for agencies for CE
- Ensuring information or actions are disseminated within own agency / department / team and to other partners as relevant
- Active participation in agenda and discussion, bringing issues to and from own area of responsibility.
- Raise and escalate any concerns from an agencies' perspective
- Undertake actions as agreed by the meeting
- To share good practice and what their agency has done when agencies have been unable to engage,
- Abide by the Information Governance guidelines for each agency and Data Protection Act

If a nominated member of the meeting is unable to attend, then a designated representative should attend in their place. The nominated delegate will be identified in advance and should be of an appropriate level to undertake decisions on behalf of the nominated member and their organisation. The nominated members should ensure that their designated representative has been briefed and provided with the relevant papers.

MACCSE agenda

The MACCSE agenda may include the following standardised items:

- 1) CE assessments- initial and review (Liverpool: CE Assessments/Plans not reducing risk)
- 2) Oversight of National Referral Mechanism Referrals
 - Has this decision been reached via multi-agency discussion?
 - Has this been crimed?
 - Has this resulted in positive conclusion grounds decision?
 - Outcome of the decision? (Investigation of the trafficking? Court outcome? Support package?)
- 3) Recent / new Intelligence and how this can be developed further by agencies
- 4) Strategic MACCSE update (demographics)
- 5) What works and any barriers agencies are facing?
- 6) Links to MARTHR and any feedback from MARTHR and focus on wider on disruption needed.

Frequency

Minimal requirement: monthly

Multi-Agency Response to Threat, Harm, Risk (MARTHUR) Terms of Reference

The purpose of MARTHUR is designed to safeguard children within our communities by identifying and pursuing those who exploit them.

MARTHUR provides partner agencies the opportunity to determine enforcement, preventative, and diversionary activity in response to:

1. Those persons or networks that are involved in exploiting others for criminal purposes
2. Locations of concern linked to Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) or Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

From a multi-agency perspective, partners will be able to:

1. Take Action themselves.
2. Take Action in conjunction with other partners.
3. Provide or pro-actively gather further information or intelligence to assist in carrying out the above actions.

The MARTHUR monthly meetings will be chaired by Merseyside Police, partners should adhere to the confidentiality agreement as set out in this Protocol and manage information and records as per the Information Sharing Agreements. Agenda items will be nominated using information or intelligence; or highlighted through the Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACCSE) process and associated safeguarding forums.

The threshold for discussion at MARTHUR would be:

1. The subject(s) are currently under investigation and wider disruption activity and partnership oversight will help reduce the risk from those persons whilst investigations are ongoing. (This may be for known victims/children or as yet unknown/unidentified other young people).
2. The subject(s) have been linked to a specific child or young person identified as at risk of exploitation (Through the MACCSE process or other safeguarding forum) and there is a concern that the relationship may expose the child or young person (or as yet unidentified children or young people) to harm*.
3. There is information or intelligence relating to the subject(s) which suggests a risk of harm from the subject(s) –
 - a. Further multi agency work is necessary to build information to better understand the concerns, with the aim of mitigating risk to children or young people, or
 - b. Coordinated activity is necessary and proportionate to disrupt or deter the subject(s), therefore reducing the risk of harm to children or young people.
4. A place or issue has been identified as a potential risk. MARTHUR will assist partners to explore, mitigate or otherwise disrupt. For example, a shop, take away, park, county line or other location.

*What do we mean by 'Harm'

Children Act 1989 – Section 31

Significant Harm - 'ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development

- Development means 'physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development'
- Health means 'physical or mental health'
- Ill-treatment includes sexual abuse and other forms of bad treatment which are not physical. This includes 'emotional harm'.

6. National Referral Mechanism

A decision as to whether to submit an NRM in respect of a child or young person is best taken in light of all the available information and intelligence. This is to ensure the NRM is fully informed, safeguarding partners are aware of the wider information and intelligence and can prioritise and safeguard appropriately.

Safeguarding Partners should share information at the earliest opportunity when concerns arise that a child or young person who may be subject to modern slavery. Information shared should support a multi-agency decision on the submission of an NRM to the competent authority. An NRM referral should not prevent immediate safeguarding actions taking place, information from the NRM assessment may contribute to safeguarding responses.

This approach may identify other children or young people at risk of being trafficked or exploited, suspected perpetrators or other persons or professionals capable of providing safeguarding interventions.

The safeguarding partners should retain oversight of the progress of NRM's so effective multi agency decision making can be made in light of decisions taken by the competent authority. This includes if, when and how to inform a child or young person to support their safety and welfare. This information sharing and partnership approach is underpinned by the principles of Working Together 2018, will avoid safeguarding partners acting in isolation; and maximise the opportunities to safeguard the child or young person.

Local partnership governance should ensure appropriate arrangements are in place to track and review NRM cases, submission and status. This may happen through the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, MACCSE or other appropriate governance.

For guidance on NRM completion: [National referral mechanism guidance: adult \(England and Wales\) - GOV.UK](#)

A First Responder organization is, in England and Wales, an authority that is authorized to refer a potential victim of modern slavery into the National Referral Mechanism. The current statutory and non-statutory first responder organisations are:

- Police forces
- Certain parts of the Home Office
- UK Visas and Immigration
- Border Force
- Immigration Enforcement

- National Crime Agency
- Local Authorities
- Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA)
- Salvation Army
- Migrant Help
- Medaille Trust
- Kalayaan
- Barnardo's
- Unseen
- NSPCC
- BAWSO
- New Pathways
- Refugee Council

Please refer to the Pan Merseyside National Referral Mechanism Trafficking Exploitation Guidance June 2022 for full guidance.

[Pan-Merseyside-NRM-Trafficking-Exploitation-Practice-Guidance-June-2022.pdf](#)

International Exploitation

If a child is assessed as linked to a particular organized crime group linked with international travel and there is a risk of exploitation abroad which has significant safeguarding risks – health i.e. plugging drugs on flights or arrest in countries whereby the child would be at risk in custody or significant consequences i.e. Dubai, then a CCSET Child Exploitation Trigger Plan would be actioned.

The CCSET Child Exploitation Trigger plan for international exploitation would be saved on police and children social care systems and this document clearly outlines the expectations from police and children services when we are aware there is a risk of exploitation abroad.

The Trigger plan outlines various actions required at the point the child presents at the airport to prevent travel, and what needs to take place if they do board the flight and are known to be abroad linked to exploitation risks.

7) Role of Agencies

Merseyside Police

Child Criminal and Sexual Exploitation Team

The overriding objective of CCSET is to reduce the harm caused to children.

They will do this by:

- Fully investigating exploitation offences
- Identifying those who are at risk of being exploited by sharing information at an early stage and assessing that risk.
- Improving the quality of call handling to ensure that first response officers are made aware of all relevant information, including risk factors.
- Increasing the volume and quality of intelligence submissions

- Improving prosecution procedures with an emphasis on victim care and support
- Increasing the number of abusers brought to justice.
- Improving statutory responses to Child Sexual and Criminal Exploitation and access to services.

Their objectives are as follows:

- The team will maintain and develop strategic partnerships within each of the five local authorities with increased governance and greater capability.
- CCSET co-ordinators will remain based within each Local Authority area who will maintain a consistent liaison with Local Authority staff
- Child Criminal & Sexual Exploitation offences do not have boundaries, and a considerable proportion of identified victims would impact across Merseyside areas and cross force borders – this will benefit from a centralised investigative function.
- A wider intelligence picture can be obtained, and action taken to target suspects across the whole of the Merseyside area, whilst developing safeguarding and support for victims
- CCSET supports a One Team approach and will encourage ongoing functions across Investigations, Local Policing, R&R and Prevention
- CCSET will provide specialist capabilities to tackle organised crime groups and protect an ever-increasing group of vulnerable victims
- CCSET will provide a centralised proactive capability by developing intelligence to target & pursue perpetrators involved in exploitation offences
- CCSET will work to standardise risk assessment and multi-agency meetings across the Force.
- The team will be accessible force-wide and cross strand, at all levels.

External partners will include the five Local Authorities currently servicing the Merseyside area, the Crown Prosecution Service, Forensic Providers, UK Law Enforcement Agencies – this list is an example and is by no means exhaustive.

Close liaison is also anticipated with other Policing areas, in particular neighbouring forces.

Role of CCSET Co-ordinators

- To be based within each Local Authority area building (with the exception of Liverpool who are based at St Anne Street Police Station), maintaining a consistent liaison with Local Authority staff
- To identify those who are at risk of being exploited by sharing information and assessing risk.
- Attend multi-Agency meetings, sharing and receiving information with / from partner agencies in a prompt and legal manner.
- Create Niche occurrence for each person subject to MACE/MARTHR process and ensure the minutes (taken by the LA) from all meetings attended are recorded accurately on police systems using Niche.
- Engage with multi-agency reviews and decisions in relation to creating and managing Niche flags for children at risk or subject of exploitation, perpetrators of exploitation, or a location where there is a CE risk. (In accordance with the [Child Exploitation Flags guidance](#)).
- Identify opportunities from safeguarding referrals, intelligence and investigations to identify perpetrators of child exploitation, consider and drive disruption tactics, ensuring proactive measures such as [Child Abduction Warning Notices \(CAWN\)](#) and [Child Criminal Exploitation \(CCE\) Warning Notices](#) which are created by the Co-ordinator to be served by Local Policing via the appropriate Chief Inspector and are then to be monitored via the appropriate meeting.
- Work closely with the Missing from Home Coordinators, sharing information in a timely manner where missing children have CE risks / flags and look to problem solve to reduce such

- episodes and reduce / remove risk.
- Work with partners to create effective MACE plans for children who are at risk of exploitation.
- Be aware of the [Pan Merseyside Child Exploitation and Missing from Home / Catch 22 guidance](#). Specifically, that any child reported missing to Merseyside Police will automatically be referred into Catch 22 for a brief intervention called a 'Return Home Interview' once the child is located and back home.
- Communicate with other Police Forces when a Merseyside Child has been found exploited outside of the Force area. Ensure a safeguarding approach and intelligence sharing is completed in a timely manner.

Role of the Child Exploitation Investigation Officers

- CCSET will use the Home Office definition of CSE (see [Department for Education – Child Sexual Exploitation](#)) and CE as outlined in Chapter 1 and will take ownership of any investigations, whether proactive or reactive, which meet the definitions.
Child sexual abuse committed for the purposes of sexual gratification of the abuser or the facilitator (where the facilitator does not benefit) does not meet the definition of CSE. This would therefore exclude most child sexual abuse within the family environment but would include child sexual exploitation as part of OCG activity.
- Investigations that have a link to child criminal exploitation cover a wide range of crime types, with a footprint across other investigative teams, including but not limited to, FIT, Op Hammer, and SOC. CCSET will not take ownership of the primary criminal investigation. For example:
 - a firearm discharge where no exploitation has been identified.
 - where CE concerns identified and linked to a volume drug investigation, CCSET will take ownership and progress identified child exploitation.
- Officers will be responsible for any NRM (National Referral Mechanism) referrals generated through the primary CE investigations and would support safeguarding if any victims/suspects are identified as being subject of a MACE plan. Note however that any first responder can generate the NRM referral.
- Offending must be LIVE - the specialism of the team is to disrupt and prevent offending and safeguard victims. Investigation of non-recent abuse would be allocated within PVP/Unity/Inv teams unless there is evidence of ongoing offending or current safeguarding concerns.
- Flexibility will be provided for issues of criticality relating to organised and complex abuse. For example, investigations involving persons of prominence, large scale offending or reputational risk. Considerations would include – organised offending within a sporting organisation, an established institution such as a church, or an investigation likely to attract national media interest. CSE must be apparent. These decisions will be made outside of the allocation policy by the D/Supt.
- CCSET will take ownership of non-recent reports received when the perpetrator is still employed or engaged in the same or further position of trust and there are current safeguarding considerations.
- CCSET Investigators will work in partnership with the CCSET Co-Ordinators and with Children's Services via MASH and MACE to identify risk, assess and safeguard children that are suspected to be, or are being sexually or criminally exploited.
- They will identify criminal offences, ensuring crimes are recorded in accordance with National Crime Recording Standards and National Standards.
- Intelligence referred to CCSET will be reviewed and assessed with a view to progressing any development opportunities to target offenders, disrupt exploitation activity and or implement safeguarding.
- Operations identified by the Force Intelligence Bureau as involving criminal or sexual exploitation of children that can has some degree of organisation, for example County Lines

activity will be referred to CE Teams to investigate.

Online Child Abuse Investigation Team (OCAIT)

- The OCAIT (see [OCAIT](#)) is responsible for investigations into the most serious incident of cyber related organised criminal activity pertaining to the sexual exploitation of children online and the making, possession and distribution of Indecent Images of Children (IIOC).
- The OCIAT gathers and disseminates relevant intelligence, identified from law enforcement, industry and referring agencies, to support effective safeguarding of children subject to sexual exploitation and abuse.
- The OCAIT is the SPOC for all CEOP/NCA referrals into the force and other law enforcement agencies worldwide. OCAIT is also the force lead on all UCOL (Undercover Online)
- investigations with Regional Crime Units across the country and liaise with specialist departments internationally such as US Department for Homeland Security, FBI, UKBA, Europol, Interpol and New Zealand's Department of Internal Affairs.
- The OCAIT provide specialist advice and support in relation to investigations involving IIOC, Online Child Sexual Exploitation & Abuse (CSEA) and associated intelligence thus ensuring an effective service is provided.

OCAIT Officers can provide advice and guidance on:

- VID and Grading (Victim Identification)
- Access to CAID – Child Abuse Image Database.
- Access to TOR Browser and Dark Web Services.
- Virtual Private Networks.
- Social Media / Instant Messenger sites.
- Internet Safety for Children.
- Categorisation of IIOC.
- Pen-Picture Schedules (formerly known as Thompson Schedules)
- Lucy Faithfull and Suicide Prevention of suspects.
- EXIF / META Data contained within digital images.
- Image manipulation and sanitisation.
- Enquiries relating to National Technology Advice Centre (NTAC) GCHQ.
- High-Tech Crime Scene Searching
- Onsite Mobile/Cell phone detection (Omnidirectional) and Direction Finding.

Further support and guidance can be found by contacting OCAIT on 0151 777 1351, OCAIT@Merseyside.police.uk

Please see the [Investigation of Indecent Images of Children Policy](#), and [College of Policing - Police action in response to youth produced sexual imagery \('Sexting'\)](#) as well as [KIK Law Enforcement Guide](#) and [Snap Chat Law Enforcement Guide](#) for more information.

Tackling Organised Exploitation Programme (TOEX)

The TOEX Programme is an intelligence capability that provides dedicated intelligence and analytical expertise in support of forces undertaking complex organised exploitation investigations, such as modern slavery & human trafficking, organised immigration crime, county lines, adult and child sexual exploitation and abuse. TOEX teams are embedded within each of the Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCU).

The TOEX response will support UK law enforcement and intelligence community by providing an enhanced picture of organised exploitation. [Tackling Organised Exploitation \(TOEX\) Programme \(toexprogramme.co.uk\)](http://toexprogramme.co.uk)

Health Services

Government guidance on children involved in sexual exploitation, notes:

‘Because of the universal nature of most health provision, health professionals may often be the first to be aware that a child may be involved, or be at risk of becoming involved, in child exploitation.

Children involved in sexual exploitation are likely to need a range of services, including advice and counselling for harm minimisation, health promotion, advice on sexually transmitted diseases and HIV’

Health professionals should be alert and competent to identify and act upon concerns that a child is at risk of or experiencing abuse through exploitation. They have a crucial role in providing support for the physical and mental health of these children.

Where health professionals have immediate concerns, they should make a referral to the MASH.

Where the concerns are not immediate or are unclear, staff should discuss the case with their safeguarding lead. A decision should be made as to whether this would be an appropriate referral to the MASH/ Front door.

Health staff should offer and/or continue to provide health education, counselling, sexual health and medical intervention to the child as an appropriate part of early intervention.

Health professionals who may be invited to attend multi-agency meetings include:

- All current health professionals involved with the child, including school nurses, nurses working with children in care, GP’s, practice nurses, health workers involved with outreach clinics, sexual health and family planning resources.
- Any previously involved health professionals (recent past) who would have a useful contribution to make to the meeting (i.e. most recent health reports and knowledge of child while at school).
- Health professionals involved in any screening or medicals involving the child who is the subject of the meeting

Schools and Colleges

Staff in schools, further education colleges and other education establishments are uniquely placed to recognise and refer children who are abused through exploitation. They are also in a position to help children to avoid being exploited and to support abused children to recover.

Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) programmes can help children make informed and healthy choices about issues such as sexual activity, grooming techniques, drug use and keeping themselves safe.

Schools should also be aware of who is picking up or meeting children at the end of the school day and also be aware of their respective ‘E-Safety’ processes which help inform children and families on how to be safe online.

Representatives from education have an active role, which is not limited to prevention, but also to sharing information in respect of children and young people with whom they share a great deal of time and experiences. It is anticipated that children missing education lead will have regular representation at the monthly MACCSE meeting and provide, amongst other information, when a child or young person has been missing from education.

Staff should have knowledge and be familiar with the Safeguarding in Education guidance (DfE 2019) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/835733/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2019.pdf

Youth Justice Service (YJS)

Youth Justice Service practitioners from the five Merseyside YJSs deal with children who have or are at risk of committing offences but can also be the victims of criminal exploitation. The expectation in terms of practice is as follows:

- All children will be managed in ways that reduce their vulnerability/safeguarding need, and any risk of harm they may present through skilled assessment, the delivery of well-targeted and quality interventions and risk management planning. The sharing of information with other key agencies will be central to this.
- Recognition of factors which pose a risk to children's safety and welfare, and the implementation of agency procedures to protect children from harm (MAPPA/MARAC/Child Safeguarding procedures).

In conjunction with the other agencies and organisations involved in the MACCSE meeting, Youth Offending Teams/Services will be integral to the success of the process in providing and sharing of information and intelligence. It is anticipated that Youth Offending Teams/Services will have regular representation at the MACCSE meeting for their geographical area.

Probation

Probation staff will deal with perpetrators, and in some cases victims, of child exploitation, including children. The expectation in terms of practice is as follows:

- All perpetrators will be managed in ways that reduce the risk of harm they may present through skillful assessment, the delivery of well-targeted and quality interventions and risk management planning. The sharing of information with other key agencies will be central to this.
- Recognition of factors which pose a risk to children's safety and welfare, and the implementation of agency procedures to protect children from harm (MAPPA/MARAC/Child Safeguarding procedures).
- Provision of services to child victims of criminal exploitation in conjunction with the other agencies and organisations involved in the MACCSE.

7. Pan Merseyside Performance Reporting

Each borough will report quarterly into Pan Merseyside Strategic MACCSE:

- 1) Number of CE assessments proceeded to MACCSE (CSE, CCE, or Both)
- 2) How many children in MACCSE (may be or being exploited)?
- 3) Emerging themes
- 4) MACCSE cohort – maybe and being exploited – demographics – age, gender, ethnicity and SEN
- 5) How many children were closed off MACCSE (assessed as risk reduced)
- 6) How many closed off due to reaching age of 18? And risk level
- 7) How many children were closed as agencies have been unable to engage or lack of consent
- 8) How many re-referrals back into MACCSE within twelve months?
- 9) No. of children assessed as being exploited for over six months and findings
- 10) No. of NRM submitted and where they completed as part of a multi-agency forum?

Appendix A

MACCSE Questions for consideration: Professional Self-Challenge

Based on JTAI CE Guidance February 2020. Questions asked by Inspectors.

- 1. Was the referral for MACCSE action timely for the child?**
 - If not, what is the impact, can we learn and give feedback to prevent?
 - Escalate if required.
- 2. Is risk identified, understood and prioritised? Does the child appear to be safe?**
 - If we don't understand the risk, what are we doing to try and understand it?
 - What immediate SMART actions need to be raised?
 - Do we need to alert anyone else?
 - Perps/Risky people or themes? What are we doing to disrupt?
- 3. Has decision-making matched the priority risks and needs?**
 - What is the biggest risk? Are we addressing this?
- 4. When an assessment has been completed, are risks, needs and strengths clear? Is the assessment regularly updated to reflect changing risks and need?**
 - CE Assessment review period – set based on risk.
 - Review if information changes.
- 5. When an assessment has been completed does it identify risks to any other children (including siblings)?**
- 6. When relevant partners identify places where risks exist (for example, schools, parks or streets) is action taken to address contextual risks?**
 - MARTHR. TH&R, ASB Meetings.
- 7. Is there a plan for the child that addresses risks and needs? Is it making a difference?**
 - Link to the CLA/CP/CiN/EH/Risk Plan – Understand how this is addressing the vulnerability?
 - Is the CE Assessment or agency update showing a reduction in risk? Be clear if so.
 - Is this only because we haven't had any reporting/contact or compliance?
- 8. Is the plan regularly updated and reviewed to reflect changing risk and need?**
 - Link to the CLA/CP/CiN Plan – Get an overview of how this is addressing the vulnerability?
- 9. Is the child supported to engage in the work at all stages, including in direct work to address the impact of exploitation? Are parents/carers involved at all stages?**

- Do we have a professional developing a trusted relationship?
- Evidence of persistence?
- Review and assess why not working.
- Engage different approaches.

10. Have individual needs and circumstances been taken into account?

- Child's voice evident?
- Diagnosed learning need? – Is this being addressed with support?
- Demographic/Factors that may need consideration?
- Subject to abuse? - Therapeutic help and good quality support?
- Contextual factors relevant to the child/family?

11. Do agencies work together effectively to reduce risk to the child?

- Other CVS/Agencies not here that can support/help?
- What are the blockages to us reducing the risk here?
- What approach is being taken with the perpetrator(s)?
- How are we trying to identify possible perpetrator(s)?

Appendix B

Language agencies should use to describe a child's behaviour

Language is an important part of how we identify and assess exploitation. Guidance on language agencies should use to describe a child's situation and behaviour:

<i>"He/she is drug running"</i>	The child is being trafficked for the purpose of criminal exploitation
<i>"Recruit/ run/ work"</i>	This implies there is a level of choice by the child regarding their exploitation and does not take into consideration the grooming, coercion, threats, and violence. More appropriate description: The child is being criminally exploited.
<i>"He/she is choosing this lifestyle"</i>	This implies choice or control by the child. More appropriate description: The child is being exploited.
<i>"Putting themselves at risk"</i>	This implies choice or control by the child. More appropriate description: The child is being criminally exploited Child may have been groomed The child is at an increased vulnerability to being abused/exploited Location/ situation could increase a perpetrators opportunity to abuse a child The location is dangerous to children Concerns regarding other's influences on the child
<i>"Promiscuous"</i>	This puts the blame on the child and implies the child is in full control of what is happening. More appropriate description: The child is either being exploited or vulnerable to exploitation.
<i>"Involved in CSE or CCE"</i>	This implies choice or control by the child. More appropriate description: The child is being exploited.
<i>"Sexually active since (age under 13)"</i>	The child has/may have been sexually assaulted or raped. Concerns exist that the child may have been coerced, exploited or sexually abused
<i>"Streetwise"</i>	This implies the child is able to keep themselves safe and is fully able to manage situations that present risk.

'Child is being offered drugs in return for sex'	Child is being sexually exploited. Concerns that the child has been raped. Perpetrators are sexually abusing the child. The child is being sexually abused. The child's vulnerability regarding drug use is being used by others to abuse them. The perpetrators have a hold over the child due to the fact that they are drug dependent.
'Prostituting themselves'	This completely misses that the child is being manipulated and controlled. Changes in legislation have meant that child prostitution is no longer an acceptable term and should never be used.
'Boyfriend/Girlfriend'	Children have been challenged in court with practitioner's recordings where their practitioner has referred to the perpetrator as the child's boyfriend/girlfriend.
'Sexual activity with...'	They have been sexually abused. They have been raped. Allegation of sexual abuse. Child has described sexual activity, however concerns exist that the child may have been groomed/coerced.
'Spending time/associating with 'elders''	The young person says that they are friends with a person and there are concerns about that person's age, the imbalance of power, exploitation, offending. The young person has been groomed, exploited, controlled. If the 'elder' is under the age of 18 years old- this will also need to be considered using child protection processes.

Appendix C

Please see each LSCB website for local Child Exploitation Protocols and operational pathways?

CE Concerns should be forwarded to Children's Social Care using the Multi Agency Referral Form used by the local authority area.

Links to each local authority area's safeguarding procedures and referral forms are detailed below:

Liverpool

[Liverpool Safeguarding Children Partnership \(LSCP\) - Are you worried?](#)

Sefton

[Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership - Worried about a child?](#)

Knowsley

[Safeguarding children | Knowsley Council](#)

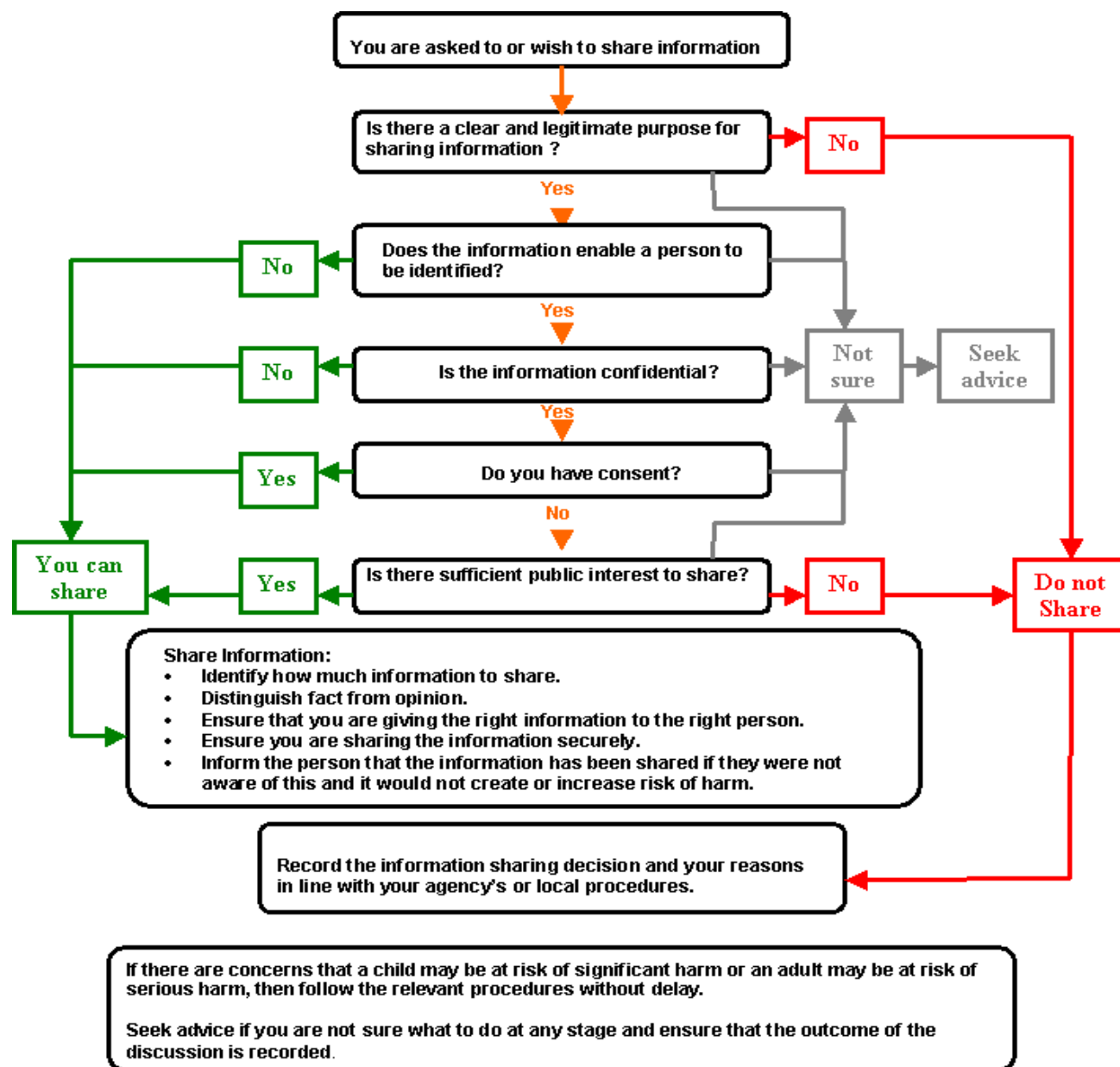
St Helens

[St. Helens Safeguarding Children Partnership -](#)

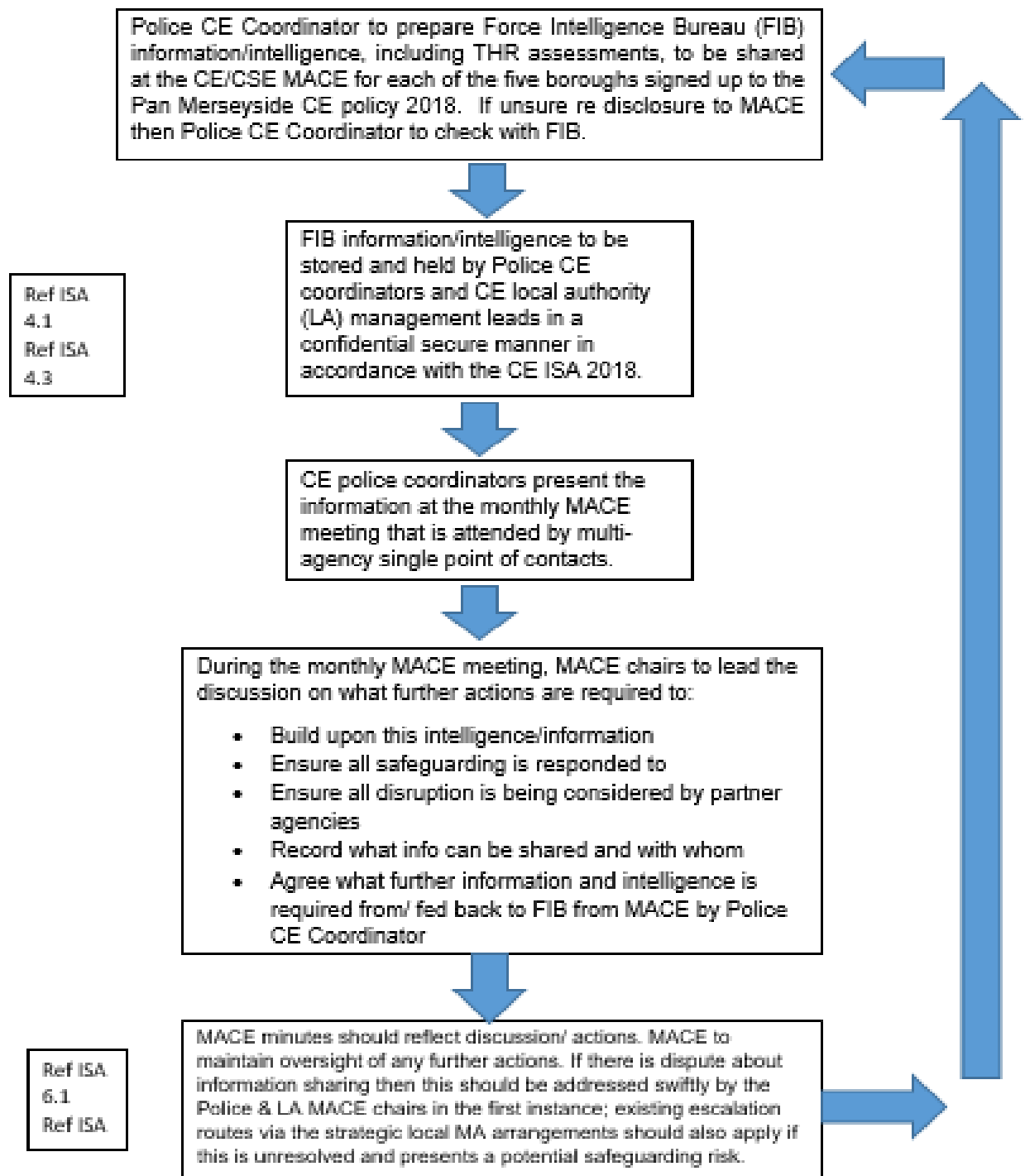
Wirral

[Concerned about a child - Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

Flowchart of key questions for information sharing



Pathway: CE Intelligence/Information Sharing via MACE Process



This process is in accordance with the information sharing agreement (ISA) contained in the Pan Merseyside CE Policy 2018 relevant sections of the ISA are referenced above. It is the readers responsibility to ensure that they are familiar with the Pan Merseyside ISA.

Appendix E

Each of the 5 Safeguarding Partnerships across Merseyside (Liverpool, Knowsley, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral) have approved this Protocol.

This Protocol has been signed on behalf of the 5 Safeguarding Board/Partnerships Chairs and the Chief Constable of Merseyside Police.

Liverpool Safeguarding Children's Partnership	
Title: Chair Signature	Date
Wirral Safeguarding Children's Partnership	
Title:	Date:
St Helens Safeguarding Children's Partnership	
Title:	Date
Knowsley Safeguarding Children's Partnership	
Title:	Date
Sefton Safeguarding Children's Board	
Title:	Date
Merseyside Police Assistant Chief Constable	
Signature 	Date 30/08/2025

This Protocol will be reviewed every 24 months after implementation.

Appendix F – Useful Documents

NRM Guidance	National referral mechanism guidance: adult (England and Wales) - GOV.UK
NRM Referral Guidance	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-trafficking-victims-referral-and-assessment-forms
Child Exploitation Screening Tool	 10a. PAN MACCSE Assessment Tool review
Language Guide	Child Exploitation Language Guide The Children's Society
MACCSE Confidential Signing in Sheet and Minutes Template	 MACCSE CONFIDENTIAL STAT  10b. MACCSE minutes June 25.docx
Information Sharing Agreement	 INFORMATION SHARING AGREEMENT
Warning Signs	Child sexual exploitation Merseyside Police

