

**Missing and Child Exploitation (MACE) Multi Agency Process and Arrangements**

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1. **Overview.**

In every case where there is concern about a child is being vulnerable to, at risk of, or experiencing exploitation, there is the possibility that a child may have suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm. To mitigate the risk and effectively safeguard children and young people, partner agencies and services must work together to provide a robust response.

The implementation of a multi-agency MACE (Missing and Child Exploitation) Single Point of Contact within in Children’s Social Care (CSC) Front Door, will capture and respond to concerns of sexual and criminal exploitation and gang association exploitation at the earliest point, and provide a clear referral pathway for children, young people and their families to receive appropriate and timely support and intervention.

MACE will provide multi- agency oversight, and where necessary resources, whilst also developing operational and strategic understanding. Statutory safeguarding responsibilities will be addressed in accordance with The Children Act; the MACE process will provide an extra layer of coordinated multi agency oversight to complement existing safeguarding procedures.

1. **Aims and Objectives.**

Children and young people who are vulnerable to, or experience exploitation, receive a coordinated and timely child-centred response and approach from all professionals, with the risks and strengths from within the family and wider community being fully considered and effectively assessed within a contextualised safeguarding framework. That they and their families are able to access a wide range of services, at the right time, to help reduce risk, and increase safety, and that the impact of multi-agency intervention is monitored and evaluated to ensure that they are making a positive difference.

The experiences and prevalence of exploitation is understood, aiding effective multi-agency action and the appropriate targeting of resources, and knowledge and learning is widely shared to support staff to be confident in reporting concerns and enable them to respond appropriately, avoiding the criminalisation of children and helping the successful identification and prosecution of perpetrators.

Communities are informed and empowered to recognise and report situations of exploitation, helping to create an unacceptable environment and opportunities for those who seek to exploit, abuse and harm.

**How will we know outcomes are being achieved? How will measures provide clear indicators of progress against the objectives?**

* Referrals /reports of concern should increase with improved awareness and information sharing. The overall ambition would be to reduce exploitative behaviour and eventually the number of vulnerable children, however, eradication of risk and vulnerability would be an unrealistic expectation. Therefore an increase in reporting of vulnerability with a decrease in children and young people identified as at risk or experiencing exploitation, would be a direction that can be measured.
* Concerns shared where intervention and support is assessed not to be required or necessary would indicate a lack of staff awareness and understanding. Therefore a greater proportion of referrals /notifications that require multi-agency intervention would provide reassurance that professionals /practitioners are effectively identifying children and young people at risk.
* Evaluation of multi-agency support and intervention will indicate if services are making a positive difference, with risk and vulnerability assessed to have reduced.

* An increase in the number of timely and successful perpetrator disruptions and criminal justice outcomes

1. **Participation – Single Point of Contact.**

To achieve a successful multi-agency Single Point of Contact, consistent contribution will be required from partner agencies and therefore the list of primary responders should not be regarded as exhaustive.

At a minimum, contribution will be required from:

* Social Care.
* Safer Kirklees.
* West Yorkshire Police.
* Health (Reflective representation across services).
* Youth Offending Team.
* Education.

Non statutory and third sector organisations have a significant contribution to offer, to help achieve the stated aim and objectives

1. **Single Point of Contact**

The purpose of the Single Point of Contact is:

***To ensure all exploitation and missing children concerns are shared, reviewed and actioned through a multi-agency forum with a focus on delivering consistent, meaningful and child centred interventions and support, designed to reduce the risk and ensure the effective safeguarding of children and young people.***

The purpose must be a reference throughout the process planning and within each and every decision made in respect of a child or young person.

Every professional contact /notification shared via the Single Point of Contact pathway will imply that a risk to the child or young person has been identified. Therefore all contacts /notifications will be captured on a single central database within Children’s Social Care to allow for timely and consistent multi-agency assessment of risk and need, and the allocation of appropriate services.

1. **Principals of the Process.**
* Reporting of a concern.
* Screening / Evaluation. Determination of information received /shared.
* Action / Strategy – Multi agency meeting.
* Implementation of Strategy / Action.
* Review and Evaluation of Strategy / Action.
	1. **Reporting of concern.**

All professionals /practitioners should be encouraged to report concerns of risk associated with missing and /or a child or young person’s vulnerability of exploitation, whether sexual or criminal. There will be sufficient tolerance incorporated into the referral pathway to allow for practitioner understanding and confidence and to fully explore the information /concern shared.

The aim will be to achieve consistency of response; this can achieved and measured through articulate feedback and learning and development opportunities, in conjunction with experience and familiarity of the process.

Upon receipt of a contact via the Single Point of Contact, any immediate risk identified will be shared with the appropriate agency to allow for timely and effective action. Concerns relating to the exploitation of a child or young person may however not be the only issue being reported and may not be the most concerning or urgent aspect of the contact. By capturing the contact and all the attributing concerns, professional’s within at the CSC Front Door will be in a position to respond to any immediate or urgent safeguarding issues, whilst also ensuring a clear accurate reporting process for the exploitation concerns to captured and addressed.

* 1. **Screening / Evaluation of report.**

Each report of a child exploitation / missing concern will be screened to effectively identify risk, determine a clear pathway to safeguard the child or young person and mitigate the risk of exploitative behaviour. There will be a collective agreement that every concern shared will receive positive action and the term ‘No further Action’ will not be considered as an option.

It will be paramount that those screening the contacts explore the concern with professional curiosity. It may that after a screening conversation the assessed level of risk and vulnerability is assessed not to require escalation to a multi-agency meeting. The minimum outcome will be signposting to appropriate agencies and /or advice to report any additional indicators signs that suggest a change an escalation of risk. A consistent approach to screening will ensure that screening is effective and inclusive across the Partnership. Outcomes and advice / feedback to referrer will be recorded

The recording of each child exploitation /missing from home or care contact will be captured on the CSC electronic database as either a contact or referral, as will the actions agreed.

* 1. **Outcomes from Screening**

Where the risk is identified to be of significant concern and multi-agency coordination required, the case will be referred to a multi-agency meeting MACE meeting (Missing and Child Exploitation).Where the risks to a child /young person are considered sufficiently low and suitable for single agency intervention, the case management and coordination will remain with the lead agency.

Where a child /young person is assessed to be at significant risk but the coordination of multi-agency intervention and support is managed effectively through alternate processes /procedures (CP /CLA), the case will be reviewed and if it is identified that intervention and support is effective, there will be no requirement for additional multi-agency MACE meeting oversight, however the risk to the child will remain monitored through the coordination process.

**Should circumstances change or additional concerning information comes to light, these should be shared using the referral pathway to the CSC Front Door.**

1. **Multi-agency / MACE (Missing and Child Exploitation) meetings.**

Participation of agreed partners together with other relevant professionals specific to the child will be required to attend the meetings to achieve effective information sharing, and agree a robust multi-agency intervention and support action plan. Agreed actions will seek to complement any other work being undertaken with the child /young person and their family and mitigate risk.

1. **Oversight, review and evaluation**

The role of the MACE meeting chairperson will be to deliver an independent oversight of the meeting and agreed strategy /actions, ensure transparency, monitor and review progress.

A MACE meeting action plan review date will be identified and the actions previously agreed will be reported on and evaluated.

Closure of a case at a MACE meeting will only occur once a review meeting has sufficiently satisfied itself that the level of risk to the child /young person can be maintained /further reduced, without the requirement of multi-agency coordination, or when the strategy in place is fully implemented and functioning without the necessity to review within a MACE multi-agency meeting.

Before the meeting agrees that a case can be closed, consideration will be given to all the circumstances and whether the support and intervention in place is realistic, proportionate and making a positive difference. This should be referenced through the following questions

* **Would a MACE meeting add further value?**
* **Are agencies supporting the child /young person and their family effectively working together to reduce risk and vulnerability?**
* **Can the case be effectively managed outside of the MACE process?**

If it is agreed that no further value can be added through additional meetings and the action plan in place is robust and sufficiently coordinated, the case will be held dormant until such time that any further concerns are uncovered, or the risk is escalated to require greater multi-agency intervention.

1. **Role of the CSC Duty and Advice Team**

All concerns relating to child exploitation shared with the **Duty and Advice team within the CSC Front Door** for immediate consideration and evaluation which lead to an assessment of a risk of exploitation, will require a notification into the MACE process. This should not delay or alter any other work to be undertaken in relation to the concerns reported, nor should it detract from statutory processes.

**The MACE process will complement statutory procedures and intervention to provide additional multi-agency oversight to exploitation and /or missing from home or care cases.**

1. **Mechanics of the Single Point of Contact /MACE process.**

Any Duty and Advice contact relating to child exploitation will be shared with the Risk and Vulnerabilities team through an agreed process.

The management and oversight of MACE meetings will be coordinated by the nominated worker in the Risk and Vulnerabilities team. They will review the information received to ensure all required information is available, to enable an informed decision at screening. All actions and advice that are agreed at MACE screening will be recorded by the Risk and Vulnerability team on a central database and the nominated worker will retain oversight and coordination of the case within the MACE process, until the case is closed.

If the screening process identifies the risk to the child requires multi agency oversight via a MACE meeting, meetings will be arranged to enable the lead agency professional to attend at a nominated time, to discuss their specific case.

The frequency of MACE meetings will be determined by demand. Initially they will be timetabled to occur every four weeks. Meetings are expected to last a full day with an ambition to discuss new nominations in the morning and review existing cases in the afternoon.

1. **Case conclusion.**

The risk to a child /young person will continued to be discussed at MACE meetings whilst it is deemed necessary to ensure effective multi-agency management of exploitation risk and vulnerability. However, where alternate processes are in place / identified which are recognised as a suitable alternative to effectively support a child /young person, the meeting may agree to remove oversight of the case from the MACE process. In such circumstances the case will remain open to the MACE process, and if risk /vulnerability is identified to have increased the case will be discussed with the child’s Lead Professional, and a decision made as to whether the case would benefit from further oversight and support from the multi-agency meetings.

1. **Additional MACE meetings.**

Where a case is regarded to be highly complex and such complexities would make a multi-agency discussion impractical within the monthly meeting, or urgency demands timely oversight and action, a specific case meeting will be arranged; all professionals involved with the child /young person and their family will be invited.

1. **Coordination of MACE meetings.**

The coordination of meetings will sit with the identified worker in the Risk and Vulnerabilities team. They will:

* Have oversight of all notifications received and shared by the Duty and Advice team.
* Have oversight of all referrals received from CSC
* Review and collate case information for consideration at screening
* Liaise with and feedback to the referring professional /agency
* Follow up any required additional information and oversee the organisation of MACE meetings including;
* Distributing referrals for each meeting with partner agency representatives and collating information received into a summary report for each individual child.
* Liaising with lead professionals and partner agencies
* Constructing a meeting agenda and time table
* Distributing agreed actions with individual agency representatives.
* Recording agreed actions for each child; tracking of outcomes / reduced
* Maintenance of a central MACE database
* Development of MACE processes, policy and procedures.
* Preparation of reports for Senior Managers / KSCP
* Sharing of information, as agreed by the chair of the MACE.
1. **Resolution of Professional Disagreements.**

It is both expected and healthy for partners to have open and honest conversations, provide challenge and offer differing views; the Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board has an Escalation process that will be utilised to achieve resolution regarding professional disagreements in the MACE process. (KSCP Escalation Process)

1. **Missing and Child Exploitation Process and Terms of Reference.**
2. **Aim**

The aim of the MACE process is to provide a coordinated and effective multi-agency operational response to missing children and child exploitation across Kirklees.

. The process will cover:

* Referral coordination.
* Action management.
* Multi-Agency meetings.
* Development of strategies
* Review management.
1. **Objectives**

The process will meet the above by working towards the following objectives:

* Identifying children / young people in Kirklees who are at risk from missing and /or child exploitation and ensuring that children/young people are referred into and supported by appropriate services.
* Identifying individuals responsible for the exploitation of children and any links and networks between individuals.
* Address the risks associated with victims, perpetrators and locations, by proactive problem solving.
* Identifying harmful contexts and working in partnership to reduce risk and create safe spaces for children and young people

The MACE process will achieve its objectives by:

* Tasking multi agency meeting representatives with specific actions to achieve the overall aim of the MACE process.
* Reviewing the multi-agency response to children, young people, families and locations of concern, to ensure that existing and appropriate actions and processes are in place.
* Ensuring cases of missing children and /or suspected or actual child exploitation are well- managed and effectively coordinated and that all possible actions have been taken in order to protect the child /young person and identify, disrupt and prosecute perpetrators.
* Ensuring agencies share information appropriately, to protect children and young people.
1. **Core Responsibilities**

The core responsibilities of MACE meetings are to:

* Ensure that cases of suspected or actual child exploitation are well-managed and coordinated, and that all possible action is taken to protect a child /young person.

* Recommend and review multi-agency action planning, to ensure that children /young people are supported appropriately and protected from harm, and delegated actions are undertaken.
* Ensure that intelligence relating to patterns of child exploitation are identified and coordinated multi-agency action is taken where necessary. This will include the sharing of intelligence relating to individual children and young people, suspected perpetrators, and /or groups of suspected perpetrators, and locations of concern.
* Identify possible links between victims and perpetrators, with the purpose of diverting, disrupting and prosecuting perpetrators.
* The MACE process will identify suspects, locations of concern, links and networks between children, young people and individuals who pose a risk to children.

The meetings **will not duplicate or replace** the functions of statutory child protection processes.

1. **Membership**

Appointments to the MACE process / Multi-Agency meeting shall be made by the KSCP Exploitation Safeguarding Strategic Group. Membership shall be reviewed on an annual basis.

* Members will be expected to have decision making responsibility in relation to missing children and child exploitation for their organisation.
* Attendance will be recorded formally through meeting minutes.
* Members are expected to make every effort to attend all meetings, or send a deputy.
* Members will be expected to share information and expertise to inform decision- making.
* Members are expected disseminate information appropriately within their agency.

Attendance at Missing and Child Exploitation meetings is required from:

* Children’s Social Care
* Youth Offending Team
* Police
* Safer Kirklees
* Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing
* Kirklees Public Protection /Licensing and Environment
* Early Support
* Adult Social Care
* Probation and Community Rehabilitation Company/Companies
* Health representatives to be agreed within Health Advisory Group.
* Education

The expectation is that members will attend routinely and progress actions required of their organisation /agency/service, irrespective of whether they are in attendance or not. Deputies should attend if a member is not available.

1. **Business Conduct**

Meetings will:

* Be organised and chaired by Children’s Services, the deputy chair will be nominated from West Yorkshire Police
* Be held monthly
* Be accurately recorded, with the minutes shared in a timely manner.
* Start and end on time as agreed
* Ensure that agreed actions allocated to named agency /attendee are reviewed.
* Share information in accordance with current guidance
* Ensure discussions are succinct, purposeful and only address information relevant to achieve the purpose of the meeting.

Agency representatives will undertake to:

* Attend meetings or provide a deputy
* Be prepared with up to date information;
* Accept and complete agreed actions within agreed timescales
* Report to the meeting on actions and outcomes.
* Provide feedback to relevant professionals /services within 2 working days
* Undertake to work effectively together, identifying what is working well and resolving issues and barriers.
* Ensure intelligence relating to suspected perpetrators, contexts and locations of concern is shared and recorded, to support disruption and prevention activities.
1. **Governance Arrangements**
* The terms of reference will be reviewed annually.
* A Chair’s quarterly report will be prepared for KSCP Exploitation Operational group. The report will address areas of activity, areas of challenge, themes / trends and examples of good practice, to KSCP.
* Quoracy - Minimum attendance is required from the 3 statutory agencies; Children’s Social Care, Health and West Yorkshire Police.
* Meetings will be supported by Children’s Services Business Support

**Duty and Advice - Front Door**

**R and V Supervisors and Partners**

Concern of Exploitation recorded at Contact within Duty and Advice.

Check Consent (Not required if CP).

Notification to MACE Process

Receipt of Notification

Record and Evaluate

Consent Obtained or Dispensed

No Consent obtained nor Dispensed.

Record and Finalise (no further opportunity to develop).

Liaise with Duty and Advice to establish all information requested or obtained.

MACE COORDINATOR

**Multi agency members of MACE**

Coordinator - Monitor Actions / Outcomes. Provide advice.

Escalation of Concerns.

Daily MACE Briefing / Screening.

No MACE meeting required.

MACE meeting required.

Single Agency Interventions.

MACE Meeting

Review Meeting.

Further meetings required.

No Further meetings required.

Exploitation Risk Assessment to be completed

Decision to Progress

Gather Information

Proceed as per Duty and Advice Process Map

Yes

Is Case Open?

Notify Worker and update records

No

Report to Duty and Advice

**Annex A**