

# All Age Exploitation Strategy 2024-2027



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#### 1. Introduction

Swindon Safeguarding Partnership are committed to protecting children and adults from all types of exploitation. We recognise there is a lot to do to ensure that we deliver a consistently robust and integrated response to children and adults at risk of exploitation in Swindon.

We acknowledge that this is a fast changing and fluid landscape, however, there is a strong collective commitment to working in partnership to identify exploitation at the earliest opportunity and, where necessary, to ensure that individuals, their families and support networks access the right services at the right time.

To support this we have developed this All Age Exploitation Strategy. It outlines the partnership approach we are taking, and is aimed at professionals who are working to reduce exploitation in Swindon.

Our approach is based on guidance set out in:

Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines, February 2020 <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines</a>

## Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2023

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65cb4349a7ded0000c79e4e1/Working\_toget\_her\_to\_safeguard\_children\_2023\_-\_statutory\_guidance.pdf

#### **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024**

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66d7301b9084b18b95709f75/Keeping\_children\_safe\_in\_education\_2024.pdf

'It was hard to escape': safeguarding children at risk from criminal exploitation' – The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, 2020

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5e5e7f47e90e077e3385cb44/Safeguarding\_children\_at\_risk\_from\_criminal\_exploitation\_review.pdf

#### Research in Practice, referenced in Working Together 2023

Multi-agency Practice Principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm (researchinpractice.org.uk)

Swindon Safeguarding Partnership's ambition is to work collaboratively across Swindon to prevent exploitation.

We aim to achieve three overarching strategic outcomes:

- 1. Children and susceptible adults across the partnership are prevented from becoming victims of exploitation
- 2. Children and susceptible adults are protected from exploitation
- 3. Children and susceptible adults are not perpetrators and/or groomed to facilitate exploitation

It is essential that all partners working with children, adults and the wider public understand what exploitation is, how it differs from other forms of abuse, and when and how to respond to concerns.

## 2. What is Exploitation

The Home Office 2018 defines exploitation as:

An individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child, young person or adult and exploits them:

- a) Through violence or the threat of violence, and/or
- b) For financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or
- c) In exchange for something the victim needs or wants
- d) Can also occur through use of technology

## Types of Exploitation

- Criminal Exploitation
- Sexual Exploitation
- Modern Slavery/Human Trafficking

#### How does it affect children and adults?

- Can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years;
- can affect any adult over the age of 18 years;
- can still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual;
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and is can be accompanied by violence or threats of violence;
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, children or adults from any ethnic background or socio-economic group and:
- Is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

Victims of exploitation may lack the capacity to consent and can be threatened or coerced. Awareness and use of the Mental Capacity Act (2005) to protect and support children aged 16 + and adults is essential. The impact of grooming, coercion and control on mental health and capacity can be a factor.

The diagrams below sets out the different types of exploitation, and how Swindon Safeguarding Partnership will approach this.



1. This will be the focus of the Swindon All Age Strategic Exploitation Group — looking at these areas through a strategic lens

1 - Exploitation

Sexual Exploitation

Criminal Exploiation

Modern Slavery/Human Trafficking

2. Processes already established across the Partnership

Domestic Abuse, Honor Based Abuse, Forced Marriage, Female Genital Mutilation

Rouge Traders, Bogus Callers & Scammers

Abuse of Position of Trust

2. These are specific established processes and pathways already in place, such as MARAC, Channel, DA & VAWG etc.

3. Risks are primarily managed through statutory safeguarding procedures.

Hate Crime
Organisational Abuse
Financial Abuse
Neglect/Acts of Omission

Emotional/Psychological Abuse

3 - Wider Abuse-

## 3. National Picture

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM), the framework for identifying victims of human trafficking or modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support,

- There were 16,938 potential victims of modern slavery referred to the Home Office in 2022, representing a 33% increase compared to the preceding year (12,706) and the highest annual number since the NRM began in 2009.
- The large increase in referrals from government agency first responders has driven this increase which could be linked to the increase in detections at the border and, particularly, the large increase in small boats arrivals.
- Around three-quarters of referrals (77%; 13,004) were sent to the Single Competent Authority (SCA) for consideration and the rest (23%; 3,934) were sent to the Immigration Enforcement Competent Authority (IECA).
- Albanian nationals overtook UK nationals as the most commonly referred nationality in 2022, with Eritrean nationals being the third most referred.
- The competent authorities issued the highest number of reasonable and conclusive grounds decisions in 2022, with almost 17,000 reasonable grounds and just over 6,000 conclusive grounds decisions made; of these, 88% of reasonable grounds and 89% of conclusive grounds decisions were positive.
- The Home Office received 4,580 reports of adult potential victims via the DtN process, the highest annual number since the DtN began.

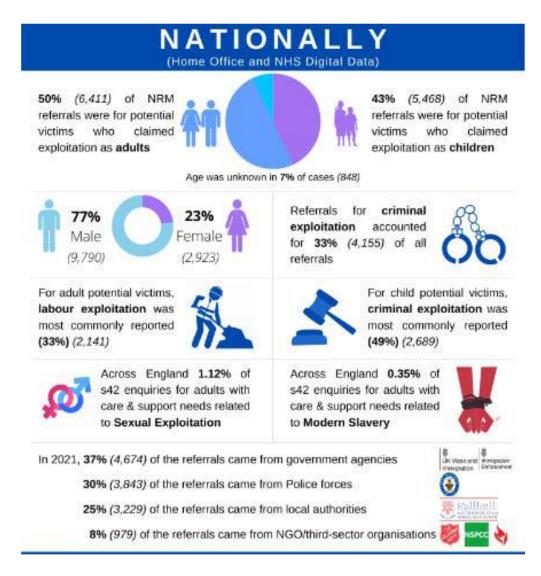
<u>Modern-slavery-national-referral-mechanism-and-duty-to-notify-statistics-uk-end-of-year-summary-2022</u>

Analysis of police-recorded crime data reveals the number of child sexual exploitation crimes has increased by 10% 2021/22.

During 2021/22 in England and Wales there were 17,486 crimes logged by police where children had been sexually exploited – an average of 48 offences a day. Over the last year, NSPCC helpline has heard from thousands of young people about sexual exploitation with some being manipulated into performing sexual activities after being given money, drugs or love and affection. Others have been sexually exploited after being trafficked from their home after being threatened with violence or the promise of a better life elsewhere.

The number of Childline counselling sessions on sexual exploitation and abuse has increased from 5,962 to 6,230 this year (April 2021 - March 2022).

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/about-us/news-opinion/2022/child-sexual-exploitation-crimes-up-10-in-the-last-year/



#### Adultification

'The concept of adultification is when notions of innocence and vulnerability are not afforded to certain children. This is determined by people and institutions who hold power over them. When adultification occurs outside of the home it is always founded within discrimination and bias.

There are various definitions of adultification, all relate to a child's personal characteristics, socio-economic influences and/or lived experiences. Regardless of the context in which adultification take place, the impact results in children's rights being either diminished or not upheld.' Davis and Marsh (2020)

Key considerations are as follows:

- Black children are more likely to experience adultification bias.
- Racism is the core issue influencing the adultification of Black children.
- Black children are more likely to be met with suspicion, assumed deviance and culpability.
- Adultification reduces professional and organisational responsibility to safeguard and protect children, yet increases a responsibilisation of children to safeguard themselves.

Adultification bias is a breach of child safeguarding legislation and guidance.

(Jahnine Davis, Adultification bias within child protection and safeguarding, 2022)

Child Q https://chscp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Child-Q-PUBLISHED-14-March-22.pdf

## 4. Exploitation in Swindon

## **Adult Exploitation**

In 2022/2023, adult social care received 2127 safeguarding concerns, of which 199 related to financial abuse concerns, 5 related to modern slavery and 10 safeguarding concerns were in regard to sexual exploitation. In 2022, there were 296 reported missing episodes for adults and 292 in 2023.

A thematic review of financial exploitation was completed from SAR Alison in 2022.

https://safeguardingpartnership.swindon.gov.uk/downloads/file/1175/a\_thematic\_review\_of\_f inancial\_exploitationcoercion\_from\_sar\_alison\_authored\_by\_nicola\_sawyer

SAR Sally published in September 2024 focused on exploitation, in particular cuckooing. The report highlighted that in Swindon we need to gain clearer data on where a person is experiencing cuckooing. Cuckooing is a practice where people take over a person's home and use the property to facilitate exploitation. It takes the name from cuckoos who take over the nests of other birds. There are different types of cuckooing; but the most common form of cuckooing is where drug dealers take over a person's home and use it to store or distribute drugs.

https://safeguardingpartnership.swindon.gov.uk/downloads/file/1439/sar sally final report

#### **The Nelson Trust**

The Nelson Trust is dedicated to supporting women and young girls involved in or at risk of sexual or criminal exploitation. These cohorts of women are particularly vulnerable and face significant socioeconomic challenges as well as multiple disadvantages. The Nelson Trust approach combines holistic, trauma-informed, gender responsive support and working in collaborative partnerships to create a safer environment for these women and young girls.

The Nelson Trust key areas of support include one-to-one key working sessions tailored across nine pathways to address the needs at an individual level. These nine pathways include support with accommodation, finance, benefits and debts, education, training, and employment, children, family and relationships, domestic and sexual abuse, sex work, attitudes, thinking and behaviour, and emotional, physical and mental health which all may contribute to the risk of being exploited. Alongside this, they host a variety of psychotherapeutic, psychoeducational, and prosocial groups that address domestic abuse,

substance misuse and recovery, healthy relationships, historic trauma, and emotional wellbeing to provide safe spaces for the women to share their experiences and build a sense of community. They also offer lunch clubs that provide opportunities for social interaction and access to resources such as counselling, art and creative writing. Drop-in sessions are also facilitated in and outside of the usual working hours to break down the barriers to accessing services by working around work and school hours and bridge the gap to other services that can address issues such as exploitation.

The Nelson Trust outreach programs prioritise creating a safe and compassionate environment for women, many of whom may initially be hesitant to engage with services. By establishing trust and demonstrating consistent support, women are encouraged to seek help and access available resources.

The Nelson Trust facilitate two weekly evening outreaches with the goal of supporting women in the night time economy who may be on or off-street sex working in order to offer harm reduction, sexual health and safety advice, wellbeing advice and general emotional and practical support. Their partnership with Wiltshire Police continues to enhance community safety alongside participation in operations aimed at tackling sexual and criminal exploitation and drug-related crimes. Their involvement includes sharing intelligence with the police about safety concerns around suspicious vehicles and individuals to support with a broader understanding of the current community issues. The Nelson Trust participate in forums such as the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and Adult Sexual Exploitation Panel (ASEP) and attend Swindon and Wiltshire custodies daily to ensure effective communication and intervention strategies.

The Nelson Trust actively contribute to policy discussions and guidelines affecting women who are currently or at risk of being exploited. By engaging with diverse stakeholders, including the police and local authorities, they aim to ensure that the voices of these women and young girls are heard and considered in policy formation.

Many women and young girls who utilise The Nelson Trust services express that the support they receive from is crucial for their safety and well-being. By offering emotional and practical support, they are empowered to navigate their circumstances and provide choices that allows for them to make informed decisions about their lives.

#### **MAPPA**

Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) is a mechanism for co-ordinated management of perpetrators of serious harm in regards to safeguarding in its many form. MAPPA can be extremely effective at convening meetings and holding agencies to account when managing the harm causers and therefore a direct response to safeguarding.

## **Children's Exploitation**

During 2023/24, the majority of children who were identified as being exploited in Swindon were aged between 13 and 16, peaking at 15.

- 77% had identified mental health concerns in the last 6 months, which was primarily self-harm and suicidal concerns.
- 55% had SEND/neurodiversity-related concerns.
- 64% were female and 36% were male
- 68% are White North European, 9% Black, and 23% unrecorded
- There are high correlations with vulnerability to exploitation in Swindon and poor education attendance, approximately 40% had poor school attendance and 31% were NEET
- Being a suspect in a crime was a trend in those children being most vulnerable to exploitation with 31% being the suspect of serious or sexual violence, 18% being the suspect of possession of a drug with intent to supply, 50% being the suspect of other offences, and additionally 23% have recent intelligence around firearms and/or bladed articles
- 59% had shown suicidal ideation or self-harming behaviours in the last 6 months
- 45% had demonstrated sexualised risk taking behaviours
- 45% had confirmed associates who are or have been exploited
- 3% had identified alcohol or substance misuse

The data, and in particular the gender breakdown may be indicative of the recognised need to improve identification of boys at risk of exploitation and identification of both boys and girls who are at risk of criminal exploitation.

## 5. Safeguarding Approach to Exploitation in Swindon

#### Approach to Harm outside the Home for Children

For children, services in Swindon are delivered based on assessments of need at different levels. These services are Universal Services, which are available to everyone. Targeted & Intensive Support, for individuals and families who require additional services to ensure lower level needs and risks are managed, and Specialist and Statutory Services for individuals with the most significant and complex needs, including the need to be protected from harm.

We know that some children experience abuse and exploitation outside the home. This is often referred to as "extra-familial harm" or "child exploitation". Harm can occur in a range of extra-familial contexts, including school and other educational settings, peer groups, or within community/public spaces, and/or online. Children may experience this type of harm from other children and/or from adults. Forms of extra-familial harm include exploitation by criminal and organised crime groups and individuals (such as county lines and financial exploitation), serious violence, modern slavery and trafficking, online harm, sexual exploitation, teenage

relationship abuse, and the influences of extremism, which could lead to radicalisation. Children of all ages can experience extra-familial harm.

Where there are concerns that a child is experiencing extra-familial harm, practitioners should consider all the needs and vulnerabilities of the child. Some children will have vulnerabilities that can be exploited by others and will require support appropriate to their needs to minimise the potential for exploitation. All children, including those who may be causing harm to others, should receive a safeguarding response first, and practitioners should work with them to understand their experiences and what will reduce the likelihood of harm to themselves and others.

Practitioners will need to build an understanding of the context in which the harm is occurring and draw on relevant knowledge and information from the children and wider partners in order to decide on the most appropriate interventions. Practitioners should consider the influence of groups or individuals perpetrating harm, including where this takes place online, and identify patterns of harm, risk and protective factors in these contexts. (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023)

In Swindon, we recognise that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers can have limited influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent/carer-child relationships. Therefore, our Family Safeguarding model together with our Trusted Relationship approach utilising trauma informed, restorative and child first practice enables us to understand, and respond to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families.

Thankfully, we know that most young people live positive lives and are not at risk of experiencing harm outside the home. However, there are a small number of young people who are at risk of experiencing harm outside the home, and this can have a significant impact on the families, communities, as well as themselves.

Historically different forms of exploitation have had different approaches and responses however this procedure recognises that whilst there are different forms of exploitation, there exists a child who is at risk of and/or experiencing harm outside the home. Therefore, we take a holistic view of harm outside the home whilst recognising that it can occur through different forms and often occurs in amongst other vulnerabilities that children and young people may be exposed to.

Our definition of "Harm outside the Home" encompasses:

- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Child Criminal Exploitation, including exploitation by organised crime groups and individuals (such as county lines and financial exploitation)
- Modern Slavery and trafficking
- Children who are reported missing with indicators of other harm outside the home
- Teenage relationship abuse
- Potentially Harmful Sexual Behaviour
- The influences of extremism leading to radicalisation

Risks of becoming a victim or perpetrator of serious youth violence

The contexts in which harm outside the home take place include:

- Online and in the digital world
- Amongst peer groups
- Within schools and places of learning
- Within and between neighbourhoods and borough boundaries
- On and around public transport
- Wider community settings where young people live their lives.

Harm outside the home in the wider definition involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them completing a task on behalf of another individual or group of individuals; this is often of a criminal or sexual nature.

Harm outside the home often occurs without the child's immediate recognition, with the child believing that they are in control of the situation. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion, and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social, economic or emotional vulnerability. Further, the nature of life in the 21st Century is that online and offline domains are no longer two distinct and separate areas. The relationship between the two is now fluid and interchangeable and as such we need to be able to recognise and respond to harm online and offline.

In Swindon the Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework (CERAF) is a child exploitation risk assessment tool used when there are concerns about harm outside the home which utilises indicators as well as professional judgement.

#### Assessment of Risk:

**Emerging** – Child has vulnerabilities with **emerging** concerns and no evidence of risk or current harm outside the home over and above peer group

On the cusp of experiencing — Child is on the cusp of experiencing harm outside the home

**Experiencing** — Child is **experiencing** harm outside the home or has already experienced harm outside the home and is at risk of experiencing further abuse

## **Emerging**

Access to universal services and early intervention for the child (Level 2 Right Help at the Right Time).

Consultation with Opal Navigator as to whether discussion is required at MACE. If required, Opal Navigator will support Lead professional with completion of My Safety Plan. My Safety Plan – Young Person's version will be completed by the Lead Professional / Social Worker

## On the Cusp of Experiencing

If child is not already open to Childrens Social Care, referral to be made to Contact Swindon, ensure a copy of the CERAF is shared (Level 3 <u>Right Help at the Right Time</u>). Consultation with Opal Navigator to progress to MACE pathway and Opal Allocation. Share information/concerns with the Police using the Police Intel Sharing Form

## **Experiencing**

In the event that the child is in danger or you need an immediate police response, call 999.

If child is not already open to Childrens Social Care, referral to be made to Contact Swindon, ensure a copy of the CERAF is shared (Level 4 Right Help at the Right Time).

Consultation with Opal Navigator to progress to MACE pathway and Opal Allocation and NRM pathway. Consider whether threshold is met for a strategy discussion. Share information/concerns with the Police using the Police Intel Sharing Form

Where there are concerns that there are emerging concerns for harm outside the home or that a child is on the cusp of experiencing or experiencing harm outside the home the child will be discussed at the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) meeting. In addition, the MACE meeting will consider places, spaces, known associates including adults and hot spots and can recommend disruption activity.

Swindon has an established bi-monthly Multi-agency Risk Panel (MARP), chaired by the DCS to ensure a clear strategic approach to harm outside the home for children. The MARP ensure better identification and early intervention for our children who are at risk of harm outside the home.

For those children where there are vulnerabilities with emerging concerns Swindon has an early intervention offer to identify a 'Trusted Relationship" to prevent harm outside the home, including services provided through the community and voluntary sector.

Within Swindon we have implemented Opal a specialist team to respond to children who are at risk of or experiencing harm outside the home, including referrals to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). The National Referral Mechanism is the UK's framework to identify potential victims of modern slavery/human trafficking and ensure they are receiving support.

Opal utilises the Family Safeguarding model alongside Trusted Relationships and Restorative and Child First Practice to engage and protect children who are at risk or experiencing harm outside the home. With the ambition to foster positive, persistent and long-term relationships and develop protective factors that build resilience in children.

Opal will empower young people to build and restore positive and trusted relationships and support active engagement and participation, ensuring the voice of the child or young person is embedded in the work we undertake. We will deliver our work where and when young people and families need them, being flexible in our service delivery. A 'Trusted Relationship' will be identified for each child and will help to build resilience, self-esteem and self-efficacy.

## Wiltshire Police Missing and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Team

Wiltshire Police Missing and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) team is a proactive unit of investigators and support staff dedicated to conducting intelligence-led investigations into child sexual exploitation and locating high-risk missing children. This specialised team provides focused resources and expertise, to protect vulnerable children from harm and enhance prosecution rates by identifying perpetrators of CSE.

The team leads proactive, intelligence-driven investigations into child sexual exploitation and high-risk missing children. With specialised training, they protect vulnerable children by targeting perpetrators, increasing prosecutions, and disrupting organised crime groups.

By developing intelligence leads, the team conduct targeted operations, prosecute offenders, and support victims throughout the justice process. Their expertise, along with collaboration with local authorities, agencies, and voluntary groups, will ensure effective investigation and victim support.

#### **Wiltshire Police Integrated Gangs Team**

The Integrated Gangs Team work in partnership to support those involved in group offending and serious youth violence or those on the periphery of gangs by way of prevention, diversion and, where necessary, enforcement. The team will be embedded with partner agencies to create a one-team approach. The force will maximise existing partnership opportunities linked to the Youth Endowment Fund and Serious Violence Duty. The team will be based within the Neighbourhood Harm Reduction Unit.

The aims of the team are:

- To work with the intelligence teams to identify and map those involved or on the periphery of gang activity.
- To prevent violence by diverting at-risk individuals from becoming victims or perpetrators.
- To proactively engage with gang-members and their families to support them to leave the 'gang' lifestyle.
- Where necessary provide disruption activity against those committing violent crimes co-ordinating enforcement activity with Local Police Tasking Team.

The teams work will include, but is not limited to:

## Partnership work

- Maintain effective working relationships with YJS, schools and other key partners
- Attend partnership meetings ensuring two-way communication
- Share information and intelligence effectively
- Co-locate where possible as part of an integrated team

## **Investigate Child Criminal Exploitation**

- Identify and control risk to safeguard vulnerable individuals
- Identify, investigate, and arrest suspects committing CCE

#### Intelligence development.

- Support intel with their work to map those involved in Serious Youth Violence
- Obtain intelligence on gangs through partnership work with the local council
- Carry out home visits to gang members and their families
- Identify county lines

## Disrupt high-harm gangs

- Attend court to obtain Criminal Behaviour Orders and other judicial restrictions
- · Record disruptions

#### **Support Proactive teams with operations**

Includes all aspects of overt tactics such as the execution of warrants

#### **Trauma Informed Practice**

Swindon Safeguarding Partnership will use trauma-informed practice to increase professional's awareness of how trauma can negatively impact on individuals and make them more susceptible to being exploited. Trauma can impact an individual's ability to feel safe or to develop trusting relationships with professionals.

We will ensure that we are working with individuals in collaboration and partnership to empower them to make positive choices working with the six key principles of trauma informed practice.

Working-definition-of-trauma-informed-practice/working-definition-of-trauma-informed-practice#key-principles-of-trauma-informed-practice (.gov.uk November 2022)

## **Strengths Based Approach to Practice**

Swindon Safeguarding Partnership will use strength-based approaches when working with individuals. This approach operates on the assumption that all people, even if they are experiencing difficulties, have some strengths, abilities and resources, which they can use to make positive change.

## **Transitional Safeguarding**

Swindon Safeguarding Partnership recognise that young people experiencing, or who have experienced abuse or harm from being exploited may often require ongoing support beyond the age of 18, as harm and its effects do not stop at this age. This may be because exploitation continues into adulthood or because they need support to recover from the impact of being exploited. Children's and Adult Social Care and children's and adults services need to work in collaboration to ensure there are robust handovers in services to prevent young people from 'slipping through the net'.

Where a young person under the age of 18 has been referred to the transitions team with adult social care and there are safeguarding concerns, the allocated social worker will attend all safeguarding meetings and support in the planning to minimise the risks ready for when the young person turns 18 and transfers to adult social care. They will work with any relevant professionals involved in supporting the young person and where required, make referrals to appropriate agencies. The request would be for these agencies to attend safeguarding meetings. If there continue to be concerns once the young person turns 18, then a referral would be made to the adult safeguarding team.



## **Priority 1 - Prepare**

 Prepare for dealing with incidents of exploitation as a partnership to support any identified victims, prosecute any identified perpetrators and mitigate the impact on the community.

## Priority 2 – Prevention

- Improve awareness, understanding and early recognition of exploitation across the Partnership.
- The Partnership has a clear understanding of exploitation.
- The Partnership is better able to recognise exploitation and the importance of early intervention, and practitioners are confident enough to respond promptly and effectively to address underlying factors.
- Members of the community are better equipped to recognise exploitation in all its forms and how to report it.
- Ensure the workforce (including public, independent, and community voluntary sector) receives appropriate learning and development opportunities relevant to their role.
- Commissioned service providers ensure their workforce is able to recognise exploitation and respond to it.
- Good quality data is available to inform problem solving. Agencies regularly problemprofile their local area to analyse and understand all the patterns of exploitation to which children and adults are subject to.

## **Priority 3 – Protection**

- Improve individuals and communities resilience to tackle and reduce exploitation and the interventions to tackle exploitation.
- Effective, multi-disciplinary procedures, tools and pathways are embedded and reviewed over time to ensure effectiveness.
- Assessments and response to include consideration of the context in which exploitation takes place.
- Child protection plans and safeguarding plans are effective and kept under review.
- Support is made available in a timely manner to victims in their recovery.
- Language Matters appropriate terminology is used when discussing individuals who have been exploited, or are at risk of exploitation.
- Professionals challenge each other and escalate as appropriate when there are professional differences of opinion and look to understand the importance of understanding and sharing risk across the Partnership.

## **Priority 4 - Partnership and Leadership**

Secure a collective commitment to tackle exploitation across the partnership and demonstrate effective leadership in driving forward changes required

- Early identification and the effective response to exploitation is a priority across all organisations, both statutory and non-statutory.
- Develop a multi-agency strategy to support the delivery of an effective range of interventions to tackle exploitation.
- Promote a clear local partnership response to exploitation that takes a strength based approach.
- Leaders drive the importance of sharing information appropriately in order to tackle exploitation effectively.
- Leaders invest in the development and support of staff, including provision of regular supervision and the opportunities for them to reflect on practice. Those professionals who offer direct support to exploited children and adults might require further intensive training that is regular and reflective of the rapid changes in exploitation tactics. They must have regular opportunities to reflect on their practice with a skilled consultant or supervisor.

## **Priority 5 – Pursue**

- Improve prosecutions and disruption of individuals and groups responsible for exploitation.
- Effective arrangements to identify, disrupt and increase arrests and prosecution of
  offenders involved in crimes associated with all forms of exploitation and the effective
  management of those in medium-high risk offending and deter those involved in lower
  level criminology are in place.
- Development of regional and local profiles.
- Deterring potential offenders through increased awareness and reducing opportunities.

## 7. Delivering the Strategy

Our approach to addressing exploitation is structured into six key areas, each playing a critical role in a comprehensive, resilient, and responsive strategy. These sections—Early Intervention and Prevention, Assurance, Disruption, Raising Public Knowledge, Support and Intervention, and Workforce Development, work in unison to protect vulnerable individuals, deter exploitative activity, and promote a safe community environment.

#### 1. Early Intervention and Prevention

This section focuses on identifying risk factors and implementing proactive measures to prevent exploitation before it occurs. We aim to engage with communities, build resilience, and ensure that at-risk individuals have access to supportive services.

#### Actions:

- We will provide real-time targeted support for adults who are at risk of being exploited
- We will identify adults who are at risk of being exploited and provide an improved multi-agency response that reduces the risk of harm.
- We will increase the protective factors for adults who have increased vulnerability which make them more susceptible to exploitation.
- We will ensure that adults who asked susceptible to exploitation have access to safe spaces and people.
- We will ensure that professionals see the child 1st and take a trauma informed approach.
- We will recognise and respond to trauma in childhood and adulthood
- We will identify risks to children when they are online and recognise that identity exploration may increase vulnerability.
- We will commit to Think Family practise and its impact on parenting and care responsibilities.
- We will ensure that young people are not subject to adultification.
- We will ensure that young people who are not in education employment or training (NEET) are supported into employment and we will cross check data between agencies, tracking and exploring trends.

#### 2. Assurance

Assurance ensures that all our activities in tackling exploitation are robust, measurable, and transparent. By establishing clear performance measures and continuously monitoring outcomes, we maintain accountability and build trust within the community.

#### Actions:

- We will establish a mechanism for regularly reviewing and evaluating safeguarding practises and procedures.
- We will ensure that we have developed protective factors established around modern slavery- quality assurance (modern slavery, immigration, refugee / asylum seekers, travelling communities comment sexual exploitation) and the EDI agenda.
- We will ensure that agencies have robust Persons in Position of Trust (PiPoT) frameworks / system / processes and inclusion of where this may come under the definition of exploitation.

#### 3. Disruption

The focus is on identifying, investigating, and addressing exploitative networks and practices. Activities aim to intervene with offenders directly to interrupt exploitative cycles and mitigate harm.

#### Actions:

- We will develop a contextual approach to safeguarding: identification of hotspots, collaborative action to make spaces safer, engagements of the wider community and business in solutions like Hotel Watch and Safe Places
- We will ensure that all agencies use their legal powers to disrupt crime and exploitation.

## 4. Raising Public Knowledge

Public awareness is key to preventing exploitation, empowering communities, and encouraging the reporting of concerns. This section outlines our plan for educational campaigns, community engagement, and communication strategies.

#### Actions:

- We will work with partner agencies to raise public awareness of exploitation in Swindon and ensure the public know how to report concerns.
- We will support victims' families and communities with the knowledge of what to do
  they are worried and where to get help by communicating and disseminating
  information across organisations.
- We will foster meaningful engagement with the community to raise awareness, gather feedback, and involves stakeholders (outreach events, focus groups, or advisory committees; ensuring that practise is informed by the needs and perspectives of those affected by exploitation).
- We will deliver public awareness campaigns aimed at parents, children and adolescents in collaboration with schools and other stakeholders about digital and online safety.
- We will ensure that awareness information is to be made available on the SSP website and in public areas that give bite size information.
- We will ensure there are clear referral pathways for adults with care and support needs at risk of exploitation that are understood by professionals, carers (paid and unpaid) and businesses and voluntary groups that form a vital part of the community.
- We will establish a community support network and resources, including counselling services, help clients and shelters, which provide assistance and protection to those at risk of exploitation.
- We will work with trading standards in sharing information around scams.

#### 5. Support and Intervention

This component ensures that victims and those at risk have access to timely, effective, and compassionate support services. By providing a range of interventions, we promote recovery and minimise the impact of exploitation.

#### Actions:

- We will increase our knowledge about what makes children vulnerable and which preventative interventions will be successful.
- We will ensure that adults who are being exploited are supportive and have protective factors in place to keep them safe.
- We will develop a strategic approach to repatriation when young people have been arrested and released, e.g. in relation to county lines

## **6. Workforce Development**

Effective exploitation prevention relies on a knowledgeable, skilled, and engaged workforce. This section describes our commitment to training, resources, and support for staff to recognise and respond to exploitation.

#### Actions:

- We will support our workforce to understand what constitutes exploitation and the definition of exploitation in order to be able to break the cycle. Partners across Swindon will be made aware of the All-Age Exploitation Strategy and understand the role of their organisation in delivering this strategy.
- We will update the practise framework and guidance for working with children and young people and across transitions.
- We will provide targeted training for secondary schools and further education settings
   and develop an understanding of push and pull factors. We will provide information through 7-minute briefings (written and video) about what makes children vulnerable to gang involvement and criminal exploitation and how to prevent it, targeting primary and secondary schools in the areas of highest deprivation.
- We will ensure that all professionals in schools and colleges understand the problems that lead to gangs on what actions they can take to prevent this and intervene early.
- We will continuously use and update the safeguarding partnership website with information and themes under exploitation.
- We will ensure that individuals in all agencies understand the issues of exploitation; the duty to notify; and how their agency can support multi-agency work.
- We will educate professionals, local organisations and communities to identify signs of Vulnerability.
- We will ensure that multi-agency partners are using the adult screening tool when working with adults who are susceptible or who are being exploited.
- We will facilitate forums and conferences where partnership members can share best practises, case studies and lessons learned.
- We will provide training and partnership working events to share information and knowledge, including sharing case studies and learnings from reviews.
- We will support professionals to better understand the line between being a victim and a criminal with regards to exploitation; For example, when someone has received support or is undergoing criminal proceedings.
- We will continue to look at possible research initiatives and partnerships with academic institutions to explore emerging trends, best practises, and innovative approaches in safeguarding concerning exploitation.

Each section reinforces our commitment to a multi-faceted, collaborative approach to tackling exploitation.

## 8. Duties and Powers

Across the Partnership, agencies will use the duties and powers invested in them to prevent exploitation and to protect and empower victims at risk of or experiencing exploitation. Relevant statutory guidance and legislation includes:

Care Act 2014	Mental Capacity Act 2005	Mental Health Act 1983
Making Safeguarding Personal:	Children Act 1989 and 2004	Children Act 1989 and 2004
Guide 2014		
Children and Social Work Act	Working Together to Safeguard	Keeping Children Safe in
2017	Children 2023	Education 2024
Modern Slavery Act 2015	Crime and Disorder Act 1998	Sexual Offences Act 2003
The Serious Violence Duty 2022	Domestic Abuse Act 2021	

## 9. Measuring Outcomes

Swindon Safeguarding Partnership have produced Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) scorecards to use measures and indicators to chart progress against outcomes for children and adults in relation to exploitation. See appendix 1 for scorecards.

## 10. Review and Evaluation

This is a three-year strategy and will be reviewed and updated prior to October 2027.

The All Age Exploitation work plan will be monitored against identified measures and outcomes indicators in the All Age Exploitation Outcomes Accountability Scorecard and Partnership dashboard. This will be evaluated through audits and other quality assurance activity through routine reporting from the All Age Exploitation Sub-Group to the Safeguarding Partnership Delivery Group.

# 11. Appendix

## Appendix 1.

All Age Exploitation, Outcome Accountability Scorecards

## Priority 4: All Age Exploitation

What do we want for child	Iren?					
Children enjoy their childhood free from exploitation.						
We'll know when  Children & young people are protected from exploitation, radicalisation, and extremism.	Child's voice  I feel safe & strong. I feel that what I say to professionals' matters. I feel professionals listen to me & hear my voice. I have an adult whom I can trust who always has my best interests at heart. I am not criminalised because I have been exploited.	Why does it matter in the context of safeguarding children?  The impact of exploitation is far reaching, it disproportionately impacts children who are already vulnerable, including children with special educational needs & who are in poverty.  Children who are exploited are often criminalised further reducing their life chances.	We need solutions for Children being hungry & cold. Adultification of children. Risks to children when they are online - identity exploration may increase vulnerability.			
child first & take a trauma informed approach.  Fewer children are: sexually exploited  Involved in violence / crime.  Children are in school & thriving.	What will make a difference?  Inclusive schools that keep children in learning.  All professionals, schools & colleges understanding the problems that lead to gangs & what action they can take to prevent this & intervene early.  Contextual approach to safeguarding: identification of hotspots, collaborative action to make spaces safer, engagement of the wider community & business in solutions like Hotel Watch & Safe Places.  All the right agencies are around the table and confident about sharing sensitive information – even if information not corroborated / soft intelligence.	Most critical underlying issue/s we need to address to break the cycle?  Children who are going hungry & cold because of poverty, neglect, and parental mental health are being preyed on by criminals and 'bonded' by debt that exasperates the cycle of exploitation.  More children are:  being exploited at a younger age going missing for more time carrying knives groomed, bullied and exploited online subject to Interfamilial radicalisation/extremism risks	vuniciaumy.			

Families/children feeling confident to share their intelligence - feel safe and that it will be used to support changes.

All agencies using their legal powers to disrupt crime & exploitation.

A strategic response to repatriation when young people have been arrested & released e.g. in relation to County Lines.

Effective <u>transition</u> for young people when exploitation is identified; robust information sharing, risks understood & managed, planning for adulthood.

Young people NEET are <u>supported into employment by the Edge</u> of Employment Team

Cross checking of data between all agencies, tracking & exploring trends

Knowledge about what makes children vulnerable & prevention.

Young people are not adequately supported by services when they transition into adulthood – life-long need evolving as life events occur such as parenthood.

Some of our contacts can mirror same patterns of behaviour groomers use – how do children know who is a "safe" adult.

Substance misuse services do not support all family members to recover from exploitation experience

#### What will we do to improve practice & practice knowledge?

Update practice framework & guidance for working with children young people & across transitions.

Re-establish the Operational Risk Panel.

Targeted training for secondary schools & further education settings – understanding of push and pull factors. Provide information through 7-minute briefings (written & video) about what makes children vulnerable to gang involvement / criminal exploitation & how to prevent it, targeting primary & secondary schools in the areas of highest deprivation.

#### What will we do to improve public knowledge?

Deliver a public awareness campaign aimed at parents which includes where they can go for help & support with the cost of living.

Deliver a public awareness campaigns aimed at parents, children, adolescents in collaboration with schools & other stakeholders about digital & online safety.

#### Priority 4: All Age Exploitation

#### What do we want for children?

Children enjoy their childhood free from exploitation.

#### We'll know when measures

Number of reported

- violent offences against U18's / Crime severity of this combined offending
- sexual offences reported against U18's / Crime severity of this combined offending

Reference Indicators 2.1.1 - 2.1.4 Note - more reporting to reflect awareness has increased but less severity

Disruption measures

Reference Indicators 2.6.1 - 2.6.3

National referral mechanism used and timely Reference Indicators 2.8.1 – 2.8.3

Fixed term & permanent exclusions / reduced timetable (all, CIN, CP, EHCP & SEN Support) Reference Neglect Dashboard Indicators 3.7.1 - 3.7.18

#### Child's voice measures

Increase in the % of

- CiC who have had the same social worker for 12 months.
- children known to be at risk of or subject to exploitation who have a named trusted professional.

Reference Indicators 2.5.10 - 2.5.12

Increase in NRM referrals

Reference Indicators 2.8.1 - 2.8.4

Young people feel / are safe at home and in their community Reference Indicators 2.4.1 - 2.4.7, 2.2.1 - 2.2.4, 2.3.1 - 2.3.6

Note survey done by Swindon Healthy Schools commissioned by Public Health for 2.4.1 – 2.4.7

#### Making a difference measures

Children who have multiple (3 or more) missing episodes in the previous 12 months without a missing episode in preceding:

- 3 months
- 6 months

Reference Indicators 2.5.8 - 2.5.8

Children who have multiple one or more missing episodes exceeding 5 days in the previous 12 months without a missing episode in preceding:

- 3 months
- 6 months

Reference Indicators 2.5.9 - 2.5.11

#### Trend data to track underlying issue/s

Profile (age, gender, ethnicity) & trends for children

- living in poverty
- referred / repeat referral for neglect Reference Neglect Dashboard Indicators 3.2.1 - 3.2.2 more associated with this theme at 3.2.3 -3.2.11
- missing including duration / number of episodes Reference Indicators 2.5.1 - 2.5.12
- carrying knives in / out of school Reference Indicators 2.4.1 2.4.7
- referred to CSC for exploitation Reference Indicators 2.8.5 2.8.6

Rate of violent & sexual offences against children aged 0-17 per 10,000 CYP population

Reference Indicators 2.1.1 - 2.1.4

Return from missing interview data Reference 2.5.1 – 2.5.6

**Underlying issue/s we need to 'deep dive'** consider in single & multiagency audits

Adultification of children – language used to refer to children in case notes / records

Reference Indicator 2.8.8

Children successfully supported who have been exploited / involved in criminality by the Way Beacons Project Reference Indicators 2.7.1 - 2.7.6 (need to be agreed via Way Beacons)

#### Improved practice & practice knowledge measures

Number of DSLs that attend targeted training. Reference Indicators 2.10.1

Exploitation screening tools being completed and used to support referrals / Agencies are confident about sharing sensitive information – even if information not corroborated. (Reference multiagency audit / dip sample)

National Referral Mechanism referrals / Return from missing interviews completed (see above 2.5.1 – 2.5.6 – 2.8.1 – 2.8.3)

#### Improved public knowledge

To be developed as part of the campaign

#### Priority 4: All Age Exploitation

#### What do we want for adults at risk?

Adults who are susceptible to exploitation are prevented from becoming victims & or perpetrators.

#### We'll know when

Adults who are at risk of exploitation are supported & have protective factors in place to help keep them safe.

Contextual safeguarding is used to

identify & address risk factors across Swindon.

Adults who are susceptible to exploitation have access to safe spaces & people. There is sustained, co-ordinated, 4 Ps approach that is multi-agency.

#### Adult's voice

I feel safe in my home and community and when I travel in Swindon.

I have weekly contact with people I can trust & who know me. I know what to do & who to tell if I feel unsure, uncomfortable or threatened.

Professionals & people in positions of trust in the community listen to me & help me make safe choices.

I know my rights, I feel safe saying no and seeking the help I may need to do this.

# Why does it matter in the context of safeguarding adults at risk?

The impact of exploitation is far reaching, it disproportionately impacts adults who are already vulnerable and who are in poverty.

Adults who are exploited are often criminalised further reducing their life chances.

Financial abuse has been increasing. Think family and impact on parenting / carer responsibilities.

Refugees and alyssum seekers may have experienced exploitation to come to the UK.

#### We need solutions for:

Lack of public awareness about different forms of exploitation and capacity to recognise and avoid exploitative situations.

Vulnerable adults without critical skills such as financial literacy, assertiveness and self-defence.

assertiveness and self-defence.
Adults who are lonely increases the risk of exploitation. For example, sheltered schemes have a lot of adults being exploited. Although it is often seen as a 'safe place' and there is support around, this is often not the case, and people are

#### What will make a difference?

Real-time targeted support for adults who are at risk of being exploited.

Identify adults in Swindon who are at risk of or being exploited & provide an improved multi-agency response that reduces the risk of harm.

Clear referral pathways for adults with care & support needs at risk of exploitation that are understood by professionals, carers (paid & unpaid) & businesses & voluntary groups that form a vital part of the community.

Offering empowering programs and resources that teach financial literacy, assertiveness and self-defence skills. Increased public awareness about different forms of exploitation so individuals can recognise and avoid exploitative situations. Establishing a community support network and resources, including counselling services, helplines and shelters, which provide assistance and protection to those at risk of exploitation. Professional understanding the line between being a victim and a criminal around exploitation – when someone received support or criminal proceedings.

Scams – professional and public knowledge on scams, risks and identifying

Protective factors established around modern slavery – quality assurance checks (modern Slavery, immigration, refugee/asylum seekers, travelling communities, sexual exploitation) EDI Agenda

Agencies having robust Persons in Positions of Trust (PiPoT) frameworks/systems/processes and inclusion of where this may come under the definition of exploitation – for discussion

# Most critical underlying issue/s we need to address to break the cycle? There are insufficient protective factors

in place for adults who have increased vulnerability which make them more susceptible to exploitation.
Culture and identify of the person and how they want to be supported.
Staff having clear understanding on their roles and responsibilities under safeguarding under alleged behaviour:
Recognising & responding to trauma in childhood & adulthood
Increasing access to education & peer support
Reduction in poverty
Equal access to opportunities

Access to early mental health support

Providing people with a sense of worth

Isolation and meaningful relationships.

exploitation and defines exploitation in

order to be able to break the cycle.

through meaningful actives &

Access to psychology services.

Professionals effectively working

Understanding what constitutes

employment etc.

together in MDTs

very isolated, living in sheltered schemes.

Unconscious bias for who may be exploited- could be anyone. Forced Marriage / Predatory marriage.

#### What will we do to improve practice & practice knowledge?

Facilitate forums and conferences where partnership members can share best practices, case studies and lessons learned.

Establish a mechanism for regularly reviewing and evaluating safeguarding practices and procedures (audits, surveys or feedback sessions).

Look at possible research initiatives and partnerships with academic institutions to explore emerging trends, best practices, and innovative approaches in safeguarding concerning exploitation. Practitioners across the board need to understand the early signs of exploitation and be able to identify someone who is at risk. Adult Learning may need to provide some training on the subject to support this in small-reachable/bite-size learning.

Training and partnership working inclusive of events to share information and knowledge. Sharing case studies, DHR/SAR learning Screening tools to help identify exploitation and support conversations (adaptation of the children screening tool)

#### What will we do to improve public knowledge?

Foster meaningful engagement with the community to raise awareness, gather feedback, and involve stakeholders (outreach events, focus groups, or advisory committees – ensuring that practice is informed by the needs and perspectives of those affected by exploitation).

Awareness information is to be available on the SSP website and in public areas that give bite-size information.

Working with Trading Standards in sharing information around Scams. How to report and avoid.

#### Priority 4: All Age Exploitation

#### What do we want for adults at risk?

Adults who are susceptible to exploitation are prevented from becoming victims & or perpetrators.

#### We'll know when measures

Reduction in the number of adults that have been financially abused sexual abused/exploited subject to modern

slaverv Reference indicators 2.1.1a - 2.1.6a

Note - more reporting will equal an initial increase but over time less severity

Adults give positive feedback on their experiences & the impact of support received.

Quality indicators

#### Adult's voice measures

gather the individuals' perspectives,

Develop surveys or feedback mechanisms that allow adults to share their experiences, perceptions and satisfaction with the services (anonymous questionnaires, online surveys) Quality indicators One-to-one interviews or focus groups with adults who have been through exploitation and had interventions (this will allow us to concerns, and suggestions for improvement). Quality indicators

#### Making a difference measures

Ensuring that measurement approaches are culturally sensitive and linguistically accessible to diverse populations, considering language proficiency, literacy levels, and cultural norms around decisionmaking and consent. Quality indicators Conducting case reviews and

# feedback loops to identify gaps and

#### Trend data to track underlying issue/s

Profile of exploitation / domestic abuse and interventions victims and perpetrators Reference indicators 2.2.1a - 2.2.10a

Profile of cyclical exploitation Reference indicators 2.2.11a – 2.2.12a

Conversion rates & timescales from MASH decisions to enquiry & safeguarding plan Reference indicators 2.6.1a - 2.6.23a

Profile of risk of harm by type Reference indicators 2.7.1a – 2.7.18a

#### Underlying issue/s we need to 'deep dive' / consider in single & multi-agency audits

- What were people's desired outcomes, and were they met Quality indicators
- Who was involved, including care providers/services involved Quality indicators
- What were the risks identified, and were they addressed Quality indicators

#### Quality of practice:

- Screening
- Assessment
- Intervention
- Information sharing
- Multi-agency working

Quality indicators

barriers in adult participation in safeguarding processes. Quality indicators
Making Safeguarding Personal.
Quality indicators
Practitioners being mindful of early identification that someone may be at risk of exploitation and putting protective factors in place to reduce the likelihood of someone being exploited.
Quality indicators

#### Improved practice & practice knowledge measures

Practitioners will be able to confidently identify the early signs of exploitation and be able to take action to manage this risk with the individual.

Increase uptake in training and ongoing professional development, increasing practitioners' understanding of different forms of exploitation.

Increase the use of safeguarding tools and robust guidelines, protocols and procedures for identifying and responding to exploitation across various settings within the partnership.

Increase information sharing between agencies, sharing relevant information and intelligence while ensuring data protection and confidentiality compliance.

Practitioners across the partnership regularly review their practice and participate in peer supervision and case discussions.

Feedback is embedded in practice systems.

Having a clear definition of exploitation / definition being used to correctly record exploitation rather than 'abuse' to better understand the dataset.

#### Improved public knowledge

Involve adults in designing, implementing, and evaluating the policies, programs and practices related to exploitation. Reference indicators 1.8.1a – 1.8.2a

Increases in safeguarding referrals from the public associated with exploitation - public feeling confident that they know how to report a concern. Reference indicators 1.8.3a – 1.8.5a Conduct pre and post-intervention assessments to measure changes in public knowledge and understanding of all age exploitation.

Assess changes in public attitudes, beliefs, and behavioural intentions related to adult exploitation (survey, focus groups, community engagement

Solicit feedback from the public and stakeholders.

Evaluate the long-term outcomes and societal impact of efforts to improve public knowledge on all age exploitation (tracking trends in exploitation rates, reporting rates, and legal outcomes

Thank you to Solihull Safeguarding Children Partnership and Solihull Safeguarding Adults Board for allowing SSP to use and adapt the Solihull All Age Exploitation Reduction Strategy 2023 – 2026.