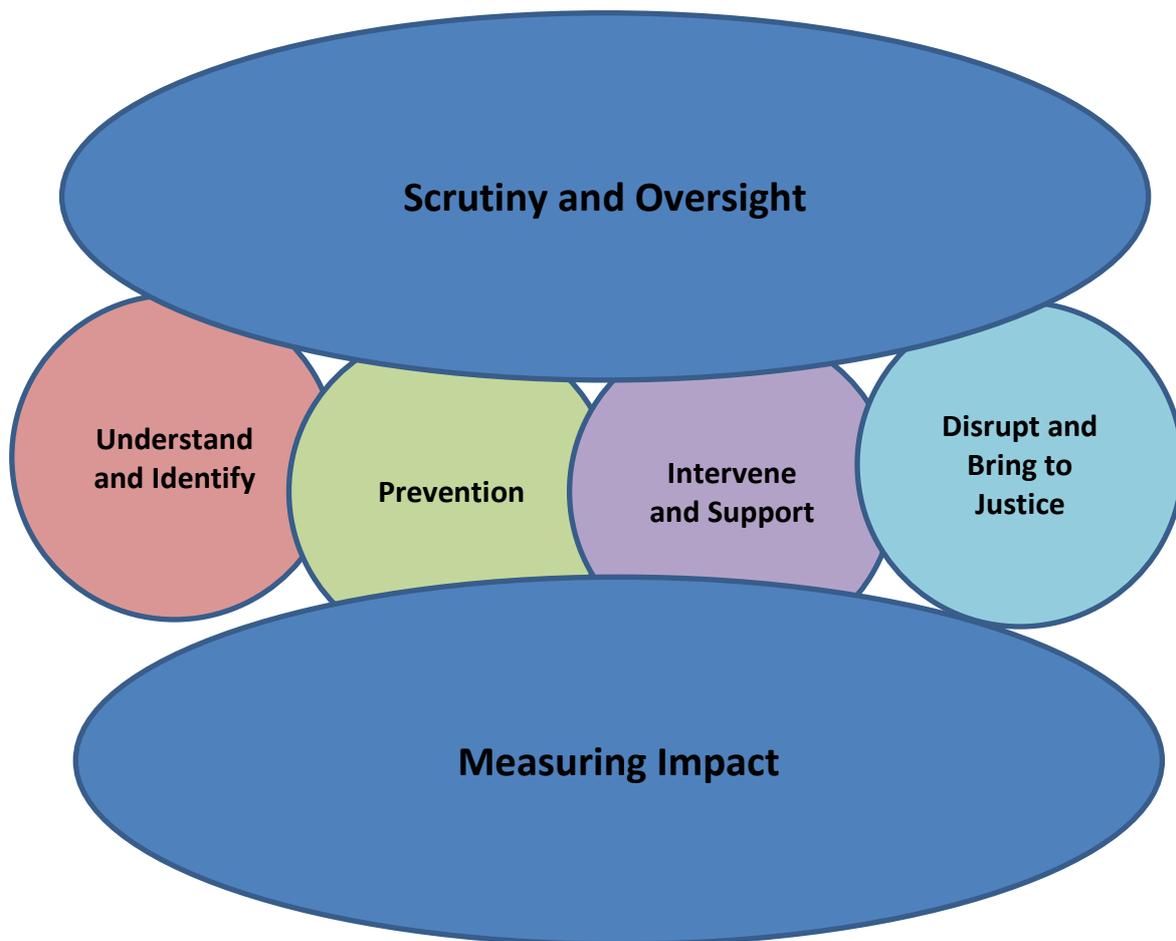


HAMPSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD

MISSING, EXPLOITED AND TRAFFICKED (MET) CHILDREN STRATEGY 2016-2019



**Working together to safeguard children in Hampshire at risk of going missing,
being exploited and / or being trafficked**

Local Case Study

Ali is a 15 year old and at the time of referral into the Willow Team was living part time with her father and part time with mother. A police report was generated that Ali had been coerced into sending indecent images and videos to an unknown male online.

The case has been opened for a formal assessment due to these concerns and part of the assessment was around how well the family were being protective around social media use.

The assessment showed that Ali had repeatedly been contacted and groomed by the male. Ali was made to feel good by the contact and this was a 'pull' factor to her continued contact with the male.

The assessment showed that Ali was having her basic care needs met. We identified though that parents were behaving very differently in their approach to boundaries. One parent was very liberal and not enforcing appropriate boundaries whilst the other was stricter and took more of an interest in the child's behaviour with social media. Parents were encouraged to take protective steps by stopping internet use and her use of alcohol whilst with one of the parents. Whilst assessing it was clear that the separation of the parents was a challenge. Neither were working together to keep Ali safe and boundaries were so different with each parent that the risk was increased due to lack of communication and joined up parental working.

The assessment was completed with the social worker recommending direct work by Willow to support Ali being better aware of healthy relationships, grooming issues and the dangers of using the internet. Parents also were part of the keeping safe work and we encouraged more joined up conversation around parenting and boundaries.

When the case was closed the risk had been greatly reduced and we further supported school staff around risks which benefitted many other children.

Introduction

'A strong focus on child sexual exploitation is maintained by the LSCB to steer and monitor the implementation of agreed policies and procedures by partner agencies. This has ensured that this vulnerable group of children is safeguarded effectively. The LSCB sub-group for missing, exploited and trafficked children provides energetic and committed multi-agency approach that drives local responses to the identification and support of children identified as missing or at risk of sexual exploitation and trafficking. Voluntary organisations are well engaged in this group and this collaborative approach ensures that the MET pathways and protocols are well understood and implemented across the partnership' (Ofsted, March 2014).

Hampshire, like every other area of the country, is faced with the challenge of tackling the issue of children going missing, being exploited and/or being trafficked (MET). These issues are a key priority for Hampshire Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB).

This strategy builds upon the significant work already taking place within Hampshire and sets out how all agencies will work together to ensure the most effective and coordinated response. In Hampshire, all under 18s are referred to as children because this reinforces the vulnerability of these individuals.

The delivery of this strategy is supported through HSCB's Annual Business Plan, which can be found on the resource library of the Board's website:

<http://www.hampshiresafeguardingchildrenboard.org.uk/procedures/resource-library/b/>

There are clear links between child exploitation and those children who are trafficked and/or go missing and the matters cannot be dealt with in isolation. HSCB has combined these three areas to ensure a robust multi-agency response across the Local Authority area. It is clear that the collaboration of all partners is required to ensure that exploitation of children is eradicated.

The Extent of the Problem in Hampshire

A review of historic cases of child sexual abuse in Hampshire was completed in mid 2015. On the basis the outcomes of that review, in addition to information available from the Police, Children's Services and Health partners from more recent case reviews the following can be concluded:

- There is no currently identified evidence of adult organised street grooming of children in Hampshire, or of the type of sexual exploitation reported in Rochdale, Oxfordshire and Derbyshire.

- There is no currently identified evidence of any systemic organisational failure to address issues of child sexual exploitation, such as those found in Rotherham.

However, the issue of missing, exploited and/or trafficked children is a national problem, with one or more elements being present in every town and city across the UK. Therefore, HSCB remains focussed on preventing, identifying and responding to issues of MET within Hampshire and always being vigilant. There is a culture of professionals and agencies being able to think the unthinkable, challenge fixed views and work in different ways to respond to the new techniques being used to identify, groom and exploit vulnerable children.

Missing Children

The College of Policing definition:

- *Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until located and their well-being or otherwise confirmed.*

The Department for Education definition:

- *Missing Child: a child reported as missing to the police by their family or carers.*
- *Missing from care: a looked after child who is not at their placement or the place they are expected to be (e.g. school) and their whereabouts is not known.*

Exploitation

There are different forms of exploitation and these are outlined below.

Sexual Exploitation

‘Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) 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’ (Definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation, HM Government, February 2017).

Criminal Exploitation (‘County Lines’)

‘County lines’ is the police term for urban gangs supplying drugs to suburban areas and market and coastal towns using dedicated mobile phone lines or ‘deal lines’. It involves child criminal exploitation (CCE) as gangs use children and vulnerable people to move drugs and

money. Gangs establish a base in the market location, typically by taking over the homes of local vulnerable adults by force or coercion in a practice referred to as 'cuckooing'.

County lines is a major, cross-cutting issue involving drugs, violence, gangs, safeguarding, criminal and sexual exploitation, modern slavery, and missing persons; and the response to tackle it involves the police, the National Crime Agency, 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 young people, vulnerable adults and local communities.

The national picture on county lines continues to develop but there are recorded cases of:

- Children as young as 12 years old being exploited by gangs to courier drugs out of their local area; 15-16 years is the most common age range
- Both males and females being exploited
- White British children being targeted because gangs perceive they are more likely to evade police detection
- The use of social media to make initial contact with children and young people
- Class A drug users being targeted so that gangs can takeover their homes (known as 'cuckooing')

Modern Slavery

Modern Slavery is the term used within the UK and is defined within the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The Act categorises offences of Slavery, Servitude and Forced or Compulsory Labour and Human Trafficking. These crimes include holding a person in a position of slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour or facilitating their travel with the intention of exploiting them soon after.

Although human trafficking often involves an international cross-border element, it is also possible to be a victim of modern slavery within your own country. It is possible to be a victim even if consent has been given to be moved.

Children cannot give consent to being exploited therefore the element of coercion or deception does not need to be present to prove an offence. Any child (0-17 years) transported for exploitative reasons is considered to be a trafficking victim.

Children can be trafficked for:

- Child sexual exploitation
- Benefit fraud
- Forced marriage
- Domestic servitude such as cleaning, childcare, cooking
- Forced labour in factories or agriculture

- Criminal activity such as pickpocketing, begging, transporting drugs, working on cannabis farms, selling pirated DVDs and bag theft.

Numerous pieces of legislation have been introduced that make reference to, and directly tackle, modern slavery. As contemporary systems of slavery have evolved, new definitions have developed. Some of the forms of slavery are:

Bonded labour: people become bonded labourers after falling into debt and being forced to work for free in an attempt to repay it. Many will never pay off their loans, and debt can be passed down through the generations.

Forced labour: where people are forced to work, usually with no payment, through violence or intimidation. Many find themselves trapped, often in a foreign country with no papers, and unable to leave.

Descent-based slavery: where people are born into slavery because their families belong to a class of "slaves" within a society. The status of "slave" passes from mother to child.

Child slavery: children are in slavery as domestic workers, forced labour – in, for example, the cocoa, cotton and fisheries industries – trafficked for labour and sexual exploitation, and used as child soldiers.

Early and forced marriage: women continue to be married without consent, often while still girls, and forced into sexual and domestic servitude.

Anyone can become a victim of modern slavery – any age, race or gender. Modern slaves are sold like objects, forced to work for little or no pay, live in fear and squalor, have their freedom restricted and are at the mercy of their employers.

Underpinning our MET Strategy is a set of principles.

- We have the safety and welfare of the child at the heart of everything we do.
- We listen to children and their families and seek their views in the development and review of services.
- We focus our work on early identification, intervention and prevention as well as disrupting and bringing perpetrators to justice.
- We take account of family circumstances when deciding how best to safeguard and protect the welfare of children.
- We continue to enhance our partnership model for MET arrangements in Hampshire with activity aligned to the HSCB Business Plan.
- We scrutinise, challenge, monitor and review our work to ensure that we have a positive impact and make a difference to the lives of children and their families. We will achieve this by continually improving our performance and auditing framework.
- We challenge fixed / uninformed views and language and work in different ways to respond to the new techniques being used to identify, groom and exploit vulnerable children.
- We liaise with neighbouring authorities to ensure that we are linking with them for the purposes of safeguarding children.

Operating Framework

HSCB has overall responsibility for ensuring there is a co-ordinated multi-agency response to issues of missing, exploited and trafficked children in Hampshire. Our Strategic MET Subgroup is responsible for delivery of the MET Strategy via the HSCB Business Plan.

The Strategic MET Subgroup was set up to tackle the issues of MET in Hampshire by:

- Developing, sharing and promoting best practice across Hampshire.
- Ensuring that all practitioners and managers who work with or come into contact with children are trained to identify and support children at risk of MET.
- Raising awareness of the issue of MET amongst members of the public, encouraging them to report their concerns.
- Developing and implementing processes for the sharing of information about children at risk of MET across local authority/agency borders.

The Strategic MET Subgroup focuses on four key themes, which ensure a more targeted approach. These themes include:

- **Understand and identify;** strengthen the identification and assessment of children at risk of MET.
- **Prevention;** *raise awareness of MET issues across agencies, children and their families and the wider Hampshire community.*
- **Intervene and support;** *improve safeguarding of vulnerable children deemed to be at risk of exploitation and trafficking. Provide direct therapeutic support and access to specialist services.*
- **Disrupt and Bring to Justice;** *lead in disrupting perpetrator behaviour and bringing those offenders to justice by building an accurate and clear picture of local trends and networks.*

MET and Partnership Working in Hampshire

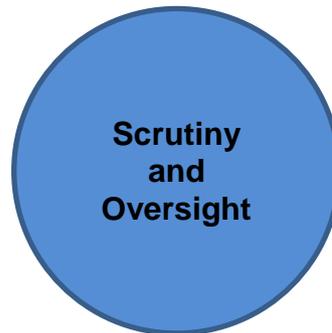
The Willow Team

The Willow Team is a multi-agency specialist MET team, launched in October 2015. The team comprises a team manager, three social workers, two nurses, one child and family support worker and administrative support. The team work collaboratively with Barnardo's workers, Hampshire Constabulary's Missing & Exploited Team, Hampshire's Youth Offending Team and the Children & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). The Frankie Worker project is also located within the Willow Team and offers therapeutic intervention for children within Hampshire who have experienced sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and/or been a victim of female genital mutilation.

The team operates across Hampshire and works directly with children identified at risk of one or more elements of MET. The team receives referrals from Hampshire's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) relating to children who are not currently open to Children's Services and where concerns are raised that they are at high risk of MET; and / or children who are in contact with known perpetrators of exploitation or trafficking. The team will also support all unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) and will undertake trafficking risk assessments.

The team also requests support for children currently open to Children's Services. In such cases support can be offered in a number of ways such as:

- Direct work with the child.
- Direct work with the parent/carers/residential workers.
- Mentoring to professionals, e.g. education, social workers, school nurses to support them to undertake direct work with the child/young person.
- Consultation advice and support to professional groups, i.e. attending High Risk Strategy Meetings (HRSM) to offer support on how to progress a plan or a child.
- Undertaking awareness raising, i.e. if a group of children raised within an area, the team could do work within schools/youth groups to raise awareness.
- Disruption of perpetrators. The team may seek to undertake work on tackling the perpetrator rather than working directly with the child.

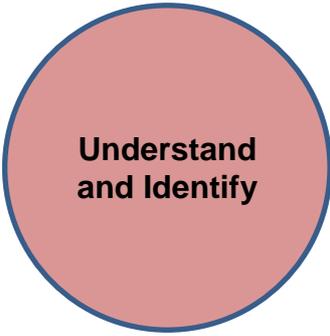


Overall objective:

To ensure that the strategy is making a positive difference to the safety and welfare of children in Hampshire

How we will achieve this:

- Build on the existing dataset ensuring that each agency contributes information and that the strategy is informed by that information.
- Regularly interrogate MET children data to ensure an up-to-date understanding of the current threat, which is used to inform the multi-agency response.
- Undertake quality assurance activity to ensure that partner agencies are compliant with statutory guidance relating to MET children.
- Scrutinise and challenge our collective response to MET within Hampshire and report progress against the strategy to the Main Board on a six monthly basis.
- Conduct regular assessments on the effectiveness of Board partners' responses to child sexual exploitation and include this in the Board's annual report.
- Ensure that agencies represented contribute to the delivery of the MET elements of the HSCB Annual Business Plan.
- Share good practice following multi-agency audits and inspections.



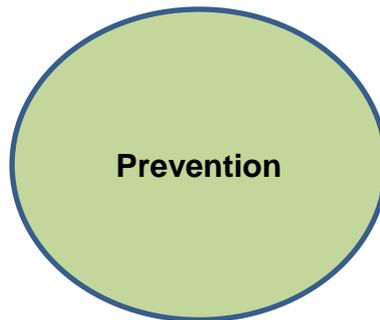
Understand and Identify

Overall objective:

To ensure that we have effective and well established information sharing and risk assessment mechanisms in place to understand and identify those at risk of, or experiencing any issues of MET.

How we will achieve this:

- Ensure that our risk assessment tools for identifying and assessing MET risks/concerns across the multi-agency workforce are well understood and embedded.
- Ensure consistency between partner agencies in reported occurrences of MET.
- Further develop the multi-agency specialist Willow Team, including collaboration with the Police Missing, Exploited and Trafficked Children Team, to deal with MET issues so that a timely and effective service is available to our children.
- Ensure that information and intelligence relating to victim, offender and locations is shared effectively within Hampshire and across local authority boundaries.
- Ensure that effective arrangements are in place between Children's and Adult's services to support vulnerable adults at risk of MET.

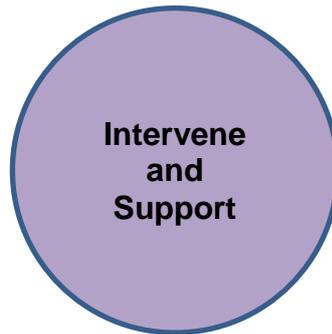


Overall objective:

To prevent children experiencing any issues of MET in the first place.

How we will achieve this:

- Ensure that the public, professionals, children and families are well informed and confident about the identification, prevention and disruption of MET issues.
- Continue to work with relevant HSCB subgroups to establish effective information-sharing mechanisms with front line services such as schools and health settings with regards to MET children, including learning from good practice.
- Develop effective information sharing mechanisms with faith groups and diverse communities, including the local business community, to ensure that MET risks are understood and addressed.
- Ensure that those who commission or provide services to provide care to children, including transport services, are able to identify children at risk of MET and know how to report concerns.
- Listen to children and ensuring that they and their parents'/carers' views inform service design and delivery.
- Ensure that partners meet their statutory duties in relation to missing episodes and children returning from missing episodes.
- Ensure that partners work together to address vulnerability at the point of children leaving care.



Overall objective:

To intervene and support to ensure that the right support is available for child victims and adult survivors when this is required.

How we will achieve this:

- Ensure that preventative/early help services have a robust awareness of MET issues/plans and are supporting those children who might be identified as at risk of MET.
- Provide accessible and 'fit for purpose' therapeutic services for children victims of CSE.
- Provide specialist services for children such as CAMHS, to provide trauma work with the child/family as necessary.



**Disrupt and
Bring to
Justice**

Overall objective:

To identify, disrupt and prosecute those who are intent on exploiting children.

How we will achieve this:

- Produce a regular multi-agency MET profile including victims, perpetrators and hot-spots to inform our collective response and interventions.
- Ensure that information and intelligence relating to victims and perpetrators is shared and acted upon.
- Support the development of a mechanism to risk assess perpetrators.
- Promote the use of the disruption toolkit to maximum effect to assist investigations, restrict and manage offenders and support and safeguard victims/potential victims.

Measuring Impact

HSCB measures impact through delivery of the annual Business Plan, which includes objectives relating to MET children. Progress against the Business Plan is scrutinised by the Executive Group and Main Board.

HSCB oversees an agreed dataset that monitors multi-agency child protection arrangements and enables the Board to support and challenge partners for their performance. The Strategic MET Subgroup reviews the MET components of the dataset on a quarterly basis, along with a six-monthly MET Profile, which includes information from Hampshire Constabulary's force-wide CSE strategic profile. This information enables HSCB to evidence the impact of its collective response to issues of MET children.

HSCB also undertakes an annual programme of multi-agency audits focussing on child protection arrangements in Hampshire. As part of this work, HSCB undertakes annual monitoring of partner agencies' responses to Missing, Exploited and Trafficked children. Recommendations and associated action plans are reviewed by the Quality Assurance Subgroup, the Executive Group and the Main Board.

References and Key Reports

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