

Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth & Southampton (HIPS) Strategy **Child Exploitation & Extra-Familial Harm**

2023-26



Hampshire
Safeguarding
Children
Partnership



Introduction

The Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships (LSCPs) across the Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton (HIPS), via the HIPS Executive Group, recognise that tackling child exploitation and extra-familial harm is complex and requires a proactive, multi-agency, holistic approach. As such they have made a continued commitment to collaborate and expand common ways of working.

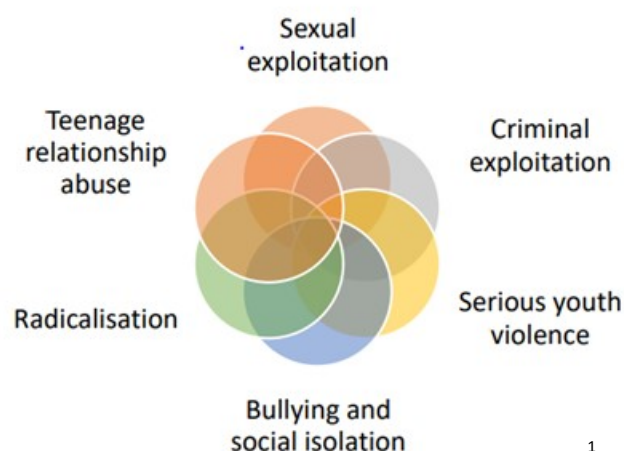
This strategy sets out the agreed priority areas that all partner agencies will work towards to ensure the most effective and coordinated response to exploitation and extra-familial harm. This includes recognising the need to work with our colleagues across the four Local Safeguarding Adult Boards (LSAB) to ensure there are appropriate transitional safeguarding arrangements in place to support all victims of exploitation.

There are clear links between child exploitation, extra-familial harm and those children who are trafficked and/or that go missing. Agencies cannot address these issues alone or in isolation from other related forms of harm and abuse or neglect that children may experience. The HIPS Executive, through this strategy is committed to securing a robust multi-agency response to children vulnerable because of:

- Missing from home or care.
- Exploitation and extra familial harm - including child sexual exploitation (CSE), online exploitation, child criminal exploitation (CCE) including County Lines, drug-related harm, knife crime and serious violence; as well as other forms of exploitation that involve coercion and control such as radicalisation and extremism; forced marriage, female genital mutilation.
- Trafficking and/or Modern Slavery.

This includes understanding the drivers of exploitation; exploring themes and emerging risks; having a greater awareness of those who pose a risk to children; and developing a greater knowledge of the places, spaces, and contexts in which extra-familial harm is most prevalent. All of which will provide key prevention opportunities to stop children becoming victims of exploitation.

As such any reference to 'exploitation and extra-familial harm' should be read to include the above risk areas. Each form of exploitation is categorised with its own definition, yet we know there are clear overlaps between the different forms of exploitation and the associated risks as represented in the image below. Therefore, our response must consider the various domains of risk children may experience when exposed to exploitation.



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¹ Diagram from the University of Bedfordshire showing the interconnected nature of all forms of exploitation



There is a [HIPS Missing, Exploited and Trafficked Children Information Guide](#) that all practitioners who work with (or routinely come into contact with) children and families are expected to be familiar with, this should be referred to for more information on these definitions.

The management, disruption and prosecution of perpetrators is a key success driver in tackling exploitation. Perpetrators of child exploitation will groom children so that they are unaware they are being exploited. They will also use violence and coerce criminality through fear and provocation. It is vital that professionals are supported to work collaboratively in safeguarding children and collectively deploy tactics to disrupt perpetrators and the drivers of exploitation.

Therefore, even when children present as perpetrators of criminality, we should be mindful of the impact of this grooming process and recognise that the behaviour we are observing may be as a result of this. We must treat these children and young people as victims and respond to them as such. We should take every opportunity to see their world through their eyes.

This 2023-2026 strategy builds on the work undertaken from 2020-2023. Some critical areas of success have been:

- ✓ The creation and implementation of workforce development across HIPS relating to child exploitation
- ✓ An increase in the number of Community Partnership Information (CPI) forms submitted
- ✓ A review of the risk assessment tools used to aid the identification of exploitation have led to the development of a HIPS Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework² (CERAF), providing consistency across all four areas
- ✓ Each LSCP area has completed at least one multi-agency practice review in relation to child exploitation and extra familial harm with learning shared across the HIPS area
- ✓ Practice has been reviewed against the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel national review [“It was hard to escape”](#)

Some of the previous priorities have become part of our business-as-usual approach. This includes continuing to develop our approach to missing children and young people and increasing the use of the CERAF and CPI forms.

While the consistency of our multi-agency practice, understanding and collaboration has improved during this time, the HIPS Child Exploitation Strategy for 2023 -2026 identifies the key priorities in continuing our collective development.

This strategy should be read in conjunction with relevant safeguarding procedures which can be found on the [HIPS Procedures website](#) and with relevant LSCP strategies and toolkits including the [HIPS Child Sexual Abuse Strategy and Toolkit](#).

Vision

Our vision is a simple one to make the counties of Hampshire and Isle of Wight a safe space for children.

Our mission is to safeguard children and young people from harm resulting from all forms of exploitation and extra-familial harm by:

1. Having a shared understanding of our roles and responsibilities to provide a coordinated and effective response, (including services for adults).
2. Having a clear focus on the prevention of harm, including through the identification, disruption and prosecution of offenders.

² [Full CERAF form](#)



Our principles are to make sure responses to child exploitation and extra-familial harm:

- Put children and young people first
- Respect the voice, experience, and expertise of children and young people
- Be strengths-based and relationship-based
- Recognise and respond to trauma³
- Be curious, evidence-informed and knowledgeable
- Treat protective parents and caregivers as partners, wherever safe to do so
- Create safer spaces and places for children and young people
- Recognise and challenge inequalities, exclusion, and discrimination⁴

Priorities

1. PREVENT, UNDERSTAND AND IDENTIFY

Our aim is to:

Ensure that we have effective and well-established information sharing mechanisms in place to understand and identify those at risk of or experiencing exploitation

Therefore, we need to:

- Continue to build our collective approaches to developing ways of working that identify and assess child exploitation and extra-familial harm.
- Have defined frameworks for the multi-agency response to extra-familial harm that identify places and spaces of concern.
- Enable the sharing of information and intelligence to develop an enhanced understanding of perpetrator networks and tactics.
- Strengthen engagement with education settings to understand the specific risks associated with children who are missing from, absent from or not in full time education and whom may be at risk from exploitation.
- Identify individuals, groups and organisations within the communities in which children live that influence extra-familial contexts; to develop relationships with these to ensure they become an effective partner in developing contextual safeguarding responses to exploitation and extra-familial harm.
- Enhance partnership working, information sharing and the collaborative response to child exploitation and extra-familial harm through developing a broader HIPS multi-agency operational function.

To achieve this, we will:

- Work with local partners to ensure that our shared risk assessment tools for identifying and assessing exploitation risks across the multi-agency workforce are well understood and embedded.
- Promote consistency between partner agencies in reported occurrences of child exploitation.
- Use agreed engagement forums to learn from the experiences of/seek the views of children and young people in relation to exploitation.

³ As laid out in the working definition of trauma-informed practice [Working definition of trauma-informed practice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/working-definition-of-trauma-informed-practice)

⁴ Tackling Child Exploitation Draft Practice Principles



- Promote the importance of information and intelligence relating to victim, offender and locations being shared effectively across the HIPS LSCPs.
- Develop a shared HIPS dataset focussing on forms of exploitation and extra-familial harm that is scrutinised alongside intelligence profiles developed by police and analysis of children who are at risk of or have experienced exploitation and extra-familial harm.
- Identify new trends or emerging themes of harm or need in children to inform the work of agencies/ professionals across the HIPS areas.
- Make use of local learning, best practice and research to ensure our systems respond appropriately to children with protected characteristics.
- Coordinate communications across HIPS so that professionals, communities, children and families are well informed and able to recognise the early signs of children who are at risk of exploitation.
- Raise awareness across professionals, children and young people, parents and carers, residential and foster care settings so that all know how to recognise the signs and take appropriate actions to keep themselves and others safe from exploitation and extra-familial harm.
- Develop effective information sharing mechanisms with community groups and members, including the local business community, to promote increased understanding of exploitation risks and develop contextual safeguarding response.
- Promote the need for staff in agencies to be professionally curious in this area of safeguarding, and, confident about the identification, prevention and disruption of exploitation risks.

2. INTERVENE AND SUPPORT

Our aim is to:

Ensure there is adequate access to appropriate support for children experiencing exploitation and/or extra-familial harm

Therefore, we need to:

- Develop and share our practice frameworks and ways of working across HIPS that respond to child exploitation and extra-familial harm, to ensure the workforce is aware of the practice and support available in each local area.
- Identify, raise awareness and knowledge of [risk and protective factors](#) and the reachable/critical moments in children's lives where support and intervention can be best targeted to have significant impact.
- Be assured that there are sufficient resources and services available for children experiencing, or at risk of exploitation. That children are appropriately supported with trauma-informed approaches.
- Promote and ensure the use of appropriate language in relation to child exploitation and extra-familial harm. Avoiding victim-blaming language and challenging use of such language as required.
- Wherever appropriate to work with parents/carers (including those caring for looked after children) as partners, to engage in the prevention, early intervention, protection and reduction of risk.
- Work with partner agencies across the four Local Safeguarding Adults Boards to support the implementation of the [4LSAB Framework for managing risk and safeguarding people moving into adulthood](#).

To achieve this, we will:

- Work with LSCP commissioners to map access to support services (including specialist trauma and therapeutic support) that work with children who are at risk of, or are being exploited. So that local agencies are clear on what is available, and commissioners can consider any additional requirements at a strategic level.



- Listen to children and ensure that they and their parents'/carers' views inform service design and delivery.
- Work with local delivery partners to ensure there is an effective response, that complies to statutory duties in relation to missing episodes and children returning from missing episodes.
- Work with LSCPs to ensure any themes arising from missing/return interviews are shared across the HIPS partnership to build a stronger intelligence picture of local push and pull factors to inform service design and delivery.
- Work with local delivery partners to address vulnerability when pathway planning at the point of children leaving care.
- Ensuring that the workforce is aware of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and their duty under Section 52 of the Act to use the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) to report individuals who they suspect are a victim of slavery and/or trafficking. That all children who are victims of trafficking (be that from another country to the UK or internally within the UK) be referred to the Independent Child Trafficking Guardians (ICTG) Service.
- Engage in the development of the strategic response to the [Serious Violence Duty](#).

3. DISRUPT AND BRING TO JUSTICE

Our aim is to:

Identify, disrupt and prosecute those who are intent on exploiting children

Therefore, we need to:

- Understand, consider and deploy the use of disruption tactics to keep children safe.
- Support professionals to work collaboratively in deploying tactics to disrupt perpetrators and the drivers of exploitation.
- Bring those offenders to justice by building an accurate and clear picture of local trends and networks.
- Ensure LSCPs have defined frameworks for the multi-agency response to exploitation and extra-familial harm that respond to places and spaces of concern, share information and intelligence to ensure an enhanced understanding of perpetrator networks and tactics.

To achieve this, we will:

- Produce a regular multi-agency exploitation profile including victims, perpetrators and hot spots to inform our collective response and interventions.
- Provide a vehicle for information and intelligence relating to victims and perpetrators to be shared and acted upon.
- Work with partners in the criminal justice process to ensure common mechanisms are in place to risk assess perpetrators.
- Promote the use of the disruption toolkit, including the use of civil orders, to maximum effect to assist investigations, restrict and manage offenders and support and safeguard victims/potential victims.
- Provide strategic coordination for any HIPS-wide initiatives or campaigns targeting specific groups, e.g., the night-time economy, taxi drivers, parents and carers.

4. GOVERNANCE, SCRUTINY AND OVERSIGHT

Our aim is too:

Evidence that the strategy is making a positive difference to the safety and welfare of children in Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton

Therefore, we need to:

- Maintain and ensure consistent governance at a strategic and operational level. This is both at a HIPS and LSCP level.
- Engage in the development of the strategic response to the [Serious Violence Duty](#). This includes the development of the strategic needs assessment and the corresponding plan.
- Gain a continued understanding of the lived experience of children who have experienced exploitation to inform our ongoing work at a strategic and local level.
- Embed a methodology of reflective practice and shared learning to best understand ‘what works’ well in a partnership response to children at risk of exploitation.

To achieve this, we will:

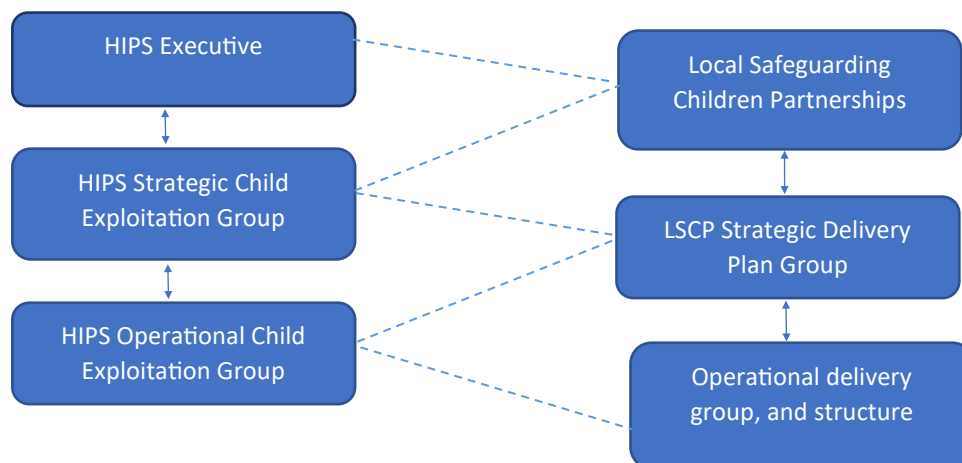
- Ensure there are fit for purpose multi-agency strategic and operational governance structures in place to support the effective safeguarding of children at risk of or experiencing child exploitation and extra-familial harm.
- Regularly interrogate data relating to missing, exploited and trafficked children to develop an up-to-date understanding of the current threat, which is used to inform the multi-agency response.
- Undertake quality assurance activity where appropriate to assess partner agencies compliance with statutory guidance.
- Review our collective response to exploitation across HIPS and report progress against the strategy to the HIPS Executive Group on a six monthly basis.
- Review the effectiveness of partners’ responses to child exploitation to inform each LSCP’s yearly report. Share good practice following national reviews/research and local multi-agency audits and inspections.

GOVERNANCE

As individual LSCPs, and collectively as HIPS, we share these priorities and agree to reflect them as required within each LSCP delivery plan that will accompany this strategy. Each LSCP delivery plan will define activity responding to the scale and nature of risks arising from exploitation and extra-familial harm within their own area.

The operational delivery of this strategy will be undertaken by, and accountable to, each LSCP across their respective partnership. The effectiveness of local arrangements should be monitored through the LSCP. Each LSCP will provide an update on progress and highlight any areas of good practice and/or challenge, to the HIPS Child Exploitation Group every six months.

Governance diagram:





Hampshire
Safe
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Children
Partnership



PSCP
Portsmouth Safeguarding
Children Partnership
Protecting Portsmouth Children



MEASURING IMPACT

Local LSCPs will measure the impact of the implementation of their local exploitation and extra-familial harm delivery plan and include this in their updates to HIPS Exploitation Group, and their respective Annual Reports.

The HIPS Exploitation Group will provide an annual overview of exploitation across the HIPS area including an assessment of themes and trends informed by the analysis of partnership data, areas of success and innovation and areas of challenge and further development for partnership working. In addition, the HIPS Exploitation Group will produce a quarterly bulletin for multi-agency partners across the HIPS areas to aid communication of ongoing work and initiatives.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

There is associated training that supports practitioners in developing and deepening their knowledge and practice in relation to Child Exploitation and Extra-Familial Harm. For more information please visit your LSCP's website:

[Training – Southampton Safeguarding Children Partnership \(southamptonscp.org.uk\)](https://southamptonscp.org.uk)

[Training - Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Board \(portsmouthscp.org.uk\)](https://portsmouthscp.org.uk)

[Training - Hampshire SCP](#)

[Training : Isle of Wight Safeguarding Children Partnership \(iowscp.org.uk\)](https://iowscp.org.uk)

FURTHER INFORMATION

For all relevant HIPS Safeguarding Procedures please follow the link below:

[Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton \(hipsprocedures.org.uk\)](https://hipsprocedures.org.uk)