



REPORT TITLE: Child Sexual Exploitation in Gloucestershire

Scrutiny meeting	Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Chair	Councillor Andrew Miller
Presenting Officer	Claire Connolly – Head of Service Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub Dan Jones – Area Manager Steve Bean – Police Head of Public Protection Jane Price – Child Exploitation Co-Ordinator
Item Type	Overview, scrutiny, and information
Purpose of Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To provide Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee members with information regarding the definition, extent, and response to child sexual exploitation in Gloucestershire, drawing on national and local policy, procedure, and data.• To set out proposed next steps aimed at the prevention of abuse and improving outcomes for those at risk of and victim to child sexual exploitation.
Recommendations/ Action sought	That Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee members consider and support the work of children’s services and partners in preventing and protecting children and young people from sexual exploitation.
Forthcoming Decisions	None
Appendices	None
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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The catalyst for this item at Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee (CFOSC) was an enquiry from the Chair about the extent of 'child grooming and abuse in the county.' A scoping paper and further discussion at July's CFOSC narrowed the scope to child sexual exploitation (CSE) as a useful area for scrutiny.
- 1.2. Child Sexual Exploitation is defined in the statutory guidanceⁱ as a form of child sexual abuse which:

*'...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.'*¹

- 1.3. In this context, the term "grooming" applies to the behaviours of those who seek to perpetrate abuse, intended to gain the trust, and create the conditions in which the abuse can happen.
- 1.4. Signs of a child or young person being in a sexually exploitative relationship can vary, however common examples can include:
 - going missing from home or care
 - physical injuries
 - misuse of drugs or alcohol
 - involvement in offending
 - repeat sexually transmitted infections, pregnancies or terminations
 - absenteeism from school
 - deterioration in physical appearance
 - evidence of online sexual bullying
 - evidence of vulnerability on social networking sites
 - emotional distance from family members
 - receiving gifts/having money from unknown sources
 - recruiting others into exploitative situations
 - poor mental health
 - self-harming

¹ Child sexual exploitation: definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation 2017: [Department for Education \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

- thinking about or attempting suicide²
- 1.5. The Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children’s Partnership (GSCP) works together to reduce the prevalence of abuse, including CSE and brings partners together in a child exploitation and missing sub-group to oversee the implementation of our strategy ‘Working Together to Tackle Exploitation’³ launched in April 2022.
- 1.6. This report sets out:
- What we know about the nature and extent of CSE in Gloucestershire
 - Recent research and policy developments – national and local
 - The structure of our multiagency partnership focusing on the disruption perpetrators of CSE
 - The structure of our multiagency partnership focusing on the prevention and protection of children and young people at risk of or victim to CSE

2. What we know about the nature and scale of CSE

- 2.1. Understanding the nature and scale of child sexual exploitation both nationally and locally continues to be a challenge for a variety of reasons, including the generally accepted view that it is under-recognised and under-reported.
- 2.2. Over-time, the nature of sexual exploitation and the ways in which abusers engage their victims has changed, requiring all those that work to protect children to change the way they understand and engage with those at risk of or victim to CSE and those who seek to perpetrate such offences. For example, an increase in the use of the internet and social media by children, young people, and perpetrators to find and groom potential victims, as well as the greater understanding we now have of the operation of organised groups to sexually exploit children.

2.3. The National Picture

- 2.3.1. The Report of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) (October 2022) ⁴ noted that “At institutional and national level, poor data collection has led to an incomplete picture of the nature and scale of child sexual abuse and exploitation.... This is one of the reasons that the true scale of sexual abuse of children is likely to be much greater in all settings than has been uncovered by evidence to the Inquiry.”
- 2.3.2. The Independent Inquiry also heard from victims of child exploitation who told of their experiences of feeling blamed for the abuse they were experiencing, responses such as “putting herself at risk” meant that professionals did not understand the extent of the abuse and failed to take protective and proactive action, particularly against the perpetrators of

² Taken from: [Child sexual exploitation | Gloucestershire Constabulary](#)

³ [gscp-working-together-to-tackle-exploitation-in-gloucestershire-2022.pdf](#)

⁴ [IICSA: report of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

harm. One victim told the Inquiry that “it was easier for the police to criminalise the children rather than go after the abusing adults.”

- 2.3.3. The IICSA, child sexual exploitation by organised networks investigation report made the following recommendations to Government ⁵
- Provide a mandatory aggravating factor for sentencing networks of child sexual exploitation offenders.
 - Publish an enhanced Child Exploitation Disruption Toolkit.
 - Review government guidance on child sexual exploitation.
 - Ensure government guidance distinguishes between risk and harm.
 - Collect data on child sexual exploitation and child sexual exploitation networks.
 - Ban the unregulated placement of children.
- 2.3.4. The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) (ending March 2019)⁶ also highlighted the scale and nature of child sexual abuse, noting that “victims often feel unable to report their experiences and adults are not always able to recognise that abuse is taking place”.
- 2.3.5. In respect of all forms of child sexual abuse (including child sexual exploitation) the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) (ending March 2019) estimated that 7.5% of adults aged 18 to 74 years experienced sexual abuse before the age of 16 years (3.1 million people); this includes both adult and child perpetrators. The abuse was most likely to have been perpetrated by a friend or acquaintance (37%); around a third (30%) were sexually abused by a stranger.

2.4. The Local Picture

- 2.4.1. The CSE Problem Profile for Gloucestershire, produced by the Police, is currently being refreshed for 2023. It draws on multi agency information and will provide us with an up-to-date picture as to the scale of the challenge and the impact of services operating in this area. The profile will be finalised and considered by all agencies at the end of this year. It will also provide insights into other, often allied, forms of exploitation such as criminal exploitation, for children and young people in Gloucestershire.
- 2.4.2. However, we do have current information available from several sources that supports our understanding of CSE in the county. The greatest difficulty for those working in this field is the absence of any digital platform that automatically brings information from various agencies together. The ability to identify and analyse cohorts and/or to identify patterns of risk is therefore limited to those officers who can bring information and intelligence together to identify and target actions aimed at reducing risk to children and identifying perpetrators.

⁵ [Recommendations - Child sexual exploitation by organised networks investigation report | IICSA Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse](#)

⁶ [Child sexual abuse in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

2.4.3. The following information has been sourced from Liquid Logic Children’s System and the Child Exploitation Team:

- Over the past 12 months, 1.8% of contacts at the Children’s Single Point of Access (front door) featured CSE.
- Between April 2022 and April 2023, our Child Exploitation team received 550 completed screening tools (13-month period) of which:
 - 47% (259) related to CSE.
 - 86% (223) of CSE screening tools were completed for girls and 14% (36) were for boys. Whilst this shows that child sexual exploitation affects all children, boys and girls, the lower figure for boys may well reflect under-identification.
 - The prevalence of other vulnerability factors makes the likelihood of abuse or exploitation greater. For example, children who have experienced neglect or domestic abuse within the home.
- The table below, shows the number of children where CSE was a feature that were discussed at the locality Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) meetings. It shows that CSE is not limited to any single community.

Stroud		Cotswolds		Cheltenham		Tewkesbury		Gloucester		Forest of Dean	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
5	22	<5	9	<5	7	<5	14	8	29	2	<5

3. The way we work in Gloucestershire.

3.1. The Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children’s Partnership (GSCP) launched ‘Working Together to Tackle Exploitation’⁷ in April 2022. It sets out the approach we take to tackling exploitation in Gloucestershire and is based on learning at a national and local level. The GSCP missing and exploitation sub-group oversees its implementation.

3.2. Following a thematic Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review completed in 2021⁸ in Gloucestershire and the publication of similar national reports, the GSCP developed its new strategy. It drew on feedback from partners, children, young people, and parents and was developed with the support of the National Working Group (NWG)⁹, a national charitable organisation comprising a network of voluntary and statutory services and private companies working in the field of child exploitation. The NWG provides expert support, guidance and uses its status to influence national and local policy.

3.3. The thematic review of CSE in Gloucestershire (2021) found that there were common themes in the views of young people, which included:

- The need to be listened to and to see all behaviour as communication - not having this meant children’s behaviour was too

⁷ [gscp-working-together-to-tackle-exploitation-in-gloucestershire-2022.pdf](#)

⁸ [lcspr-thematic-cse-review-feb-2021.pdf \(trixonline.co.uk\)](#)

⁹ [Welcome to the NWG Network](#)

often seen as troubling, rather than troubled and considered disruptive by adults who were supporting them.

- The need to have stable homes and stable school places, the opportunity to form close and safe friendships.
- Not having stable positive adult relationships (parental or others) afforded perpetrators a greater opportunity to exploit children and young people. Children described feeling “alone.”
- All those who provided their views now wanted to take up further education and employment opportunities and to form positive stable relationships.
- Children and young people described wanting to take responsibility for improving their emotional health and wanted support to achieve this. The provision of mental and emotional health support was a key issue.

4. Contextual Safeguarding

- 4.1. Responses to child abuse often focus on intrafamilial harm, which is harm caused within families, whereas CSE and child exploitation more generally occurs outside of the home. Contextual Safeguarding is an approach that was first proposed in 2015 by Professor Carlene Firmin at the university of Bedfordshire and subsequently, Durham. It is an approach to child protection that is intended to assess, support, and where necessary intervene with, peer relationships, educational and public contexts where young people are at risk of significant harm and is offers a way of understanding, and responding to, young people’s experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people’s experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships.
- 4.2. The approach necessitates the engagement of children’s social care practitioners, child protection systems and wider safeguarding partnerships with individuals and sectors able to influence the extra-familial context, for example, community safety partners, the night-time economy, the built environment, parks and leisure and the wider community. Intervention within these spaces form a critical part of safeguarding practices. Contextual Safeguarding, therefore, expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people are vulnerable to abuse beyond their front doors.”¹⁰
- 4.3. The Contextual Safeguarding team¹¹ are now based within Durham University's Sociology department and undertake research with young people, families, and practitioners to inform practice developments using their approach to improve outcomes for children. Their research has influenced government policy in this area and their website contains a

¹⁰ [Contextual Safeguarding Research Durham University. About us | Contextual Safeguarding](#)

¹¹ [Research | Contextual Safeguarding](#)

number of resources and toolkits developed for use by safeguarding partnerships and practitioners.

- 4.4. In September 2023, Gloucestershire successfully applied to join the strategic leaders Contextual Safeguarding Local Area of Interest Network (LAIN). Membership of the southwest LAIN provides access to contextual safeguarding developments in our areas and the opportunity to learn from the experience of others. In this way, we intend to stay at the forefront of practice in this area.

5. Locality MACE Arrangements

- 5.1. Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) meetings are used across the UK to bring together agencies and respond to exploitation of children in all its forms. Following consultation with other local authorities, including North Yorkshire (a similar shire county to Gloucestershire's rated 'outstanding' by Ofsted and the NWG) and, taking account of research findings from the Contextual Safeguarding team, Gloucestershire has moved its MACE arrangements from a countywide centralised meeting to one that sits within each locality. This allows local organisations, who know their community to come together to share intelligence in respect of exploitation with the purpose of mobilising an appropriate response to tackle and disrupt the people and places of concern. MACE meetings are chaired by the GCC Child Exploitation coordinator and supported by the MACE coordinator, a jointly funded post between Gloucestershire Police and Children's Services.
- 5.2. It is important to note that MACE compliments and does not replace the existing child protection and support pathways, which start at the front door, multiagency safeguarding hub (MASH) and continue to allocation of a social worker where required.

6. Gloucestershire Childrens Services dedicated Child Exploitation (CE) Team

- 6.1. The CE Team (formerly the CSE team) was set up in 2014 following the Rotherham Inquiry which considered child sexual exploitation in the town between 1997-2013¹². The team work on a countywide basis and are co-located with the Police Child Exploitation Team in the Public Protection Unit in Gloucester. The team comprises a child exploitation co-ordinator, senior social worker and 1.5 full-time equivalent social workers. It works closely with Police, Social Care, Health, Education, Youth Support (Missing and Youth Justice) Services, the voluntary sector, Housing, and Community Safety Partnerships.
- 6.2. The team have oversight of all the screening tools that come into the team and provide a multiagency approach to decision making, contributing to the decisions around the risk level for the young person including referral for consideration at the locality missing and child exploitation (MACE) meeting.

¹² [independent-inquiry-into-child-sexual-exploitation-in-rotherham](#)

- 6.3. The child exploitation social workers undertake direct work with young people who are at high risk of exploitation. They are skilled and experienced, taking a person-centred, trauma informed approach when working directly with children and young people. They are able to spend time building relationships with children and young people where others may experience greater difficulty. These workers complement existing services, having the time and space to develop a trusted relationship in which the young person feels cared about and which young people tell us is so important.
- 6.4. Between 2022 and 2023, the child exploitation workers worked directly with 33 young people. Allocated workloads are kept low to allow workers to build relationships and respond at a frequency led by the young person and their current circumstances. Of these, a small number of children's risk levels reduced, and a further small group have ended involvement with children's social care. Evidence of impact can take time to achieve given complex and multi-faceted nature of the abuse and trauma experienced.
- 6.5. In addition to the direct work with children and young people, workers also support parents and carers, working with them as safeguarding partners and supporting them to feel heard.

7. What children, young people and families say about the service

"[The CE SW] has become an invaluable support and safety net, not only for [YP] but for us as a family. [SW] has made a massive impact on our lives since [YP] was placed on a child protection plan, and I really couldn't thank her more for her time and effort in helping to keep [YP] safe. We need more people like [SW] to help in protecting our young people."

'He is starting to trust you, I think this will help me a lot.'

"you don't give up on me" and keep coming back"

"You have gotten through [YP]'s barriers, she trusts you and likes you..."

"Thank you so much for the support you gave. I will miss you as much as I think. You've done a wonderful job xxx"

"Hey, ik your not gunna see this right now but I just wanna say thank you for everything you've done for me this year, I appreciate it so so much, and idk what I would've done without you, you've helped me realise my worth and become more confident, I couldn't as for a better support worker, you really inspire me and anyone's lucky to have you in there life. Thank

8. Gloucestershire Police

- 8.1. Gloucestershire police created a dedicated CSE response in 2014 which has evolved over time. CSE is declared as a Force Operational Priority owned by the Head of Public Protection Unit.
- 8.2. The Head of Public Protection Unit devised a departmental 'health check' (based on HMICFRS inspections and relevant best practice) which was then applied across all of the Police internal child protection teams and a gap analysis conducted on the findings to devise a corresponding Child Protection Development Plan, which is being implemented and covers the Child Abuse Investigation Team, MASH, CSE, the child exploitation missing and mental health (CEMM) and Indecent Images of Children (IIOC) teams.
- 8.3. The Constabulary also regularly accesses the national CSE Taskforce, which is part of the Hydrant Programme¹³. The Taskforce works in partnership with the Tackling Organised Exploitation (TOEX) programme and the Vulnerability Knowledge Practice Programme (VKPP) to provide local forces with access to advice, guidance, peer review and analytical products.

9. Commissioned services- Youth Support Team (YST) (Shaw Trust/Prospects)

- 9.1. The YST Exploitation & Complex Engagement (ECET) Team works with CSE, Criminal Exploitation (CE) and Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB). CSE makes up approximately 40% of the team's work (CE is increasing). The team works with approximately 50 young people at any one time and is commissioned to work alongside social workers with children and young people who have either child in need or child protection plans.
- 9.2. The team comprises 1 Senior Practitioner, two full time and two part time Case Responsible Offers. The role of the ECET Case Responsible Officer (CRO) is to apply a structured case management approach. The ECET work is based on a good understanding of the individual child's needs and uses trauma informed approaches to build trusted relationships and person-centred plans. Like the CE social workers, the CRO workers take the time needed to engage those that professionals are struggling to reach.
- 9.3. The team deliver direct work to children and families as well as delivering training, support, and consultation to other professionals and are able to draw on the wider services available within the YST for example, speech/language/communication therapists, the Activities Team,

¹³ Operation Hydrant coordinates multiple non-recent child sexual abuse investigations around the country. Relevant investigations are those which involve either people of public prominence and/or abuse that has taken place in an institution. In most cases the victims are reporting abuse that took place when they were children. [Operation Hydrant | College of Policing](#)

Substance Misuse (SMU), Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) Teams, as well as other agencies such as the Police, Exploitation Team and Education.

10. Health response

- 10.1. At present the health representative at Gloucestershire MACE meetings is a Specialist Nurse for Safeguarding Children (SNSC). To date, SNSC participates in four of the locality MACE meetings with the ambition of attending all six in future.
- 10.2. The health representative will provide relevant and proportionate information prior to MACE meetings and will take actions to ensure that these are recorded and passed to the appropriate professional or health team.
- 10.3. Over last 12 months SNSC has delivered presentation to Safeguarding Group members and School Nursing Service raising profile of new Locality MACE process promoting use of Child Exploitation Screening tool, Intelligence reporting forms and guidance for both.
- 10.4. Gloucestershire Health and Care (GHC) Safeguarding Practitioners actively promote, direct, and support all practitioners in the use of Child Exploitation Screening Tool and contribute to strategy meetings for young people at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation, disseminating outcomes accordingly.

11. Information provided by Vulnerable Access Nurses (Sexual Health) (VANs)

- 11.1. The GHC VANs offer on-going sexual health advice, sexual health screening, and contraception services to young people at risk of CSE. The VANs work creatively to see children and young people at a venue of their choice, communicate with them via a method of their choice (text, email, face to face, phone etc) and ensure consistency of nurse to build trusting relationships.
- 11.2. All children coming through the Pregnancy Advisory and Integrated Sexual Health Services (PAS & ISH) are assessed using an <18 proforma with CSE questions (formulated from initial spotting the signs) embedded to ensure best practice at recognising CSE and other vulnerabilities.
- 11.3. All children are seen independently in all our clinics initially to ensure their voice is heard and recorded as well as to provide the opportunity to discuss more sensitive and intimate topics.
- 11.4. Home testing kits are available to over 16s in Gloucestershire. All patients aged under 18 accessing these kits must complete an online screening tool prior to being issued a kit, which includes questions around CSE and exploitation. Any flagged answers that indicate risks for various things

including CSE are then taken by the Sexual Health advising team to ensure the child or young person is telephoned. Issues are explored and the child or young person encouraged to attend face to face appointments, with any further safeguarding issues referred as appropriate via referral to the Children's Single Point of Contact/MASH. There is a pathway in place via school nurses and safeguarding teams to contact those young people who do not engage with these attempts to call.

- 11.5. The service performs an internal annual audit of outcomes for our U18 proforma. We also use national reporting and coding systems for sexual health (SHRAD and GUMCAD), and this requires us to also report CSE findings for national statistics.¹⁴
- 11.6. The service has a vulnerable access nursing (VANS) team which represents sexual health services at MACE and in other areas, working with all ages where vulnerabilities and additional needs have been identified. The creation of VANS has allowed sexual health to build a network amongst other teams (CSE team, school nurses, child in care teams, CAMHS etc) to ensure easier access into the service and speedier information sharing. There are CSE specialist residential settings within county and the VANS team can also support with accessing care for those children in care from other local authorities that live in Gloucestershire.
- 11.7. VANS also allows for a continuity of care by allowing children to see the same clinicians and build relationships of trust, thereby reducing the trauma of having to retell their story to different professionals. This is strongly indicated in feedback from children who have experienced CSE as a need, not a want.
- 11.8. VANS are able to work reactively to meet the needs of children by offering community appointments, outreach work or home visits and can ensure flexibility to meet the needs of the child.
- 11.9. VANS team receive all MARACS so can be alerted to risks which may involve children and the need for contextual safeguarding.
- 11.10. VANS work closely with the vulnerable midwifery team and young people's midwives to ensure that anyone known to have vulnerabilities and is pregnant has appropriate and proportionate information shared with them to again, provide continuity of care without retraumatising.
- 11.11. VANS team have a smartphone and patients working with them have access to nurses via SMS and WhatsApp which has given all patients and particularly young and low-income people access to clinical support and the capacity to make their own appointments. It is especially useful to have WhatsApp for those with no credit and it can be difficult when children have had their telephones removed.

¹⁴ [Sexual and Reproductive Health Activity Data Set \(SRHAD\) collection - NHS Digital](#)

- 11.12. An area of focus for the service is the 18-25 age range where CSE may continue but due to the statutory safeguarding differences between children and adults, it remains a grey area. Care leavers have additional support and may be assessed for CSE risks in this age range, but others may be missed. We believe this is a gap and mitigate this within our proformas in both ISH and PAS by asking questions about sexual and domestic violence, substance use, transactional sex, and general relationship control / coercion with the aim of providing opportunities for patients to access support for any issues that they divulge.
- 11.13. A further area of work is the movement of those children known to be experiencing CSE across counties to disrupt perpetrators which can then cause additional vulnerabilities in ensuring that local authorities work together to deliver seamless care with a multi-disciplinary team approach across specialities and professions.

12. Information provided by Education Inclusion Service

- 12.1. Operationally, the Education Inclusion Service provides representation at MACE and missing meetings. They can provide demographic information, be curious around links (such as Schools) and can liaise directly with the child's school or education setting when required. The team provides support and challenge to ensure that children and young people are provided with the right response, making any necessary referrals to teams to ensure that where young people are not accessing education, employment, or training, they can be supported to do so. We know that this is important to reduce the risk of exploitation.
- 12.2. Strategically, the Education Inclusion Service is represented at a variety of meetings – CSE and Missing Subgroup, YJ Education Subgroup, Youth Violence Prevention, Urban Street Gangs (GRIP) and Police Operations. As a team, they will share and highlight the importance of awareness and signs of CSE to education colleagues including schools through forums such as Heads Up, attendance network meetings and targeted supported meetings.

13. Inspection feedback

- 13.1. Services aimed at supporting children at risk of or victim to exploitation were considered in both the Children's Social Care full inspection of February 2022 and the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) of June 2023.
- 13.2. Inspectors found that:
"Since the last inspection, strong and effective services to support some vulnerable groups of children have been developed. The response to children who are at risk of or who are experiencing criminal or sexual exploitation has improved since the development of the children's exploitation team. Regular multi-agency meetings oversee support to children

through robust risk management planning, which leads to interventions that help reduce the likelihood of further incidents of exploitation. Children who go missing have workers who are persistent in completing return home interviews that include detailed conversations with children to inform safety plans that reduce risk effectively.” Ofsted Children’s Services Inspection report - February 2022.

“The child exploitation, missing and mental health team, based at police headquarters, is co-located with the multi-agency child sexual exploitation team. This helps to ensure that there is a coordinated multi-agency response when children are identified to be at risk of or experiencing harm from exploitation, including children who are reported to be missing from home or care. Partners have a close working relationship, and this supports effective information-sharing to better understand exploitation risks to children. 6 Through a multi-agency child exploitation meeting, partners share intelligence and information effectively about local hot spots, perpetrators, and persons of concern. This enables professionals to identify emerging themes to develop targeted disruption activity. In addition, the coordination of actions to inform children’s current risk assessments and trigger plans is supported by daily multi-agency meetings.” JTAI report – June 2023.

14. Next steps

- 14.1. It is recognised that there is more to do to continue to mature as an effective safeguarding partnership able to protect children and young people from abuse and exploitation and to apprehend those who wish to perpetrate such crimes. The partnership is committed to continuous improvement and to delivering the ambitions set out in our strategy. Our approach is informed by research and evidence-based practice but is not, as yet, driven by a comprehensive picture derived from multiagency data. It is critical that our next steps include this development, something that was highlighted in the JTAI of June 2023. Other next steps include:
- Engaging children, young people, parents, and carers in sharing their experiences and working collaboratively to develop services, “nothing about me without me.” This includes the recently initiated review of the Child Exploitation Team and the delivery model currently in use.
 - Implement recommendations from the Gloucestershire Police commissioned peer review of missing persons arrangements, contributed to by partners. The review report will be made available by end of November 2023.
 - The Youth Service contract will be recommissioned in early 2024 and is being designed to incorporate current thinking and approaches to exploitation, as well as the new statutory guidance

for local authorities on services to improve young people's wellbeing¹⁵.

- To continue Gloucestershire's partnership with NWG, North Yorkshire and the Contextual Safeguarding Team with next steps being the development and delivery of training across the partnership and to all corporate parents, raising awareness and skill levels regarding recognising and responding to exploitation effectively.
- Review our initial assessment and response to vulnerability within our MASH / Front Door arrangements. The aim will be to share relevant information at the earliest point thereby supporting a swift multi-agency assessment of risk and required response commensurate with the published Levels of Intervention¹⁶ document. This is being led by the Area Manager and Head of Service for the MASH who will then make proposals to the multiagency safeguarding partnership's Missing and Child Exploitation Subgroup.
- Focus on the alignment with and shared endeavour to deliver the Exploitation Strategy from both a Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children's Partnership and Safer Gloucestershire perspective.

¹⁵ [Statutory guidance for local authorities on services to improve young people's well-being - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

¹⁶ trixcms.trixonline.co.uk/api/assets/gloucestershirescp/b5f87cf7-c583-439c-8e0b-dc79983c9ab6/