Solihull All Age Exploitation Reduction Strategy 2023 - 2026

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1. Introduction

Solihull Together, the Safeguarding Adults Board, the Safeguarding Children Partnership, Safer Solihull and partners in Solihull are committed to protecting children, young people and adults from all types of exploitation. We recognise we have more to do to ensure that we deliver a consistently robust and integrated response to children, young people and adults at risk of exploitation in the borough. 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, in 2020 we developed the borough's first all age exploitation reduction strategy. It outlined the partnership approach we are taking in the borough. We have now refreshed the strategy for 2023-2026 and it continues to be aimed at supporting and giving direction to people who work to reduce exploitation in Solihull.

Our ambition is to continue to work in partnership to prevent exploitation; identify and protect those at risk of exploitation; strengthen resilience of victims and communities; support victims in their recovery; and pursue those who perpetrate exploitation and bring them to justice.



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

This strategy has been mandated by Solihull Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB), Solihull Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP), Safer Solihull Partnership and Solihull Health and Wellbeing Board (H&WBB). It will be delivered through the Solihull Exploitation Reduction Delivery Group.

2. What do we mean by Exploitation?

The West Midlands regional definition of exploitation is:

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.

The victim may have been exploited even if the activity appears consensual due to his /her specific situation. Exploitation does not always involve physical contact, it can also occur through the use of technology, e.g., as the result of a grooming process which takes place during conversations in chat rooms, or through the use of social media.

Solihull recognises that exploitation is deliberate maltreatment and manipulation irrespective of their age, gender, ethnicity, background or ability and sexuality and comes in many forms, including:

- modern slavery
- human trafficking
- sexual exploitation
- criminal exploitation.

Exploitation can also be a strong feature of the following, but these are out of scope for this Strategy, as they are not primarily based on exploitative relationships and already have embedded processes in place to respond to them:

- radicalisation and extremism
- domestic violence and abuse (forced marriages, honour based violence and FGM)
- rogue trader, bogus callers and scammers
- abuse of positions of trust
- hate crime

For glossary of terms see Appendix 1.

It is acknowledged that victims may lack the capacity to consent or may be being threatened or coerced. Use of the Mental Capacity Act (2005) to protect and support people is key- this applies to people aged 16+. Grooming, coercion and control have been known to all have an impact on mental capacity, particularly where sexual or criminal exploitation is a factor.

It is imperative that appropriate terminology is used when discussing individuals who have been exploited or are at risk of exploitation. Language implying that the person is complicit in any way, or responsible for the crimes that have happened or may happen to them, must be avoided. Language should reflect the presence of coercion and the lack of control people have in abusive or exploitative situations and must recognise the severity of the impact exploitation has on the person. Please refer to the Solihull Language Matters Guide for the full document.

The following diagram separates out the different forms of exploitation into three Tiers:

- ✓ Tier 1 is the focus of Solihull's Exploitation Strategy, to be delivered by the Exploitation Reduction Delivery Group.
- ✓ At Tier 2 there are specific established processes and pathways already in place, such as MARAC, Channel, etc., and
- ✓ Tier 3 risks are primarily managed through established statutory safeguarding procedures.



Services in Solihull are delivered based on assessments of need at different levels. The diagram below illustrates in very broad terms how services are structured: Universal Services which are available to everyone, Targeted Support for individuals and families who require additional services to ensure lower level needs and risks are managed, and Specialist Services for individuals with the most significant and complex needs, including the need to be protected from harm.



A mapping exercise has been undertaken to identify across the Partnership those services available to support individuals at risk of or experiencing exploitation at the different levels of need. Those and wider services can be found through accessing My Solihull Map.

3. National and Local Context

3.1 National Picture

National data, research and reviews are all evidencing the increase in modern slavery, trafficking, sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation of both children and adults.

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) - the framework for identifying victims of human trafficking or modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support, in 2022 identified 16,938 potential victims of modern slavery - a 33% increase from 2021 and the highest number of referrals since the NRM began in 2009. Of which 49% claimed that the exploitation occurred in the UK only, with 50% of referrals relating to adults and 43% relating to children. The age group for the remaining 7% was not known[1].

In quarter 3 (July – Sept 2022), labour exploitation was the most common form of exploitation for adults (50%), whilst criminal exploitation was most common for children (41%). Potential victims from the Albania, UK and Eritrea were the three most common nationalities to be referred[2].

Gaming, social media and online forums all have a significant role to play in the trafficking and exploitation of children and adults on a global level, as well as nationally or locally[3]. In addition, there is also recognition from the work of Programme Challenger in Greater Manchester[4] that because services nationally have been working in silos for sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, modern slavery and trafficking; they have not effectively shared information to recognise that many of the perpetrators are the same people.

There have been a number of high profile cases which have raised the awareness of the extent of (child) sexual exploitation, including Rotherham where it was estimated that 1400 children had been sexually exploited over the 16 year period covered by the National Inquiry.

There is limited information nationally, however, about the sexual exploitation of adults although it is clear that sexual exploitation does not stop when an individual reaches their 18th birthday and in some cases does not start until an individual has reached adulthood. Transition from childhood to adulthood can be seen as a particularly risky period in relation to sexual exploitation. The Casey 'Report of the Inspection of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council' in 2015 highlighted that "abuse and violence continues to affect victims into

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[1] Modern Slavery: National Referral Mechanism and Duty to Notify statistics UK, end of year summary 2022 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

[2] https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-referral-mechanism-and-duty-to-notify-statistics-uk-july-to-september-2022/modern-slavery-national-referral-mechanism-and-duty-to-notify-statistics-uk-quarter-3-2022-july-to-september#:~:text=In%20quarter%203%202022%2C%20the,referrals%20since%20the%20NRM%20began.

[3] https://www.europol.europa.eu/publications-documents/criminal-networks-involved-in-trafficking-and-exploitation-of-underage-victims-in-eu

[4] https://www.programmechallenger.co.uk/

adulthood" and that there were "serious concerns about the group of young people during their transition to adulthood".

Between February and June 2016 five Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAIs) focused on child sexual exploitation and children missing from home, care and education. The findings from these inspections are summarised in the overview report 'Time to Listen – a joined up response to child sexual exploitation and missing children'[5]. The report identified that more can be done to ensure that all children and young people receive consistently good support from all agencies and in all areas; poor practice by some professionals and some key agencies means that some children at risk of exploitation were still not getting the response they needed quickly enough and it was emphasised that responding effectively to child sexual exploitation requires all partners to take responsibility for their own work and to work collaboratively with each other.

As partner agencies continued to work together to ensure the response to sexual exploitation is robust, professionals were increasingly becoming aware of other models of exploitation and their impact on vulnerable children and adults, in particular those involving criminal exploitation.

The National Crime Agency (NCA) reports that there are currently over 2000 individual deal line numbers in the UK. Exploitation remains integral to the business model with offenders recruiting, transporting and exploiting vulnerable individuals, including children, to carry out criminal activity essential to their operations. There can be a high risk of violence and serious injury, including loss of life, in relation to county lines offending with vulnerable drug users and runners at the greatest risk of violence. In 2018 the Home Office published its Serious Violence Strategy outlining the Government's response to knife, gun crime and homicide. Tackling 'county lines' and the misuse of drugs is one strand of the national strategy[6].

In response to increasing awareness of the risks to children being exploited for criminal reasons, three further Joint Targeted Area Inspections were completed in 2018 which also focussed on children associated with gangs and who were at risk of criminal exploitation, including 'county lines'. The findings of these three inspections are reported in: '*Protecting children from criminal exploitation, human trafficking and modern slavery: an addendum*[7]' which supplemented the previous JTAI findings looking at child sexual exploitation. This report recognised that agencies have done much to address child sexual exploitation, but called for them to learn the lessons of the past in responding to the criminal exploitation of children and 'county lines'. It noted that agencies, locally or nationally, did not yet fully understand the scale or level of this safeguarding

[5] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/676421/Time_to_listen___a_joined_up_response_to_child_sexual_exploitation_and_missing_children.pdf

[6] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-strategy

[7] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/756031/Protecting_children_from_criminal_exploitation_human_trafficking_modern_slavery_addendum_141118.pdf

challenge, and the need for professionals to be flexible and respond quickly to changing risks. It concluded that family-focused services were not always appropriate for dealing with the exploitation of children outside of a family setting.

The first national review undertaken by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel in February 2020[8] focussed on the response to young people who had already been drawn into criminal exploitation and where high levels of risk of serious harm had been identified. It asked two connected questions about whether young people in need of protection get the help they need at the right time, and what improvements can be made to the way services work together to provide greater protection. The review did identify examples of good practice, but found that young people do not always receive the right help from statutory agencies at the right time. The review identified a number of ways in which services could be improved, including working more effectively with families and responding quickly and flexibly at times when young people are likely to be at their most vulnerable.

In 2022, an independent inquiry was commissioned by Telford and Wrekin Local Authority into the child exploitation in the Borough. The inquiry sought to better understand whether public services and other agencies had failed to support child victims of sexual exploitation, with a view to establish accountability and share their recommendation to keep victims safe in the future.

The commission found a total of 1000 children were sexually exploited whose needs had not been adequately met or supported as exploited children. Some of the key issues highlighted includes, victim blaming; racial biases; lack of multi-agency challenge; generational exploiters; lack of a response to contextual harm; focus on the child behaviour.

The report made six key recommendations which includes;

1. Strengthening the criminal justice response to exploitation
2. Government to develop and publish the Child Exploitation Disruption Toolkit
3. Review of Government guidance on child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation
4. Categorisation of risk and harm
5. Better multi agency collation of data to build and develop problem profiling
6. The ban of unregulated placements

3.2 Regional approach

The West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has set up the West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership; a multi-agency strategic partnership which ensures and oversees the effectiveness of arrangements made by individual agencies to prevent and reduce violence, vulnerability and exploitation. This Board seeks to co-ordinate efforts across the West Midlands Metropolitan Area in developing and implementing a public health, long term

[8] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-at-risk-from-criminal-exploitation

systemic approach to preventing and reducing violence, vulnerability and exploitation. The establishment of the West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit (WM-VRP) is a collaborative regional approach to addressing violence, vulnerability and exploitation. There are agreements for each West Midlands authority to work with the VRP on its prevention agenda.

In addition, the West Midlands Criminal Exploitation and Missing Board has been established to ensure that there is an effective joined up approach to preventing, identifying and responding to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk of or experiencing exploitation. The Board is responsible for the development and delivery of multi-agency strategies which prevent children, young people and adults from being harmed by criminal exploitation and reduce the number of children who go missing or are absent in the West Midlands Police Force area; protect those who have been harmed; pursue offenders who have harmed them; and ensure that key stakeholders are effectively contributing towards delivery of the Board's priorities.

Membership includes senior strategic leads responsible for local service responses to exploitation from a range of partner agencies. The West Midlands Criminal Exploitation and Missing Board is accountable to the West Midlands Community Safety Partnership and has representation from the associated councils, including SMBC.

Solihull supports the regional initiatives as required, feeds into the work being undertaken and considers outcomes to ensure that the local response to exploitation is fully informed by regional learning and best practice.

3.3 Exploitation in Solihull

In 2017 the Local Government Association (LGA) carried out a Peer Diagnostic Review of the Solihull Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) arrangements. The CSE Strategy was found to be clear and well supported and there was evidence of strong multi-agency support for CSE activity. Solihull was seen as a champion in the approach to addressing CSE. Recommendations for development included:

- the need to broaden learning about CSE to wider forms of exploitation (in line with the findings from national themed Joint Targeted Area Inspections);
- the need to develop reporting mechanisms to demonstrate impact and outcomes;
- the need to embed a dataset to support strategic planning and operational development.

In 2019 Solihull Safeguarding Adults Board completed a Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) following the death of Rachel who was 20 years old[9]. Rachel had previously been a victim of sexual abuse, and had also been a victim of sexual exploitation and trafficking from the age of 17 onwards.

[9] https://www.safeguardingsolihull.org.uk/ssab/safeguarding-adult-reviews/safeguarding-adult-review-reports/

The SAR confirmed that there had been a number of important developments during and since Rachel's case, which had enhanced the response to children and adults who are at risk of exploitation, and/or are experiencing mental health issues.

The learning and priorities for action from this SAR centred around a combination of strategic, partnership working and practice issues in responding to victims of sexual exploitation both pre and post 18 years of age, the processes and eligibility criteria for identifying support when children transition into adulthood, and issues around joint working in response to adults who go missing.

A number of the issues identified by the SAR were not new and had been identified previously through the work of the CSE Steering Group and/or the findings of the Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Diagnostic Review referred to above.

Partnership working and practice has significantly progressed since the original learning from the SAR and is moving towards a business as usual approach. The All-Age Exploitation Reduction Strategy was positively referenced in the JTAI in 2022 as follows *'…The partnership, in collaboration with the Solihull Safeguarding Adults Board and the Safer Solihull Partnership, has worked well to create an All-Age Exploitation Reduction Strategy. This clearly sets out the strategic objectives to assess and reduce risk for all vulnerable people in Solihull.'*

Progress has involved partners in Solihull developing and agreeing All-Age Multi-Agency Exploitation Reduction Safeguarding Procedures and an All-age Screening Tool that are to be followed in all cases involving exploitation across Children and Adult Services. These procedures were launched in March 2021 and are currently being reviewed to ensure they still meet local needs. These procedures set out consistent processes and support for children through transitions to adulthood in addition to support for adult victims of exploitation through Multi-Agency Adult Child Exploitation (MAACE meetings).

Partners have also worked together to develop a Vulnerability Tracker which is a comprehensive data set based on cases of exploitation in Solihull. This supports an improved understanding of the prevalence of exploitation in Solihull and provides useful information on demographics of victims, locations and types of exploitation. This data tells us that numbers of exploited individuals are gradually increasing quarter to quarter, likely due to increased awareness raising and focus on this issue. Criminal exploitation is the highest reported form of exploitation making up approximately 64% cases. There are concerns that sexual exploitation which accounts for 31% cases is underreported and is becoming a more hidden form of exploitation. Additionally, there are concerns that female victims are underreported, making up 32% of cases of exploitation. The majority of cases relate to victims aged 16 or under (71%). 42% of victims have diagnosed Autistic Spectrum Disorder or ADHD and 40% are open to Mental Health Services, indicating perpetrators are seeking out individuals with vulnerabilities that can be exploited.

We also know, that there are specific local factors which need to be considered in developing the local exploitation profile:

- Solihull has an international airport, Birmingham International, so we are a major port of entry within the United Kingdom which can act as a route into the UK for the purposes of people trafficking and modern slavery.

- The West Midlands Immigration Enforcement Team is located within Solihull identifying individuals at risk of or suspected to be experiencing exploitation.

- Solihull sits within the corridor between the cities of Birmingham and Coventry, which means that it is significantly affected by cross border issues pertaining to organised crime (often drug-related) and opportunities for trafficking and exploitation.

- Solihull is located within easy reach of New Street Railway Station which is a central hub of the British railway system and is the busiest station outside London providing links to areas throughout the UK.

- There are distinct areas of income deprivation in the north of the Borough (some of which are in the bottom 5% nationally).

- The rising cost of energy, food and other essentials are combining with existing disadvantage and vulnerability within our communities to put more households at greater risk of both immediate hardship and reduced opportunity and wellbeing which could increase levels of exploitation.

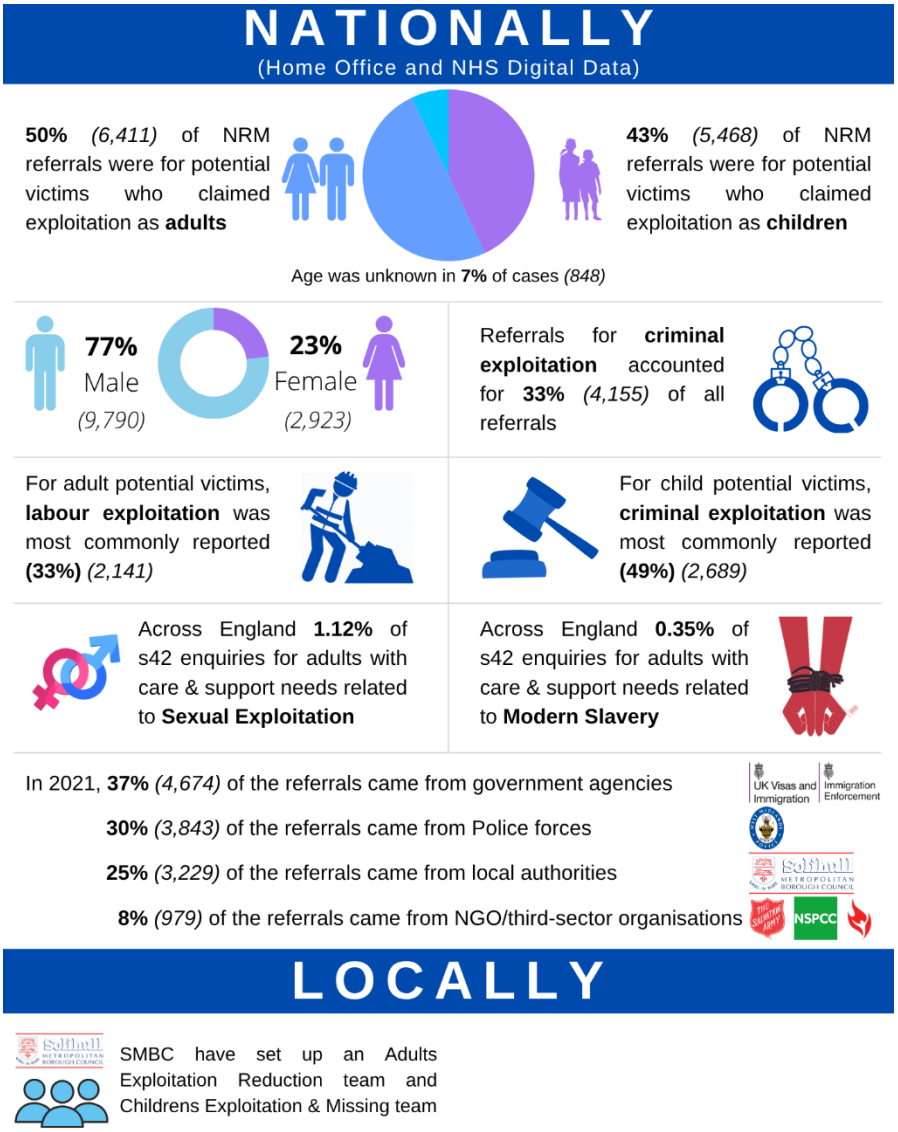
An all-age case file audit and questionnaire sent to staff during 2022 has identified that whilst there is increased awareness of the Exploitation Reduction Procedures implemented in 2021, there are still some staff who are not aware of the procedures or where to find them. The audit also identified that use of the procedures is not full embedded in practice and more work is needed to ensure all staff are aware of and are using the procedures and supporting tools which will be part of our delivery actions against this refreshed strategy.

A review of Solihull's Exploitation Panel (ShEP) should ensure that this meeting focuses on identifying themes and trends in the data to support effective disruption.

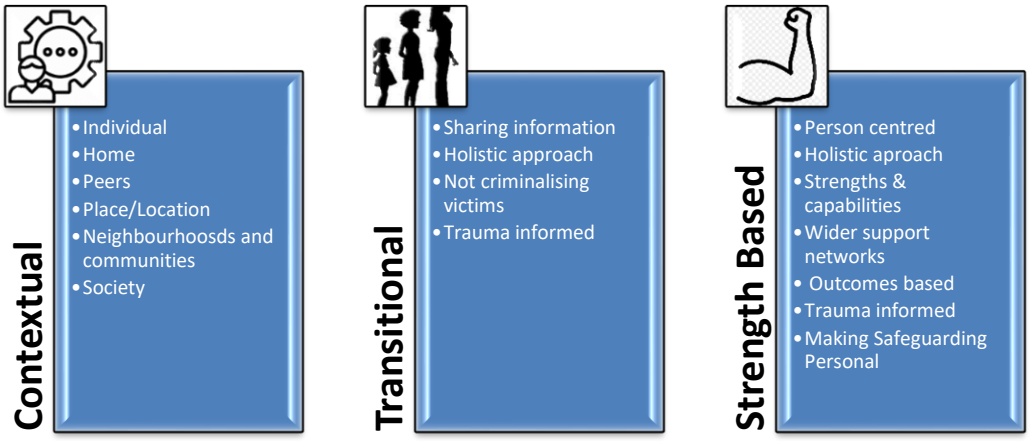
In 2023 a child safeguarding practice review was commissioned following two separate incidents where children and young people were involved in serious youth violence. The review seeks to better understand the pathways of support for young people that have been exploited and their links to serious youth violence, and whether contextual safeguarding practices are well developed and embedded. The final report and recommendation will be published in late 2023

which may result in additions or changes in the exploitation reduction delivery plan.

3.4 2020- 22 Snapshot



4. Our Safeguarding Approach to Exploitation



In Solihull, we take a blended approach when working with individuals at risk of being exploited. The agreed model for working with children and young people under 18 years old is contextual safeguarding. Our approach when working with adults will be tailored to the individual, using the principles of strength-based working. It is important to recognise that adult safeguarding duties under the Care Act (2014) relate specifically to people who are at risk due to disability or illness and who are unable to protect themselves from harm or abuse. Young adults at risk may not be covered by Care Act duties, however, in Solihull, we are committed to working in partnership to develop approaches to reducing risk of exploitation for all adults. We work across the partnership together to ensure the response to children and adult victims of exploitation combines elements from the following approaches:

Contextual Safeguarding is an approach and term developed by Dr Carlene Firmin now at the University of Durham. Solihull has agreed to adopt the Contextual Safeguarding approach in principle when working with children, young people and adults. It requires practitioners to not only consider familial harm but to also take account of the need to assess and intervene outside of the family setting and relationships in order to safeguard individuals at risk and will enable us to do two things:

- Recognise contextual risks during interventions: record contextual issues; collect information about extra-familial risks during assessments; make referrals about specific concerns;
- Address contextual risk: accept referrals for peer groups, schools and public spaces; screen referrals against contextual thresholds; subject them to assessment; discuss assessments at multi-agency meetings; action a plan to reduce the risks in these contexts. These actions feed into the individual child and

family/vulnerable person assessments for the individual affected by that context.

Contextual Safeguarding is not a model, rather an approach that extends the parameters of traditional safeguarding systems to extra-familial settings and relationships. Solihull will seek to achieve this by taking into consideration local demographics, as well as the partnerships and operating systems used by Childrens services, Adult social care and their partners to safeguard against exploitation.

During adolescence and young adulthood in particular, the nature of risks and the way they are experienced become increasingly complex with risks posed by peers, partners and other adults unconnected to their families. These risks:

- often manifest in extra-familial environments including schools, public spaces and online platforms
- are informed by peer norms and relationships
- involve young people perpetrating, as well as experiencing, harm
- can present as the result of perceived 'choices' a young person has made and/or continues to make despite professional/parental intervention
- often feature grooming, coercion, criminality and serious risks of significant sexual and physical harm that create climates of fear and reduce engagement with agencies
- are beyond the control of family members and rarely instigated by family members
- continue into adulthood and particularly for young people during the 18-25 transitional period

Transitional safeguarding is simply a term used to highlight the need to improve the safeguarding response to older teenagers and young adults in a way that recognises their developmental needs. It recognises that adolescence extends into the early/mid-twenties (Sawyer et al. 2018) because the brain is not yet fully developed, and in some cases, there will be a need for specific support to help an individual to navigate through this progression safely. A more fluid and transitional safeguarding approach is needed for young people entering adulthood given that harm, and its effects, do not stop at 18 years. The children's and adults safeguarding systems work to different procedures and are governed by different statutory frameworks, which can make the transition to adulthood harder for young people facing ongoing risk and arguably harder for the professionals who are trying to navigate an effective approach to helping them. The difference in terms of support can be exacerbated by notable differences between thresholds/statutory criteria for children and adult safeguarding responses (Firmin et al., Research in Practice, 2019).

Strengths-based working
The core objective at the heart of the approach in Solihull is to help people to achieve the outcomes that matter to them in their life. Our work, at every level, aims to provide support to the residents of Solihull, in the least intrusive manner possible, based on the assets, resources and abilities that are available to people.

Adopting a strengths-based approach is vital to this. It means focusing on what is important to people, and what they can do, rather than what they find difficult. This is achieved by enabling people to stay as independent and well as possible for as long as possible. When people do need long term support, this is timely, proportionate, responsive and good quality and enables people to continue to live their lives the way they want to.
In strengths-based practice the individual is empowered to have as much choice and control as possible and encouraged to propose options and solutions to enable them to have the life they want.
This is particularly important when working with adults at risk of exploitation, in order to support them to regain control and enable long-term change.

Trauma-Informed Practice
Trauma-Informed practice is grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma, and emphasises physical, psychological, and emotional safety for everyone, and creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment (Hopper et al., 2010).

Duties and Powers
Across the partnership agencies will use the duties and powers invested in them to prevent exploitation and 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: Guide 2014
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Equality Act 2010
- Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Human Rights Act 1998

In summary we will seek to identify and protect victims of exploitation by:

- ✓ sharing information in a timely manner
- ✓ taking a holistic, strengths-based and contextual approach rather than concentrating on risks, incidents and indicators
- ✓ ensuring that young adults aged 18+ continue to receive services to support their safe transition to adulthood
- ✓ not criminalising victims
- ✓ giving consideration to the impact of trauma and providing support to victims in rebuilding a sense of control and empowerment

5. Strategic Objectives

- **To prevent exploitation by increasing awareness and understanding of exploitation** amongst individuals, communities, business and planners to maximise the opportunity to prevent its occurrence within Solihull.

- **To develop a common understanding of exploitation across the Partnerships** with a clear expectation that each organisation is responsible for ensuring its workforce has access to relevant training and development opportunities and its practitioners are signposted to the All-Age Multi-Agency Exploitation Reduction Safeguarding Procedures and screening tool.

- **To improve the recognition, assessment and response** to individuals at risk of or experiencing exploitation; which prevents the need for statutory intervention.

- **To increase disruption, arrests and prosecution of offenders** involved in exploitation; effective management of those in medium-high risk offending and deter those involved in lower level criminology**.**

- **To strengthen resilience of victims and communities** to mitigate harm caused by exploitation by raising awareness of risks through active communications and training.

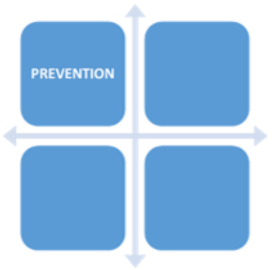
- To secure and sustain a collective commitment to addressing and responding to exploitation across all partner agencies and to demonstrate **effective leadership** in driving the appropriate system, culture and process changes forward.

- To ensure the effectiveness of **service provision**:

    - Evidence-based practice will continue to be developed and promoted.
    - Work with individuals will continue to be measured by its impact on outcomes.
    - The views of individuals, their families and their support networks will continue to inform the development of effective interventions.
    - Single and multi-agency audits will continue to be undertaken to monitor the effectiveness of interventions. This process will seek evidence that the voice of the individual has been taken into account in all assessments, planning processes and reviews.

6. Our Priorities

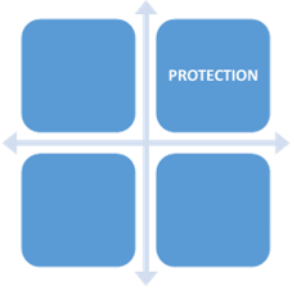
Priority 1 – Prevention



Improve awareness, understanding and early recognition of exploitation across the partnership, communities and society.

- The multi-agency workforce has a clear understanding of exploitation.
- The multi-agency workforce 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/society are better equipped to recognise exploitation in all its forms and how to report it.
- In response to this, Solihull have developed Exploitation Reduction Resources which are aimed at raising awareness and understanding of exploitation within the workforce, community and within the general public.
- Planners ensure that designs for social and community settings consider opportunities for exploitative behaviour.
- 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 problem-profile their local area to analyse and understand all the patterns of exploitation to which children, young people and adults are subjected to. A comprehensive problem-profile is available and shared across all key partners to inform the development of a multi-agency strategy and action plans, the commissioning of services and the delivery of training and awareness-raising activity to support local professionals.
- Working towards the development of a multi-agency exploitation hub to ensure early intervention and use of robust evidenced based decision making where exploitation is identified, to assess risk.

Priority 2 – Protection

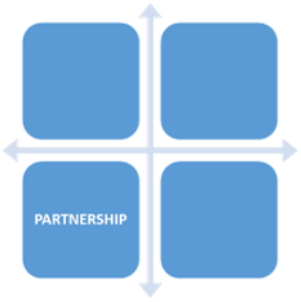


Improve individuals' and communities' resilience to tackle and reduce exploitation and the interventions to tackle exploitation.

- 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, safeguarding plans and trigger plans are effective and kept under review through MAACE meetings and the use of support and disruption plans.
- 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.
- Ensure that people who use our services are engaged in sharing their experiences to improve and develop resources, services and processes.
- That multi-agency interventions are focussed on the individual.

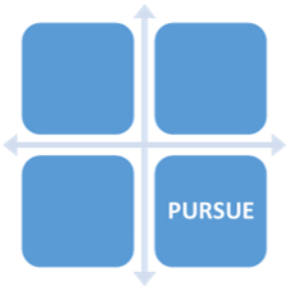
Priority 3 - Partnership and Leadership



Continue with 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.
- Progress the 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, young people and adults might require further intensive training and must have regular opportunities to reflect on their practice with a skilled consultant or supervisor.
- Through self-assessment to continue to improve services to reflect the needs of Solihull residents and identify gaps in service provision.

Priority 4 – Pursue and disruption



Improve prosecutions and disruption of locations, individuals and groups responsible for exploitation through effective partnership working and sharing of information. Supporting and safeguarding victims.

- 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.
- Identify offenders and locations and utilising powers within all agencies to gather intelligence and disrupt exploitation.

7. Measuring Success

The success of the strategy will be measured based on a range of quantitative and qualitative measures:

The measures below, which were set in the first iteration of this strategy in 2020, continue to be the most effective measures of success of exploitation reduction in Solihull.

A local data set has been established identifying demographics of children and adult victims of exploitation, locations and exploiters which is enabling organisations to improve their services to meet the needs of people within Solihull.

There is a dedicated Exploitation and Missing Team within children's services and adult Exploitation Reduction Team within adult social care directorate working together and supporting people of all ages where exploitation is a concern.

The development of multi-agency exploitation reduction procedures has seen an increase in referrals and improved processes and multi-agency working through Multi-Agency Adult / Child Exploitation (MAACE) meetings and escalation processes into Solihull Exploitation Panel.

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) devolved panel

The NRM devolved pilot went live nationally in June 2021. The aim of the pilot is to test whether determining if a child is a victim of modern slavery within existing safeguarding structures is a more appropriate model for making modern slavery decisions for children. The pilot also aims to enable decisions about whether a child is a victim of modern slavery to be made by those involved in their care and to ensure that the decisions made are closely aligned with the provision of local, needs-based support and any law enforcement response.

Since the commencement of the pilot, we have seen partners supplying relevant information to assist the decision-making process which has enabled partners to be more able to identify and protect those young people who are being exploited. We have seen a reduction in the length of time that it takes for young people to receive NRM decisions with all reasonable and conclusive grounds decisions being made within 90 days of referral. Solihull had seen an increase in NRM referrals at the start of the pilot through more awareness and an educated workforce, however the high staff turnover and increase in agency staff has impacted on this recently.

The pilot has been extended to April 2024 and will continue to work with our multi agency partners to reduce exploitation and better protect those at risk of exploitation.

The pilot will continue to focus on its aims of ensuring that better support is provided to victims in their recovery, strengthen the resilience of victims and communities and achieve higher prosecution rates of perpetrators of exploitation.

We have made great progress in a number of these areas but there is still more to be done. Audits of exploitation cases have evidenced effective use of the screening tool, procedures and multi-agency working but this is not yet embedded across all cases. The audit also provided the opportunity to seek feedback from individuals and their families on their experiences of being supported, which was largely positive. Individuals valued being listened to and knowing what was happening and why. The Exploitation Reduction Delivery Group has made great progress in its ongoing work to improve the multiagency response to exploitation in Solihull.

Quantitative Measures	**Aim to**
Timeliness of response to referrals/concerns	↑
Increase in exploitation referrals/concerns	↑
Improve prosecution outcomes for crimes associated with exploitation	↑
Increase over time in percentage of agencies grading themselves good or outstanding against practice standards	↑
Increase in NRM referrals	↑
Increase in FIB submissions	↑
Agency representation at MAACE meetings	↑
Increase in number of support and disruption plans due to risk of exploitation	↑
Decrease in numbers of children/adults who are re-referred due to exploitation concerns following disruption/safeguarding interventions	↓

Qualitative Measures	**Aim to**
Audits of exploitation cases evidence effective screening, intervention, information sharing and multi-agency working	□
Positive evaluation of ShEP through proportionate case tracking	□
Increase in practitioner confidence and skills across the workforce	↑
Evidence of positive feedback from individuals on their experiences and the impact of support received	□

8. Review and Evaluation

- This Strategy will be reviewed on a two-yearly basis for relevance and effectiveness. The next review will be due in April 2025 to be co-ordinated by the Exploitation Reduction Delivery Group.
- Outcomes will be monitored through the Delivery Plan.
- The difference made to individuals, their families and supporters will be evaluated through audits and other quality assurance activity including reporting to SSAB, SSCP, Safer Solihull, HBB.

Glossary of Terms

Adult safeguarding	Safeguarding adult's means protecting a person's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. Statutory duties are outlined in the Care Act (2014). An adult at risk is any person who is aged 18 years or over and at risk of abuse or neglect because of their needs for care and or support.
Bogus callers	Bogus callers are someone pretending to be someone they are not. If you are not expecting anyone to visit you for a product or service, do not let them into your home and if you're really unsure, don't open the door.
Channel	Channel is part of the Prevent strategy. The process is a multi-agency approach to identify and provide support to individuals who are at risk of being drawn into terrorism.
Contextual Safeguarding	'Contextual safeguarding' is an approach to safeguarding that responds to young people's experiences of harm outside of the home, for example, with peers, in schools and in neighbourhoods ..... Contextual safeguarding framework with specific reference to how contexts relate to each other and inform young people's behaviours.
Criminal exploitation	Criminal exploitation is a form of modern slavery that sees victims being forced to work under the control of highly organised criminals in activities such as forced begging, shoplifting and pickpocketing, cannabis cultivation, drug dealing and financial exploitation.
Domestic violence and abuse	Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse: • psychological • physical • sexual • financial • emotional
Exploitation Reduction Delivery Group (ERDG)	The Exploitation Reduction Delivery Group (ERDG) is responsible for overseeing the development of strategic priorities, and will co-ordinate actions and oversee delivery of these, in respect of both children and adults who are victims, or at risk of exploitation.
FGM	Female genital mutilation (FGM), also known as female genital cutting and female circumcision, is the ritual cutting or removal of some or all of the external female genitalia.
FIB	Force Intelligence Bureau (FIB) Form. The purpose of the Force Intelligence Bureau (FIB) Form, also referred to as the West Midlands Police Information Report, is to inform the police of any intelligence that has been gathered during day to day working.
Forced marriages	Forced marriage is a marriage in which one or more of the parties is married without their consent or against their will.

Hate crime	The term 'hate crime' can be used to describe a range of criminal behaviour where the perpetrator is motivated by hostility or demonstrates hostility towards the victim's disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or transgender identity.
Honour based violence	Honour based violence is a violent crime or incident which may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family or community.
Human trafficking	Human trafficking means: “The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or purchase of persons for the sole purpose of exploitation.”
LSCP	The Local Safeguarding Children Partnership is responsible for ensuring that safeguarding children arrangements in the local area are effective. It has a role in supporting the development of local strategies to improve safeguarding outcomes for children and young people.
MAACE	The MAACE is a multi-agency exploitation meeting. It is aimed at identifying risk and preventing children, young people and adults from being exploited further by working together to gather, share and understand information and intelligence in order to identify potential risks and for agencies to use their resources to protect the individuals through the use of a support and disruption plan.
MARAC	MARAC, or multi-agency risk assessment conference, is a meeting where information is shared on the highest risk domestic abuse cases between representatives of local police, probation, health, child protection, housing practitioners, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) and other specialists from the statutory and voluntary sector.
Modern slavery	Modern Slavery. Slavery is an umbrella term for activities involved when one person obtains or holds another person in compelled service. Someone is in slavery if they are: forced to work through mental or physical threat.
NRM	The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a framework for identifying victims of human trafficking and ensuring they receive the appropriate protection and support. The NRM is also the mechanism through which the Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Unit (MSHTU) collects data about recognised victims of modern slavery and trafficking crimes
Position of trust	Position of trust is a legal term that refers to a position of authority over another person or within an organization. These guidelines are intended to guard against situations where a person takes advantage of their position of authority with inappropriate behaviour.
Radicalisation and extremism	Radicalisation and extremism. Radicalisation is a process by which an individual or group comes to adopt increasingly extreme political, social, or religious ideals and aspirations that reject or undermine the status quo or reject and/or undermine contemporary ideas and expressions of freedom of choice.
Rogue trader	Rogue traders are opportunists who call on people's doors to rip them off. They make repairs that don't need doing and may talk people into buying products that they don't want.

Safer Solihull	Solihull Safer Solihull Partnerships role is to strategically plan, commission and oversee services that tackle crime and disorder, address drug and alcohol misuse, and deal with anti-social behaviour.
SAR (Safeguarding Adults Review)	A Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) is a Multi-Agency review process which seeks to determine what relevant agencies and individuals involved could have done differently that could have prevented harm or a death from taking place.
Scam & Scammers	Scam is a slang term for personal fraud, generally used to describe “a misleading or deceptive business practice where you receive an unsolicited or uninvited contact (for example by email, letter, phone or ad) and false promises are made to con you out of money” (Office of Fair Trading, 2009, p.12). It is an illegal plan for making money, especially one that involves tricking people.
Sexual exploitation	Sexual exploitation is an act or acts committed through non-consensual abuse or exploitation of another person's sexuality for the purpose of sexual gratification, financial gain, personal benefit or advantage, or any other non-legitimate purpose.
ShEP	Solihull Exploitation Panel (ShEP) is a multi-agency forum that brings together the key agencies and organisations with a responsibility for stopping the exploitation of Children and Adults in Solihull.
Solihull Together	A partnership of local health and social care organisations that have joined together to improve the lives of people from the borough through joined up care between health and social care services.
SSAB	Solihull Safeguarding Adults Board is a group of organisations and communities working together in the best way possible, so that people are able to live their lives free from abuse or neglect.
Strength based approach	The strength-based approach is focusing on the positive attributes, of a person or a group, rather than the negative.
Trigger Plans	Where it is assessed that the individual is at risk of going missing again, the police officer in charge of the investigation should ensure that information gathered is used to create a plan outlining key actions to be taken if the person is subsequently reported missing. This ‘trigger plan’ may then be used to locate them as quickly as possible and ensure relevant partners are informed of the incident. Trigger plans should be reviewed following the conclusion of any subsequent missing incidents, and should be shared with other police forces if the individual moves to another area.