

Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership (RSCP)

# CHILD EXPLOITATION STRATEGY 2024-29

A Vision for Managing Risk Outside the Home in Rotherham



[www.rscp.org.uk](http://www.rscp.org.uk)

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# I. WHO IS THIS STRATEGY FOR?

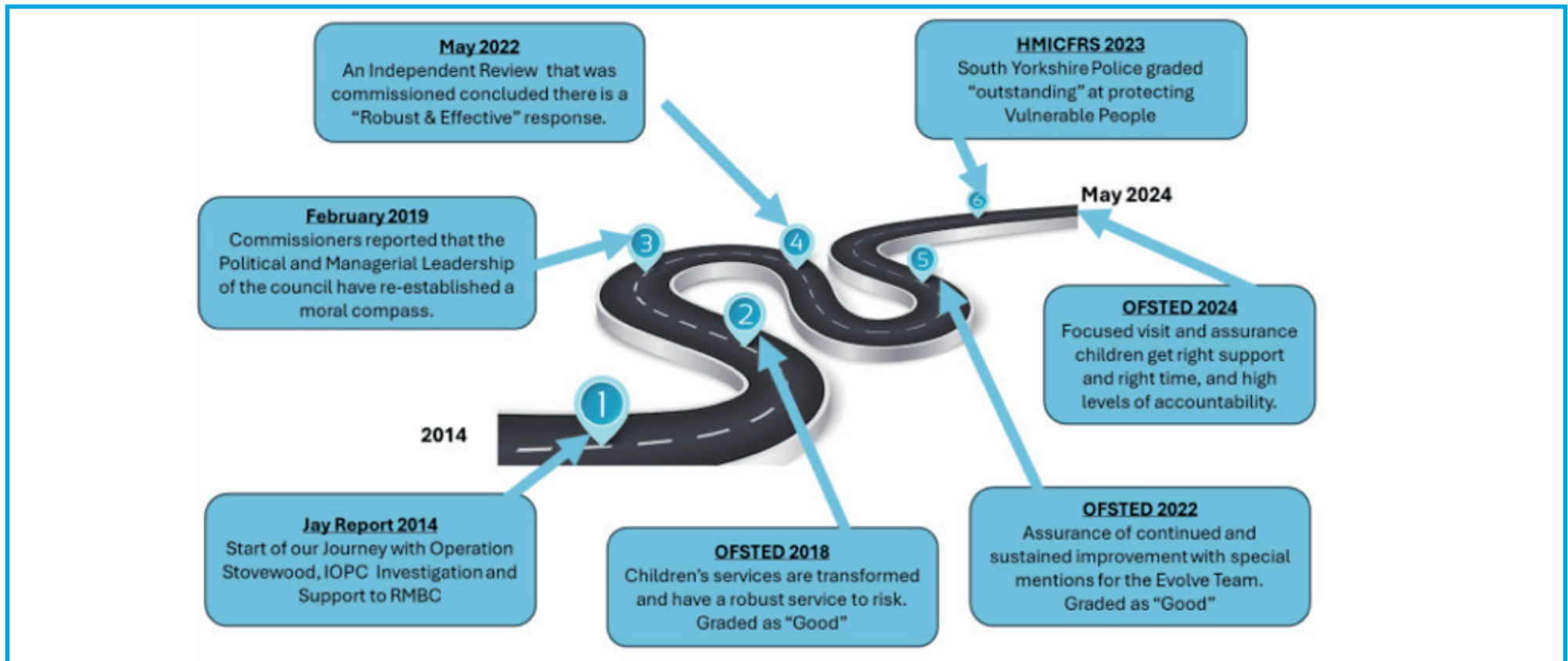
## This Strategy is for...

- Every child and young person living in and being cared for in Rotherham
- Parents, carers and family members
- Members of the community
- Childminders, daycare providers, nurseries, and sports and social clubs
- All education providers
- Midwives, community paediatrics, and accident and emergency
- Health visitors, school nurses and GP's
- Elected members and local authority staff
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Adult services, mental health, substance use
- Staff working in youth and community settings
- Police, fire and rescue services, and ambulance service
- All partnership employees, Early Help providers and Family Hubs
- Voluntary sector providers
- Licencing workers
- Convenience store and takeaway workers

## 2. OUR JOURNEY

Our experience in relation to child sexual exploitation constantly drives our determined and relentless approach to the protection of all children and young people in Rotherham. Our journey has been much publicised and rightly scrutinised, and as such, we know that we must deliver for our children and their families. As partners we hold each other to account and expect the highest standards, with integrity and honesty deeply embedded into our core values.

The next section of the strategy talks about the steps in our journey, but we recognise that our journey is ever evolving, and we will strive to continuously improve and to remain a national leader in combatting child exploitation.



## 2. OUR JOURNEY

Following the Jay report in 2014, which predicted there were over 1400 children sexually exploited between 1997 and 2013, Operation Stovewood was commenced in collaboration with key partners. Including the National Crime Agency (NCA). As of June 2024, over 200 arrests had been made, resulting in 26 convictions being secured, with a combined total of over 250 years imprisonment. There remain a number of active investigations under Operation Stovewood, and the partnership is determined to ensure all victims have access to justice and will not stop until the investigations are concluded and communities safeguarded. It is expected that Operation Stovewood will continue to deliver until at least 2027.

All current investigations continue to be managed across the partnership, with South Yorkshire Police leading the criminal investigations and partners and local organisations continuing to ensure that justice can be accessed in collaboration. Operation Stovewood has helped us to continue to learn from the past, prioritise prevention, identification and the protection of children and young people at risk, as well as raising awareness through training and media campaigns such as **Spot the Signs** and **Any Childhood Can Be Ruined**.

# 3. OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

The Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership remains assured that multi-agency practice in Rotherham is at the forefront locally and nationally, in tackling Child Exploitation. This strategy will precede the ten-year anniversary of the publication of the Jay Report in 2014, and the partnership has been on a significant journey of improvement, led by the voice of survivors and victims. We set the highest standards, and due to the hard work and dedication of everybody involved in our partnership, our achievements have been celebrated and validated by external and independent experts.

These include:

- The Office for Standards in Education Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted) who rated the Local Authority as ‘Good’
- His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) who recently rated the service offered in protecting vulnerable people by South Yorkshire Police as ‘Outstanding’
- The Independent Review commissioned by the partnership in 2022 also identified significant successes

All of these reports and their recommendations have been integral to the development of this Strategy and the associated Delivery Plan, and are reviewed and monitored regularly.

The latest OFSTED-focused visit to Rotherham Children’s Services occurred in May 2024 and is a good touchstone of our continued progress. Key findings include:

- That when children require help and protection, they receive high quality and effective support
- The children’s cases reviewed demonstrated thorough assessments of need and risk, resulting in children and families receiving the right help and support at the right time
- There is a robust appetite for improvement and holding to account those delivering services to children to perform better across the Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Senior leaders ensure there are effective lines of accountability across children’s social care

# 4. OUR APPROACH AND VISION

This strategy will guide our approach to working with children and families affected by exploitation – in all its forms in the Rotherham borough and for the next five years. This period will enable us to deliver our broad ranging plan to our borough’s children, in line with our commitment to excellence. This strategy and the plan will be reviewed annually to ensure delivery is achieving for Rotherham’s children.

The strategy will support and guide a proactive contextual safeguarding approach to adolescent safety, helping our young people stay as safe as possible as they develop into adulthood. This means understanding those factors that may increase vulnerability and risk in the community and working across partnerships to protect our young people.

Traditionally, safeguarding services have developed and been structured to address familial risk or risks within the home. Young people’s needs and experiences are very different as they get older, and risks outside the home or family (extra familial risks) become more relevant. These are sometimes referred to as ‘contextual’ risks. – Rotherham’s approach to contextual safeguarding will provide a borough-wide framework which is both flexible and robust, and which recognises the need to be preventative in nature, responsive to risk and steadfast in the pursuit of offenders and suspects.

“In order to build on effective responses to Child Sexual Exploitation and break down siloed approaches to different forms of exploitation, responses need to be:

- **Holistic** – i.e. reach across boundaries of victims/perpetrators, young people and adults etc.
- **Coordinated** – drawing together the work of partners and specialist organisations or meeting structures that historically have been associated with one form of exploitation.
- **Contextual** – reaching beyond the individuals and families impacted by exploitation to change the extra-familial contexts associated to the abuse.”

*Research in Practice 2019*

# 5. OUR MISSION

To create as much safety as we can for young people in Rotherham, our partnership will do this by:

- Ensuring the strategy is accessible to the young people that it is for and that it is informed by their stated views
- Minimising opportunities for perpetrators and criminal gangs to target young people; and making sure that when they do, they are dealt with effectively and robustly. We know that exploitation of children and young people often exists within the context of their vulnerability. Whether that be as a consequence of abuse within the home, a lack of access to education and opportunity or due to community and local factors
- We will adopt a child-centred approach, which will enable us to understand a child's world and offer a coordinated multi-agency response
- Our approach will focus upon the risk of 'Harm Outside the Home' and will guide us in creating as much community safety as possible so that young people can enjoy our borough without fear of abuse and exploitation
- We will work strategically to ensure that our neighbourhoods and facilities are as safe as possible for our young people and that emerging risks are identified and addressed
- Working cooperatively with families, practitioners and communities so that responses to young people at risk from exploitation are tailored to their specific circumstances and that support wraps around them, offering long term protection
- Ensuring that practitioners are well equipped to recognise and manage risk concerning exploitation and have the confidence to intervene effectively when needed. We will further enhance our collective understanding of what is meant by 'extra-familial harm', or 'risk outside the home', and develop pathways, practices and policies which actively reduce risk in the community
- Working effectively across the partnership, ensuring that all agencies share information when needed and that they collaborate positively in creating safety for young people. This includes our intention to create a transitional safeguarding approach with our colleagues in the adult care sector, as we recognise that the risk of exploitation does not cease at 18 years of age
- Ensuring that the partnership adheres to guidance and best practice in relation to preventing and addressing extremism and radicalisation, modern slavery and trafficking so that young people in our borough are further protected from harm and exploitation
- Recognising that the online space presents increasing risk to children, this strategy will mitigate against this risk by ensuring our staff, partners and communities are aware of the changing profile of online risks and that action can be taken to understand, prevent and reduce online harm in Rotherham
- Remaining mindful of those children for whom risk of exploitation is heightened. Research has evidenced the ways in which victimisation of boys and young men, black and minority ethnic young people, and young people with a disability have been further overlooked, as professionals interpret their behaviours differently or struggle to see them as vulnerable (Cockbain et al, 2014; Franklin et al, 2015; Hudek, 2018). We will support our practitioners to understand the impact of 'intersectionality' and to engage meaningfully and sensitively with children and families from various backgrounds



# 6. PARTNERSHIP STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS

How we work together, challenge, and support each other is important for the partnership and our communities. In order to deliver the best we can, we expect the following from our partners:

- That everyone who works with children and families understands their role in providing early help and identifying Child Exploitation
- Everyone will promote accountability so that professionals take responsibility for building relationships with children and their families to provide direct support and not just routinely signpost to other services
- That we all work together to pool our skills, knowledge and resources to achieve the best we can for Rotherham's children and young people
- That all professionals receive quality supervision, strong management oversight of their work, and support and leadership that allows them to do their jobs well
- We have a culture of challenge and scrutiny in which we all have the confidence to challenge one another when we think we are not getting it right for the child and support each other to achieve this

# 7. WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES TELL US

It is crucially important that this strategy is created for and influenced by the voices of children and young people. Our aim is to ensure that this strategy is embedded in the heart of our communities and that our residents feel involved, informed and able to influence it.

To ensure this happened, we met with young people to discuss their views; and below is a snapshot of some of what they told us is important to them in relation to child exploitation.

*“He (SW) has taught me that the most important person is me.”*

*“I was sad when the worker had finished, I know who to call if I feel unsafe again.”*

*“She’s supported my lad to the 100% of abilities needed. Helped get his head onto the right track and also listened to him as well. His interest’s and hobbies have been supported and not just over looked.”*

*The worker went above and beyond for us as a family, she was absolutely amazing, she is the only person that xxx has actually ever opened up to.”*

*“I can’t score no higher, she literally went above and beyond. Not just for the child at hand but for the whole family. I couldn’t of asked for a better Evolve worker for my boy. The safety, care and things she’s taught him will take the risk down of exploitation in the future.”*

Our relational approach enables us to develop meaningful and honest relationships with young people.

# 8. DEFINING CHILD EXPLOITATION

Exploitation is a complex and ever-evolving area of criminal activity, and it is imperative that we not only protect our communities from traditional forms of exploitation, but also consider how it is changing. There are many forms of exploitation and the risk to children from outside the home, to that online can be equally as dangerous, and focus needs to be paid to all types of exploitation, and all levels of risk.

This strategy will address all relevant areas of exploitation and risk to children, including:

- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), including County Lines
- Online risk/internet abuse
- Missing from home, care and education
- Risks associated with gangs (also referred to as Organised Crime Groups – OCGs)
- Risks associated with radicalisation and extremism
- Trafficking and modern slavery

*All definitions are included within the Appendix*

We recognise that children and young people experiencing exploitation are victims first and foremost. Our child centred approach; alongside our awareness of contextual risk will guide how we engage with children and young people, so that they feel heard and valued and so that we can robustly identify their abusers and take action to protect them.

# 9. VULNERABILITY FACTORS

## **Children have a heightened vulnerability to exploitation if they:**

- Have a prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse
- Lack a safe/stable home environment
- Have experienced bereavement or loss
- Are excluded from mainstream education, or have special educational needs
- Experience social isolation or social difficulties
- Have economic vulnerability including food poverty, homelessness or insecure accommodation status
- Have connections with other children and young people who are being sexually or criminally exploited or with other people involved in gangs; family members or other connections involved in adult sex work
- Have been or are in local authority care (particularly those in residential care and those with interrupted care histories)

It is important to remember that young people are not abused or exploited because they are vulnerable, but because someone is prepared to take advantage of their vulnerability and at that moment there is insufficient protection around them.

# 10. THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL PICTURE

## Nationally:

- In the Crime Survey for England and Wales for 2017 to 2018, 27,000 children aged between 10 and 17 years old in England identified as a members of a street gang
- Based upon research in 2019, it has been estimated that up to 50,000 children are being criminally exploited by county lines gangs
- Nine in ten of those identified as being exploited through county lines are boys, although girls could be being missed through any gender biases in policing (Justice Inspectorates)
- There were around 107,000 offences reported in 2022 – a 7.6% increase compared to 2021
- Around 75% of Sexual Exploitation offences are related to sexual offences committed directly against children, and around 25% relate to online offences of Indecent Images of Children
- The number of recorded incidents of online sexual abuse continues to grow. It accounts for at least 32% of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (CSAE)
- 52% of all CSAE cases involved reports of children (aged 10 to 17) offending against other children, with 14 being the most common age. This is a growing and concerning trend involving a wide range of offending. Whilst some include exploratory online sexual behaviours, some of the most prevalent forms include serious sexual assaults, including rape

*National Police Chiefs Council 2024*

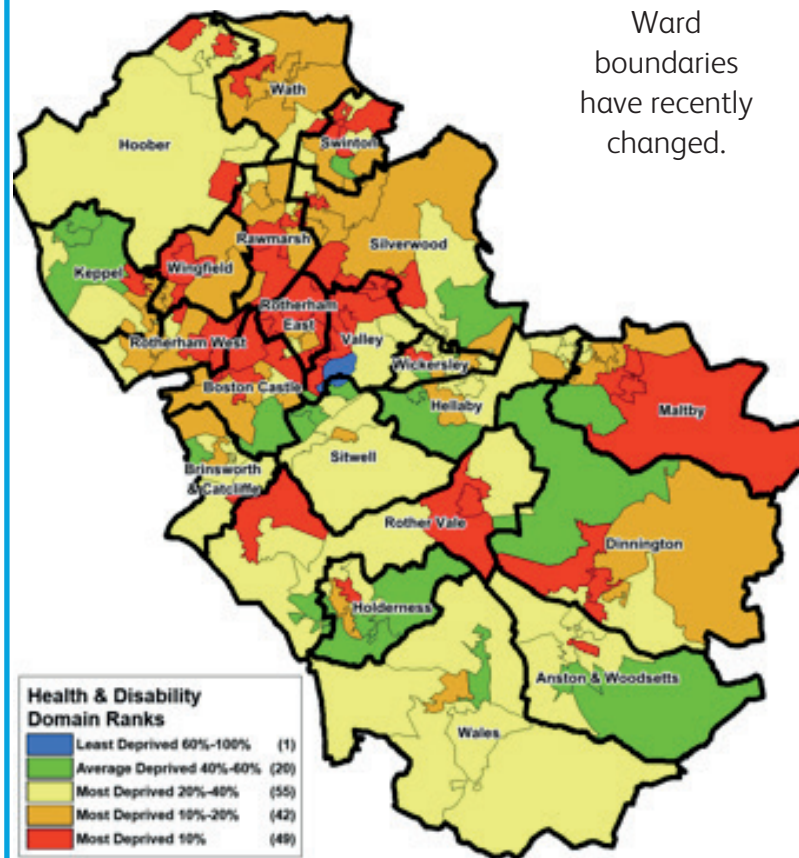
## In Rotherham:

### Rotherham has a population of 265,800 people

- 47,100 children (under 15)
- Employment rate of 73.9%, which is slightly below the national rate of 75.5%
- Full-time weekly pay is £72 lower for Rotherham residents than the national average
- 13,300 (36%) of 16 to 64 year olds are economically inactive due to long-term sickness. Compared to around 25% in Y&H and the UK
- 34.6% of Rotherham children were living in poverty in 2020, with a four-fold increase in the number of food parcels
- 57,560 Rotherham residents are living in the most deprived 10% of England
- 8.3% of 16 to 64 year olds have no qualifications, compared to an UK average of 6.6%
- 64.5% of children under 5 achieve a “good” level of development compared to 65.2% nationally
- Community intelligence has doubled since 2021
- CSE assessment numbers have reduced nearly 30% in the last year
- Of exploitation referrals 50% are CCE, 37% CSE and 13% both

# 10. THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL PICTURE

## Indices of Deprivation 2019 Health and Disability Domain (Wards shown)



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## Children and Young People in Rotherham:

Just over one-fifth of Rotherham children live in a low-income family. Across the 10 most deprived areas, 50% of children are classed as living in poverty, compared to just 3.8% in the 10 least deprived areas. Children in the most deprived areas are also five times more likely to be classed as a “child in need” of social care services. In knowing our borough and working across the safeguarding sector our partnership shares information and intelligence regarding ‘hotspot’ areas so that we can deliver targeted support and disruption activity and reduce the potential for exploitation.

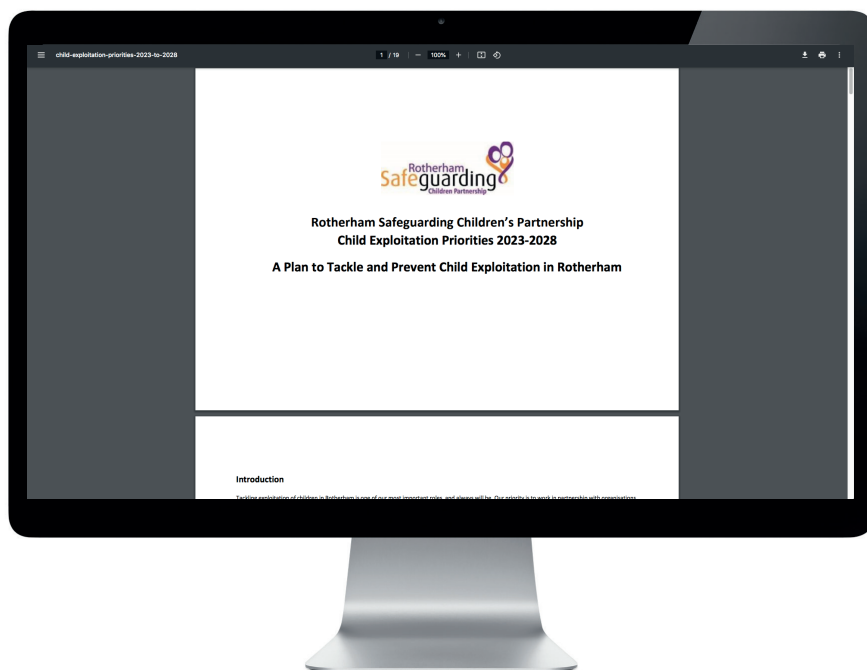
The Rotherham “voice of the child” Lifestyle Survey 2015, conducted with Year 7 and Year 10 secondary school pupils, revealed that only 16% reported feeling safe in the town centre. We want our young people to have a diverse range of positive experiences and have a number of plans across the Borough, including Dinnington and the town centre, that will transform and revitalise Rotherham, and enhance the leisure offer to our young people. We are already engaged in discussions with partners about ensuring that young people can safely access these facilities as we head into 2025 as the UK’s first Children’s capital of culture.

Our efforts in addressing Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and creating a safer Rotherham for our young people have resulted in a decrease in CSE related activity. However, in line with the national picture, we are seeing a rise in the activity linked to Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) in the borough. Criminals operating within this arena have developed a complex system of abuse and exploitation, often linked to targeting vulnerable young people and increasing the risk to them gradually. Our activity will, therefore, be wide-ranging and creative in approach, building on our success in tackling CSE and engaging all relevant partners and stakeholders in creating safety and making Rotherham a challenging borough for those who would seek to exploit any member of our population.

# II. RECOGNISING, RESPONDING TO AND REDUCING CHILD EXPLOITATION

## How we will know it is working

The current RSCP Child Exploitation plan is available with clear and measurable details designed to achieve positive and protective outcomes for our children. The plan is reviewed on an annual basis and managed by the Child Exploitation Delivery Group (CEDG) who report directly to the RSCP Executive Board, where they are challenged and held to account for delivery and outcomes through an independent scrutineer. The key priorities are shown below.



### PRIORITY ONE

To have an effective response to tackling exploitation in Rotherham, from prevention, safeguarding systems, and identification of offenders to victim support.

### PRIORITY TWO

Reduce exploitation from happening in Rotherham.

### PRIORITY THREE

Keeping children and young people safe from harm through exploitation.

### PRIORITY FOUR

Identifying offenders of exploitation and bring them to justice.

# II. RECOGNISING, RESPONDING TO AND REDUCING CHILD EXPLOITATION

PRIORITY ONE - PREPARE		
Priority	Detail	How will we achieve it
To have an effective response to tackling exploitation in Rotherham, from prevention, to safeguarding systems, and the identification of offenders to victim support	Partnerships are just one of our unique strengths, and support us in all our activities to safeguard against all forms of exploitation	We will continue to work together, have a multi-agency approach to tackling exploitation through our Evolve Child Exploitation team, and joint operational and strategic meetings across the partnership
	Ensure we have effective early identification services	Promoting early interventions through universal services and use of the early help assessment tool to support the early identification and intervention by universal and targeted services
	Ensure we have effective intervention embedded within communities to minimise the occurrence and harm linked to child exploitation	Developing, informing and empowering communities to have an empowered and active role in prevention of exploitation
		Ensure that information including strategies, and what to do if there are concerns, is available in different languages and formats to ensure all communities know how to raise concerns, where to and what to expect
		Provide continuous targeted education and training in priority areas
	Development of a child exploitation pathway for practitioners across the partnership workforce	
	Promote our established and successful systems and interventions to install confidence in our partners, communities, and survivors on the outstanding work undertaken	Communicate the success of the previous plan and activities through awareness initiatives, including spot the signs, training events, Makesafe and Keepsafe. Work with community groups, the voluntary sector and elected members to link with communities and engage them in feedback to support the exploitation plan
Promote safeguarding is everybody business	Promotion of awareness raising including Spot the Signs, Makesafe and Keepsafe. Draw on community groups and link in with community activities	



# II. RECOGNISING, RESPONDING TO AND REDUCING CHILD EXPLOITATION

PRIORITY TWO - PREVENT		
Priority	Detail	How will we achieve it
Reduce exploitation from happening in Rotherham	Ensure the right learning and development offer in place for all partners, relevant organisations and community groups around child exploitation	The partnership is trained to identify and act on early indicators around Child Exploitation and understand their role in the Safeguarding process
		To review and evaluate the impact of the whole range of services
		Use analytical capability and capacity to identify high risk areas of vulnerability. This will enable us to target intervention/prevention activity, including identification of emerging themes to support early intervention and longer-term problem solving
		Work to identify and engage with hard to reach communities to improve confidence in reporting abuse
		Work with organisations, community groups and businesses that work with or provide a service to children to improve their knowledge and understanding and practices in spotting the signs and taking appropriate action
		Work with communities and community groups to provide education and learning
		Work with children and young people in communities, youth groups and schools to provide education and awareness of the risks and empower them to support themselves and keep themselves and their peers safe

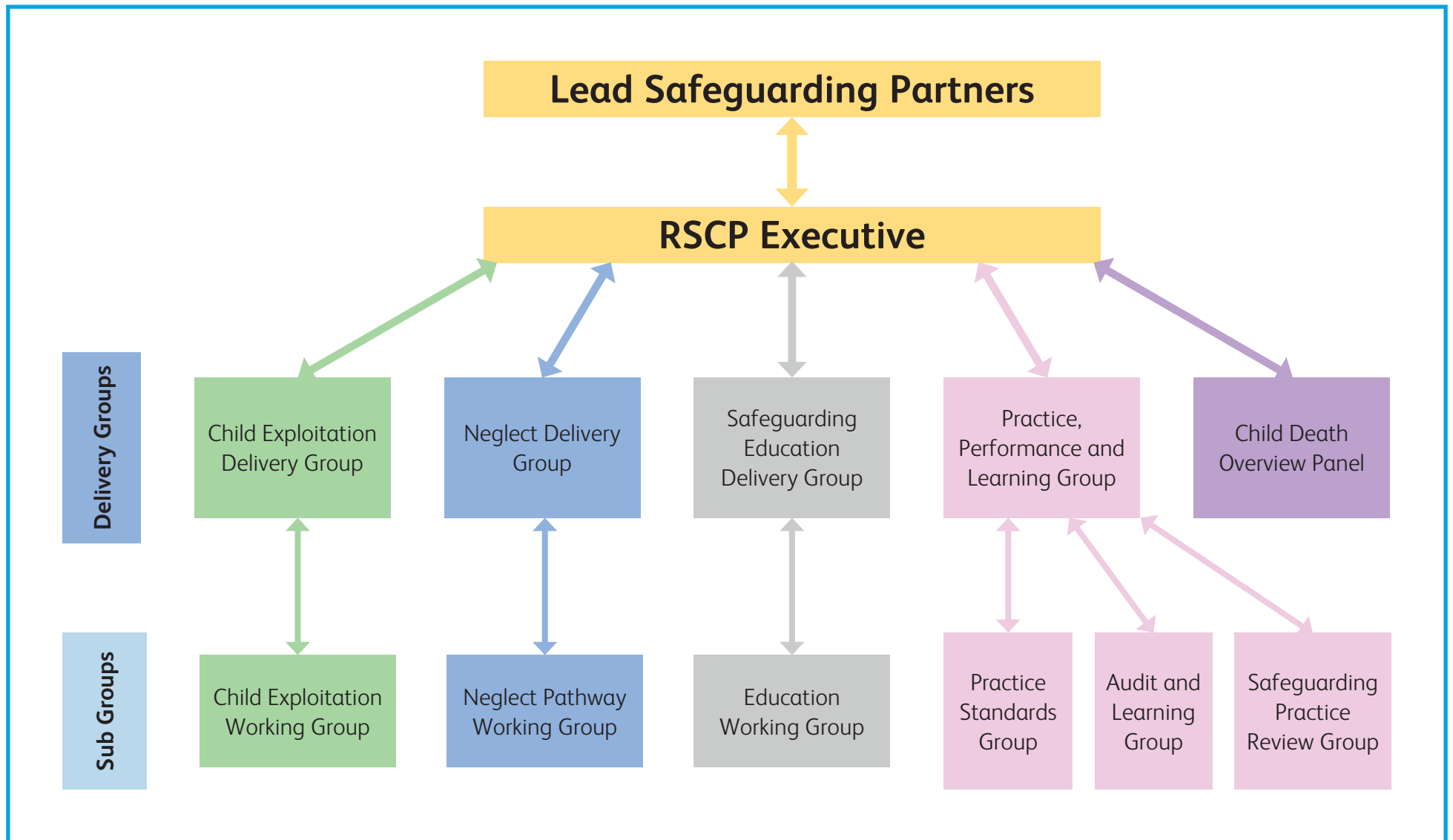
# II. RECOGNISING, RESPONDING TO AND REDUCING CHILD EXPLOITATION

PRIORITY THREE - PROTECT		
Priority	Detail	How will we achieve it
Keeping children and young people safe from harm through exploitation	Ensure that local processes and practices are effectively protecting children when child exploitation is suspected or confirmed, as well as effective working arrangements to ensure that perpetrators are identified and brought to justice	<p>Evidencing that child who are at risk of, or who are experiencing child exploitation receive interventions that reduce risk in a timely way</p> <p>South Yorkshire policing is Child Centred and ensures the child is firstly seen as a victim</p> <p>The ongoing collection of service user feedback from children and families, considering the impact of practice on children, young people and their families as well as perpetrators of abuse</p> <p>Review of the child protection process for children who are at risk outside the home as a coordinated approach whilst embedding effective partnership processes and response to protect vulnerable individuals from risk whilst targeting those who seek to harm them</p>
	Provide support to victims and survivors of exploitation, recognising the importance of trauma informed practice and ensuring their needs are met, and understanding that this will be continuous activity	Development and implementation of the trauma resilience roadmap, providing post abuse support to victims and survivors

# II. RECOGNISING, RESPONDING TO AND REDUCING CHILD EXPLOITATION

PRIORITY FOUR - PURSUE		
Priority	Detail	How will we achieve it
Identifying offenders of exploitation and bring them to justice	Pursue all forms of child abuse including sexual abuse sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation and bringing offenders to justice	The continued review and refinement of processes and pathways so support effective sharing and recording of information about people who pose a risk and or are known to Operation Stovewood
	All child exploitation, including single incidents, individual and groups of children, and complex and organised abuse networks are identified and understood, effectively managed, investigated and resolved. There are effective working arrangements to ensure that perpetrators are identified and brought to justice	
	Ensure that the right strategic and operational arrangements are in place so that investigations including Operation Stovewood around large scale historic abuse concerns in the borough connect effectively to processes for current work with children and survivor	The Police with support of partners will pursue those offenders who cause the most harm

# 12. GOVERNANCE



## 12. GOVERNANCE

The Child Exploitation Delivery Group (CEDG) will manage the strategy and report directly to the RSCP executive board. The CEDG meets bi-monthly and is chaired by South Yorkshire Police, with membership made up of senior professionals from across the partnership, and a working group with key practitioners delivering the work. The RSCP Executive group challenges and scrutinises activity of the CEDG to get the reassurance required for communities that the priorities are being delivered against, and this is done through the use of key professionals and an independent scrutineer. The other sub groups to the RSCP also work collectively to ensure exploitation is a focus of the work they are delivering to safeguard children.

The CEDG works in collaboration with other local partnerships, including the Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP), and the Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB), with all the chairs recognising that a cooperative and holistic approach is required to address exploitation in Rotherham. Regular meetings of the chairs support activity across the partnership, providing reassurance whilst holding each other to account through a comprehensive scorecard. In doing this, all agencies are individually and collectively responsible for ensuring our children, young people and vulnerable adults are safeguarded against violence and exploitation.

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## Definitions

Our strategy uses the following definitions and guidance:

### Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. (Dept. for Ed: Definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision-makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation, Feb 2017)

### Child Criminal Exploitation

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology (Home Office: Serious Violence Strategy, April 2018).

## Online Harm and Internet Abuse

'Internet Abuse' relates to four primary areas of abuse to children:

- Sharing and production of abusive images of children (although these are not confined to the internet)
- A child or young person being groomed online for the purpose of Sexual Abuse
- Exposure to pornographic images and other offensive material via the internet; and
- The use of the internet, and in particular social media sites, to engage children in extremist ideologies or to promote gang-related violence

The term digital (data carrying signals carrying electronic or optical pulses) and interactive (a message relates to other previous message/s and the relationship between them) technology covers a range of electronic tools. These are constantly being upgraded, and their use has become more widespread as the internet can be accessed easily on mobile/smartphones, laptops, computers, tablets and game consoles.

Social networking sites are often used by perpetrators as an easy way to access children and young people for sexual abuse. In addition, radical and extremist groups may use social networking to attract children and young people into rigid and narrow ideologies that are intolerant of diversity: this is similar to the grooming process and exploits the same vulnerabilities.

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Internet abuse may also include cyberbullying or online bullying (see Bullying). This is when a child is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another child using the internet and/or mobile devices. In the case of online bullying, it is possible for one victim to be bullied by many perpetrators. In any case of severe bullying, it may be appropriate to consider the behaviour as child abuse by another young person.

Sexting is a term which many young people do not recognise or use. Therefore, it is important that when discussing the risks of this type of behaviour with children and young people, the behaviour is accurately explained.

Sexting or sharing nudes and semi-nudes are terms used when a person under the age of 18 shares sexual, naked or semi-naked images or videos of themselves or others or sends sexually explicit messages (some children and young people consider this to mean 'writing and sharing explicit messages with people they know' rather than sharing youth-produced sexual images). They can be sent using mobiles, tablets, smartphones, laptops - any device that allows images and messages to be shared. Sexting may not be criminally motivated and can be consensual, but creating or sharing explicit images of a child is illegal, even if the person doing it is a child. A young person is breaking the law if they:

- Take an explicit photo or video of themselves or a friend
- Share an explicit image or video of a child, even if it's shared between children of the same age
- Possess, download or store an explicit image or video of a child, even if the child gave their permission for it to be created

However, if a young person is found creating or sharing images, the police can choose to record that a crime has been committed but that taking formal action is not in the public interest).

With effect from 29 June 2021, section 69 Domestic Abuse Act 2021 expanded so-called 'revenge porn' to include threats to disclose private sexual photographs and films with intent to cause distress.

E-Safety is the generic term that refers to raising awareness about how children, young people and adults can protect themselves when using digital technology and in the online environment and provides examples of interventions that can reduce the level of risk for children and young people.

## Gang Activity

Defining a gang is difficult. They tend to fall into three categories: peer groups, street gangs and organised crime groups. It can be common for groups of children and young people to gather together in public places to socialise, and although some peer group gatherings can lead to increased antisocial behaviour and low level youth offending, these activities should not be confused with the serious violence of a street gang.

A street gang is a relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of children who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is integral to the group's identity.

A street gang will engage in criminal activity and violence and may lay claim over territory (not necessarily geographical; for example, it could include an illegal economy territory). They have some form of identifying structure featuring a hierarchy usually based on age,

# 13. APPENDIX

physical strength, propensity to violence or older sibling rank. There may be certain rites involving antisocial or criminal behaviour or sex acts in order to become part of the gang. They are in conflict with other similar gangs.

An organised criminal group is a group of individuals normally led by adults for whom involvement in crime is for personal gain (financial or otherwise). This involves serious and organised criminality by gang members who exploit vulnerable young people and adults. This may also involve the movement and selling of drugs and money across the country, known as 'county lines' because it extends across county boundaries and is coordinated by the use of dedicated mobile phone lines. It is a tactic used by groups or gangs to facilitate the use of vulnerable people or children to sell drugs in an area outside of the area in which they live, which reduces their risk of detection.

This may also involve the movement and selling of drugs and money across the country, known as 'county lines' because they extend across county boundaries and are coordinated by the use of dedicated mobile phone lines. It is a tactic used by groups or gangs to facilitate the use of vulnerable people or children to sell drugs in an area outside of the area in which they live, which reduces their risk of detection.

## County Lines

Selling drugs across county lines often involves the criminal exploitation of children and young people. Child criminal exploitation, like other forms of abuse and exploitation, is a safeguarding concern and constitutes abuse even if the young person appears to have readily become involved. Child criminal exploitation is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation and usually involves some form of exchange (e.g. carrying drugs in return for something). The exchange can include both tangible (such as money, drugs or clothes) and intangible rewards (such as status, protection, or perceived friendship or affection). Young people who are criminally exploited are at a high risk of experiencing violence and intimidation, and threats to family members may also be made. Gangs may also target vulnerable adults and take over their premises to distribute Class A drugs in a practice referred to as 'cuckooing'.

There is a distinction between organised crime groups and street gangs based on the level of criminality, organisation, planning and control. However, there are significant links between different levels of gangs; for example, street gangs can be involved in drug dealing on behalf of organised criminal groups. Young men and women may be at risk of sexual exploitation in these groups.

Children may be involved in more than one 'gang', with some crossborder movement, and may not stay in a 'gang' for significant periods of time.

Safeguarding should focus on both young people who are vulnerable to becoming involved in gangs, as well as those already involved in gangs. Practitioners should be aware of particular risks to young people involved in gangs, including violence and weapons, drugs and sexual exploitation.



# 13. APPENDIX

## Radicalisation and Extremism

Radicalisation is defined as the process by which people come to support terrorism and extremism and, in some cases, to then participate in terrorist groups.

“Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas” (HM Government Prevent Strategy 2011).

Since the publication of the Prevent Strategy, there has been an awareness of the specific need to safeguard children, young people and families from violent extremism. There have been attempts to radicalise vulnerable children and young people to develop extreme views, including views justifying political, religious, sexist or racist violence, or to steer them into a rigid and narrow ideology that is intolerant of diversity and leaves them vulnerable to future radicalisation.

Keeping children safe from these risks is a safeguarding matter and should be approached in the same way as safeguarding children from other risks. Children should be protected from messages of all violent extremism.

## Children Missing from Home and Care

Going missing should be treated as an indicator that a child may be at risk of harm and is often one of the key vulnerabilities linked to Child Exploitation. The safeguarding of children is paramount. A missing person report should be recognised as an opportunity to identify and address risks and understand the root causes of going missing. The reasons for a child going missing may be complex and linked to a variety of social, geographical or family issues.

When a child is reported missing, the primary responsibility is to safeguard that child. Missing person strategies and responses should focus on multi-agency working. The primary focus of multi-agency work should be on preventing a child from going missing again, as this reduces the risk of harm. It is important to understand the reasons why children go missing. A greater understanding will enable more effective prevention strategies to be implemented. By applying preventative approaches at strategic and tactical levels partnerships will help safeguard children as well as reduce the number of missing incidents.

# 13. APPENDIX

## Trafficking and Modern Slavery

'Modern slavery' is a form of organised crime in which individuals, including children and young people, are treated as commodities and exploited for criminal and financial gain. It encompasses human trafficking, slavery, servitude and forced labour.

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 provided better protection for victims and increased the sentences for committing these offences.

Grooming methods are often used to gain the trust of a child and their parents, e.g. the promise of a better life or education, which results in a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

'Trafficking of persons' means the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.

'Exploitation' for modern slavery purposes is defined, as a minimum, to include: sexual exploitation, forced labour, domestic servitude and organ trafficking.

Trafficked victims are coerced or deceived by the person arranging their relocation, and are often subject to physical, sexual and mental abuse. The trafficked child or person is denied their human rights and is forced into exploitation by the trafficker or person into whose control they are delivered.

Children are not considered able to give 'informed consent' to their own exploitation (including criminal exploitation), so it is not necessary to consider the means used for the exploitation - whether they were forced, coerced or deceived, i.e. a child's consent to being trafficked is irrelevant, and it is not necessary to prove coercion or any other inducement.



