



Bromley  
Safeguarding  
Children  
Partnership

# **Bromley Child Exploitation Strategy 2022-25**

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 All partners in Bromley Safeguarding Children Partnership are clear that anyone under the age of 18 is a child and we are committed to being **child focussed** in our practice. *The welfare of the child is paramount.*
- 1.2 Understanding the context in which children and young people live their lives is an essential feature of effective multi-agency intervention. For the Bromley Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP), this issue remains central to our overall approach, therefore developing our understanding of the **context of children's lives** and the **vulnerabilities that can create pathways to greater harm** is central to everything we do.
- 1.3 To do this effectively, children and young people need to be seen, heard and helped:
- **Seen- in the context of their lives at home, friendship circles, health, education and public spaces (including social media).**
  - **Heard- to effectively protect children and young people, professionals need to take time to hear what children are saying and put themselves in the child or young person's shoes and think about what their life might truly be like.**
  - **Helped- by remaining professionally curious and by implementing effective and imaginative solutions that help children and young people.**
- 1.4 This strategic document complements **the pan [London Child Exploitation Protocol](#)** (published 2021) which itself complements the [London Safeguarding Children Procedures, Working Together 2018](#) and other statutory guidance. The pan [London Child Exploitation Protocol](#) outlines how, through our partnerships, we assess, challenge and provide an enhanced, effective service to reduce the harm and threats posed to children from exploitation and target offenders to prevent and disrupt criminality. It is a key document which the Bromley children's workforce needs to be familiar with.
- 1.5 The [Adolescent Safeguarding in London Handbook](#) (published 2022) is an excellent resource for practitioners and leaders.

1.5 The Bromley Child Exploitation Strategy focuses on the following priorities:

- **Knowing our problem, knowing our response**
- **Strong leadership**
- **Prevention and early intervention**
- **Protection and support**
- **Disruption and prosecution**

## 2. Purpose and Scope

2.1 This strategy's primary purpose is to ensure that the multi-agency work involving children and adolescents is focussed on the reduction of risk and vulnerability. The safeguarding partners in Bromley will work together to ensure the coordination of partnership activity and scrutinise developments in respect of the difference that they make to the lives of young people.

2.2 This strategy provides the Bromley vision and strategic priorities in relation to child exploitation. The three statutory safeguarding partners in Bromley, who make up the BSCP Executive, formally agreed to adopt the **pan [London Child Exploitation Protocol](#)** in 2021. This replaces the previous three Bromley 'plug and play' protocols on CSE, Missing and Gangs/SYV which the BSCP had in place from 2017-2021. It also replaces the Metropolitan Police's CSE Protocol. Professional understanding and expertise in the field of child exploitation has moved on considerably since 2017 and it is right that all London boroughs adopt a regional protocol which covers all types of child exploitation.

2.3 The Pan-[London Child Exploitation Protocol](#) is equally owned by the Metropolitan Police Service, Local Authorities and Health. It complements and does not replace the London Safeguarding Children Procedures ([www.londoncp.co.uk](http://www.londoncp.co.uk)), [Working Together](#) 2018 and other statutory guidance. Tackling child exploitation is a complex task that requires a proactive, multi-agency, holistic approach. Understanding exploitation drivers and push/pull factors, themes, risks and venues of concern will provide key prevention opportunities to stop children becoming victims of exploitation. Interventions need to adapt, with partners, peers, families and communities being better placed to respond. The management, disruption and prosecution of perpetrators is a key success driver in tackling exploitation.

2.4 Alongside our local strategic partnerships (such as Safer Bromley Partnership, Bromley Adult Safeguarding Board and the Health and Wellbeing Board), the BSCP

will continue to develop integrated arrangements that actively consider and effectively respond to a wider range of associated vulnerabilities that either exacerbate risk or arise as a result of exploitation. A full list of factors in scope is explored in the pan London Child Exploitation Protocol so not duplicated here.

- 2.5 Widening the strategic scope reflects the fact that children and young people often face multiple risks. Dealing with the response to certain threats in isolation can potentially hinder the understanding of vulnerabilities that frequently overlap and hence limit the effectiveness of intervention. We are committed to seeing the child in the context of their lives not simply in the context of the current vulnerability or harm they have suffered or are exposed to.
- 2.6 Furthermore, as young people get older their experiences of abuse are often associated with public environments in which they spend their time. As such, a critical focus of our strategy is how young people can be better protected and supported by a wider range of individuals and bodies in a wider variety of contexts. This will include ensuring we enable adolescents to engage with these services when they need them.
- 2.7 Such public environments also include those in the virtual world too. In this respect, how children and young people are safeguarded in the context of their access to technology and their use of social media is an underpinning concept to this strategy. Practitioners should make themselves familiar with the [BSCP Social Media policy documents](#).
- 2.8 If practitioners don't have a clear understanding about context and the root causes of vulnerabilities (and where these arise), the effectiveness of interventions will be limited.
- 2.9 Practitioners need to know what the problems are and who can be engaged to help and support the young people to enabling them to have positive outcomes in their lives.

### **3. Vision for Bromley**

- 3.1 Our multi-agency work in responding to vulnerable children and adolescents will create the following conditions within the London Borough of Bromley.

- **Strong leadership and partnerships** between key stakeholders are maintained and ensure an effective response to vulnerability.
- Children and young people are **educated and empowered**. They better understand the range of risks that they can face as they grow up and are supported to develop healthy friendships and relationships.
- Children and young people recognise when they or others are at risk and are **confident to seek support**.
- Children and adolescents who are vulnerable are **identified, safeguarded and supported** for as long as they need. Professionals, local businesses, families, parents / carers, friends and local people can identify the signs of vulnerability in a variety of contexts.
- Comprehensive multi-agency **assessments** identify risks within families, schools, peer groups and public spaces. Specifically, **extra-familial relationships and environments** that impact upon children and adolescents' safety are better understood and a **contextual safeguarding** approach is used.
- Families/carers, professionals, and communities support vulnerable children and adolescents to **build resilience** against harm.
- **New and radical partnership approaches** are implemented alongside peer group informed assessment models and interventions. **Relevant interventions** are developed that address risk and harness the strength of peer relationships.
- The **nature of public spaces** change and those responsible for these spaces are empowered to initiate and participate in child protection processes.
- **Whole-school responses** are developed that promote safe and supportive interactions and relationships. Community members are engaged to enable them to support children and adolescents through applying this approach.
- **A safeguarding system** is in place that focuses upon changing public and social environments (including schools) where children and adolescents may encounter significant harm, rather than relocating them to remove them from harmful contexts.
- Those who seek to harm or exploit children are **identified, disrupted and convicted**. **Robust offender management** post-conviction and/or effective intervention strategies reduce the risk presented by identified abusers.

## 4 The London SCP Safeguarding Adolescents Core Principles

4.1 Bromley SCP unanimously agreed the nine core principles of the London Safeguarding Children Partnership's Adolescent Safeguarding Task and Finish Group's report 'Safeguarding Adolescents' in March 2020. It was acknowledged that although many of these principles already underpin work across London, it was wise to state these in local strategies explicitly. The nine core principles are:

- I. As children get older, their increasing autonomy should be recognised, inform our response and shape how they are involved in decision making. Their wishes and opinions should also inform strategic decision making, including the allocation of resources and the design of services.
- II. The risks facing some adolescents, and the protective factors that help keep them safe, are located not only in families but also in their peer groups and wider communities. Services must therefore work in close partnership with families, peer groups and communities.
- III. We must never give up on children and young people because they seem reluctant to engage with services or face complex issues. We must always 'go the extra mile'.
- IV. Responses must address the context of children and young people's lives, including the impact of different forms of social prejudice, inequality and racism. Such factors can mean that many young people find it difficult to trust professionals.
- V. Policy and practice should address the need for older young people (i.e. those over 18 years) to be able to access appropriate support and protection.
- VI. A joined up multi agency response must be provided by professionals who have expertise and capability in working with older children and young people.
- VII. When a child is believed to be involved in criminal or anti-social behavior, assessments should seek to understand safeguarding concerns.
- VIII. Children need to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to keep themselves safe and live healthy, happy and productive lives. For older children this means high quality sex and relationship education.
- IX. Strategic and operational practice must be based on sound evidence, good and shared intelligence and effective data analysis.

4.2 Bromley's work on transitional safeguarding focussing on services and support for young adults up to 25 years is key to addressing the needs of this older group. This is a work in progress and is crucial in preventing exploitation of vulnerable young people later in life.

## 5. Strategic Priorities

- 5.1 The BSCP understands the need to place this document in the context of other strategies, policies and plans that influence the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. As such, it is essential that this strategy to identify and divert the young and vulnerable from harm sets the local context within which **the pan London Child Exploitation Protocol** and Bromley's **Children Missing Education Protocol** are considered and applied.
- 5.2 The following strategic priorities, informed by local issues and self-assessment, provide the focus for further developing our safeguarding arrangements and responses to vulnerable children and adolescents.

### **Priority 1: KNOWING OUR PROBLEM, KNOWING OUR RESPONSE**

**The focus of this strategic priority is to ensure that all professionals and volunteers working in the BSCP partnership, along with parents/carers, local businesses, residents, and young people themselves, know about the problems facing children and adolescents in the context of exploitation.**

**They understand the signs and symptoms of exploitation and the factors that increase the risk to children. Individuals know what to do if they are worried about a child. Leaders and managers understand the local problem profile and contemporary intelligence picture and use this to target interventions to make young people safer.**

Outcomes sought:

- Our problem profile is continually developing and understood in the context of children and young people, perpetrators and the spaces and places they frequent online and offline.
- Professionals who come into contact with children and young people have relevant and proportionate knowledge of the broader profile of vulnerability. This includes the factors that exacerbate risk and the consequential vulnerabilities arising from exploitation.
- Professionals, parents/carers, young people, local businesses and residents, can identify vulnerability, know who to contact, and know what will be done in response. This is supported through robust awareness raising and regular training provided by the BSCP, to partner agencies and communities.



- Engaging, educating and empowering the broader community forms a critical element. We will encourage communities to be vocal about exploitation and the unacceptability of abuse. Communities participate in being part of the solution.
- Analytical support is coordinated across a range of agencies to identify themes, patterns and trends relating to vulnerability. Stronger intelligence gathering and sharing across the partnership on individuals, peer groups and geographic hotspots engages a tactical response from the partnership to make young people safer. This intelligence should include information gathered from young people, their families and the wider community. This information is analysed by the Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) panel.

## **Priority 2: STRONG LEADERSHIP**

**The focus of this strategic priority is on the need for strong leadership to successfully tackle the range of risks facing children and adolescents in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.**

Leadership is required at all levels, but particularly from those at the top. Political leaders, Chief Executives and senior leaders in all organisations, together with leaders in the local community, have a responsibility to set the culture within which abuse and exploitation is not tolerated. Continuing to promote a culture that encourages professional curiosity, challenge and appropriate escalation of concerns is fundamental.

Governance arrangements that include regular meetings between the Independent Chair of the BSCP with the Chief Executive of the London Borough of Bromley, Lead member for Children, Borough Commander, Borough lead for the Integrated Care Board and chairs of partnership boards will ensure ongoing connectivity between policy areas impacting the welfare of children and adolescents.

Outcomes sought:

- The safety and wellbeing of vulnerable young people at risk of exploitation continues to be prioritised across all relevant organisations and community settings and this is evidenced in respective strategic planning.
- The culture of organisations set by senior leaders and active engagement with children and young people wins their trust. They are confident that their concerns are taken seriously and help is provided when needed. This culture helps drive a stronger response by peer groups in helping protect their friends and associates.

- Partnership activity in Bromley engages a broader range of organisations and individuals in the protection of vulnerable children and adolescents in extra-familial settings (i.e. schools, neighbourhoods, public, transport hubs, community centres or in areas where young people congregate). Leaders fully commit to engaging their staff in this work.
- Leaders use the intelligence and data collected to take a proactive stance in reacting to emerging risk and need. They respond with timely interventions which reduce risk and vulnerability.

### **Priority 3: PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION**

**The focus of this priority is to ensure an unswerving focus on early intervention to prevent vulnerability escalating. In the context of exploitation, this priority relates to risk being effectively mitigated by partners both before a young person reaches adolescence and when they are in the adolescence stage itself.**

**Strong early help systems, robust responses to domestic abuse and the effective identification and tackling of neglect are key. Equally applicable is the work undertaken directly with children and young people, educating and empowering them to support their friends, build resilience to exploitation and better understand the risks that they might face (both offline and online).**

Outcomes sought:

- The performance of early help systems across Bromley reduces the need for statutory interventions – effectively dealing with need and vulnerability. Early help is subject to ongoing scrutiny by the BSCP, testing the difference it is making to children and young people’s lives.
- Children and young people who are particularly vulnerable to exploitation (i.e. looked after children, missing children) are identified early and supported by their families/carers, professionals, and their community to prevent and build resilience against exploitation.
- Schools deliver high quality Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and take a whole-school approach to gender equality, safeguarding, and preventing exploitation.
- Professionals engaged in providing universal and targeted services to young people, empowering them to identify harmful behaviours and supporting young people to build positive and healthy attitudes towards relationships and friendships, gender identity, and sexuality.

- The following strategies and approaches across the London Borough of Bromley are effective in reducing vulnerability and subject to ongoing scrutiny and challenge by the BSCP:
  - Community Safety in respect of gang activity / youth crime
  - Domestic Abuse / VAWG
  - Working with neglectful families
  - Think Family – Parental Substance Misuse & Mental Health
  - Prevent
  - Suicide Prevention
  - Young People’s Substance Misuse
  - Safeguarding Children in the Context of their Access to Technology and use of Social Media

**Priority 4: PROTECTION AND SUPPORT**

**This priority focuses on two key aspects - the basics and innovation. Whilst acknowledging the need to create new approaches to safeguarding, this cannot be done at the expense of basic practice.**

**The focus on ‘the basics’ across the London Borough of Bromley includes reassurance that information is being shared appropriately, risks are being assessed comprehensively, the focus of work remains on the child or young person, escalation is understood and engaged as appropriate and case recording is contemporaneous and accurate.**

**In terms of innovation the BSCP will seek out and engage in contemporary initiatives that enhance our opportunity to engage children and young people and empower them and the community that cares for them. This will include the use of cutting edge technology and closer alignment and partnership working with local children, parents, carers and community representatives.**

Outcomes sought:

- Quality assurance processes by the BSCP and partners provide reassurance that basic practice across all agencies is effectively safeguarding young people.
- Enduring support to children and young people who have been exploited is delivered, ensuring that what is offered is appropriate for each individual child or young person

based on their gender, age, ethnicity, disability, and the nature of the exploitation that they have experienced.

- The BSCP develop their individual and collective expertise through joint learning exercises and strong partnership.

### **Priority 5: DISRUPTION AND PROSECUTION**

**The focus of this priority is on ensuring a clear focus on the use of a range of disruption techniques to build the trust and confidence of victims. Through the implementation of such strategies, public confidence will increase; with individuals and communities empowered to report the signs of CSE and other forms of exploitation – knowing that robust and effective action will follow.**

**It is not always clear cut as to who is a victim and who is an offender, in some cases such as county lines, the offender may also be a vulnerable adolescent and potential victim of trafficking. This priority will seek to identify strategies for dealing with this dichotomy.**

**This priority will focus on the targeting and pursuit of adult offenders and bring them to justice.**

Outcomes sought:

- Professionals identify, assess and mitigate any vulnerabilities that might reduce the chances of young people exiting gang culture or involvement in youth crime and violence.
- Robust policing responses to perpetrators are in place: agreeing and monitoring investigation plans to run alongside support plans developed in response to a child exploitation referral.
- All agencies effectively share information and routinely utilise intelligence-led disruption in relation to any local businesses, individuals or groups associated with exploitation.
- Agencies flexibly applying the full range of disruption tactics available through both criminal and civil routes to protect children and young people, including powers available in relation to licensing, health and safety, fraud, housing provision and other related legislation.

- Young people demonstrating harmful sexual behaviours are identified and support put in place to address their behaviours, with their own vulnerabilities and developmental stage being considered within any response.
- Robust offender management strategies post-conviction and/or effective intervention strategies that reduce the risk presented by identified abusers.

## 6. Governance and Accountability

- 6.1 **The BSCP Executive** is accountable for the local safeguarding arrangements. Escalations should be made to the BSCP Executive where there are gaps or concerns about the commitment of any partners to the procedures set out in the pan London Child Exploitation Protocol or the priorities and values set out in this strategy.
- 6.2 The **Bromley MACE** (multi-agency child exploitation meeting) follows the protocol for MACEs as set out in the pan London Child Exploitation Protocol. It is jointly chaired by the Local Authority's Director for Children, Families and Education and Detective Inspector (Safeguarding) from South BCU. Terms of reference can be found in the appendices.
- 6.3 The **Bromley MEGA** Panel (Missing, Exploited, Gang Affiliated) is the local tracking panel for medium and high risk children and young people. The multi-agency panel meets fortnightly to monitor individual cases ensuring progress is swift and focussed. The MEGA ensures that outcomes for children and young people improve through a consistent, co-ordinated and robust management of risk across the partnership. Intelligence is shared at the meeting and to the MACE in order to identify trends, themes and patterns. The shared intelligence and partnership arrangements support joined up planning and interventions for young people. Terms of reference can be found in the appendices.
- 6.4 The **Atlas team** was set up in 2017, initially to track and respond to young people who go missing and are at risk of CSE. Since then, the team remit has expanded to respond to wider contextual safeguarding concerns. The team sits alongside the **Bromley MASH** team and provides intelligence and expertise as well as opportunities to identify and reduce risk at the earliest opportunity. Their intelligence supports the early identification and safeguarding of young people in need of support or protection. All children and young people who go missing from home or care, are at risk of CSE, CCE or serious youth violence are known to the team. The Atlas team supports all Children

Social Care teams and works closely with the Youth Justice Service. The ATLAS team manager sits on Bromley's Channel (PREVENT) panel, which is an early intervention programme that supports people who are at risk of radicalisation. The team manager also sits on the YJS Risk and Safeguarding Panel to ensure that young people who are vulnerable to exploitation are identified and supported.

Where concerns arise, in relation to extra familial harm, social workers undertake an exploitation risk assessment. All young people who are considered medium or high risk are tracked through the multi-agency MEGA (Missing, Exploitation and Gang Affiliation) panel. Young people who are assessed at low risk are tracked by the Atlas team manager to ensure that risks are mitigated, and that the young person is receiving appropriate support to prevent an escalation of concerns

## 7. Practical and operational documents

### LONDON

- 7.1 **Definitions for the different types of child exploitation** are detailed in the pan London Child Exploitation Protocol chapter 2.
- 7.2 A list of **factors which make children more vulnerable to exploitation** are detailed in the pan London Child Exploitation Protocol at page 17 and in its appendix C.
- 7.3 A list of **warning signs / risk indicators which children may exhibit if they are being exploited** can be found on page 18 and in appendices B and C of the pan-London Child Exploitation Protocol.
- 7.4 Details of the **tactical options and current legislation** which can be used to prevent/disrupt child exploitation is in appendix H of the pan London Child Exploitation Protocol.
- 7.5 A Pan London Child Exploitation **Problem Profile** is owned and managed by the Metropolitan Police Service. This contains details of suspects (including aliases, nicknames) and assists in identify and disrupting high harm offenders.

## **BROMLEY**

- 7.6 **Terms of reference for the Bromley MACE and Bromley MEGA** are included in appendix 1 and 2 to this document.
- 7.7 **Local profiles linked to child exploitation** are owned by the Bromley MACE. These are shared with relevant partners and not made public. However, more general profile information for specific types of exploitation is shared more widely with the children's workforce. An example of this is in appendix 3.
- 7.8 If you have concerns that a child is being/has been exploited or is at risk of being exploited, the London Safeguarding Children Procedures must be followed. Bromley's 'front door' and first point of contact is the **Bromley MASH**. For details on how to contact, make a referral or ask for advice from MASH, see the 'What to do if you are concerned about a child' page on the [BSCP website](#) or the 'Are you worried about a child?' page on the [Bromley Council website](#). The **Atlas Team** is located within the MASH and will offer expertise on the safeguarding of children and young people who go missing from home or care, are at risk of CSE, CCE or serious youth violence.
- 7.9 The Bromley **Threshold of Needs Guidance** provides practitioners with guidance as to the threshold on which decisions need to be based. The indicators are an overarching guide to what level of support and intervention a family may need. The document explains how and when to access early intervention services and at what point statutory services are needed. The [Threshold of Needs Guidance](#) can be found on the BSCP website.



### **Terms of Reference – Missing, Exploitation and Gang Affiliation (MEGA) Tracking Panel.**

#### **1. Aim:**

To establish an effective strategic multi-agency tracking panel to maintain oversight for safeguarding children/ young people at risk of significant harm through exploitation, missing from home or care, trafficking and gang affiliation/serious youth violence.

#### **2. Purpose:**

- To ensure that outcomes for children and young people improve through a consistent, co-ordinated and robust management of risk across the partnership. The panel will track risk assessments and safety plans for young people to support risk reduction.
- To enable information sharing and intelligence gathering which will support effective protection, prevention and disruption.
- To provide a framework to identify themes, trends and connections between young people at risk.
- To build an intelligence picture of the contextual (extra-familial) harm across Bromley including locations, persons of concern, victims, and perpetrators.
- To hold partners to account for delivery of services to ensure that children and young people are safeguarded.
- To offer professional support and challenge in the best interests of reducing risk for vulnerable adolescents.
- To ensure Bromley has effective structures, protocols and agreements in place at both operational and strategic level

#### **3. Membership and Frequency and Agenda**

The panel will take place fortnightly on Wednesday mornings from 10am – 12.30pm at Bromley Civic Centre (or virtually).

The panel will take place in two parts:

- **Building a contextual picture of Bromley.**  
Agencies will provide relevant updates on local information, patterns, trends, incidents of concerns, service delivery etc.
- **Focusing on Risk and Safety for young people.**  
Discussions and updates in relation to young people currently being tracked through MEGA.



## Membership:

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Chair                        | Group Manager (Children's Social Care) MASH / Atlas   |
| Co-Chair                     | Group Manager (Children's Social Care) – 16+ / Leaving Care   |
| Police                       | Detective Inspector   |
| CSC Atlas Unit               | Data officer<br>Team Manager  |
| Children's Social Care       | Team Managers from all relevant CSC Teams.  |
| Education                    | EWO / CME co-ordinator / Virtual School   |
| YJS                          | YJS Group Manager   |
| <b>Intervention Services</b> | Rescue & Response<br>Targeted Youth Services<br>Mental Health - Bromley Y & CAMHS,<br>Parenting Support - EIS/BCP<br>Substance Misuse - Bromley Changes<br>Mentoring / Gang diversion - St Giles Trust / Safer London<br>Bromley Sexual Health Service<br>Health – CLA and School nursing.<br>Staying Together Team |
| <b>Contextual Services</b>   | Housing lead<br>Probation (when required)<br>Community Safety   |

All members will need to be of sufficient seniority to direct service delivery and to maintain oversight of case work. Membership should be consistent to aid continuity. Where a member is unable to attend, a suitable delegate should be nominated.

The panel will be co-ordinated and administered by the Business Support Officer for Atlas.

### **4. Confidentiality, Diversity and Information Sharing Arrangements.**

- The Information Sharing for MEGA will be covered by the Bromley Multi-Agency Safeguarding Data Sharing Agreement for Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children which has been signed off by the Bromley Children's Safeguarding Partnership Executive Board.
- Information shared within the context of the panel, may at times be restricted due to sensitivity.
- The panel will be committed to equal access to services for all, particularly in relation to race, gender, age, religious beliefs, sexual orientation and disability.

### **5. Child Level Data.**

An Updated MEGA list will be shared ahead of each panel. This list will be updated and shared by the ATLAS data analyst.

All agencies will be required to review actions and updates prior to the panel. Feedback will be provided at each meeting to ensure that progress for children and young people at risk of harm is swift and focused.

#### **6. Referral pathways.**

Children and Young People who are confirmed to be at MEDIUM and HIGH risk will be discussed at MEGA. The risk level will be informed by the relevant risk assessment tool. New referrals will be placed onto the Child Level List by the Team Manager of Atlas.

#### **7. Escalation.**

Any member of the panel can escalate concerns directly to the chair for a further decision or case direction. Where there are concerns around service delivery, delays in planning for young people and concerns in relation to practice, the Team Manager for Atlas will raise this directly with the line manager for the case as well as with the Head of Service. The chair will escalate concerns about service delivery to the relevant managers in partner agencies.

#### **8. Governance Arrangements.**

The MEGA panel is a Strategic Panel that sits within the Children's Social Care Structure. Information from MEGA and the effectiveness of the partnership arrangements will be shared with the strategic MACE group and Bromley Safeguarding Partnership on a quarterly basis.

#### **9. Review.**

The terms of Reference will be reviewed annually. Date of next review – September 2023

## Appendix 2 – Bromley MACE Terms of Reference



### London Borough Bromley Multiagency Child Exploitation (MACE) Terms of Reference

#### **Introduction**

In the London Borough of Bromley, the Quarterly MACE meeting provides strategic and tactical oversight of Exploitation of young people including CSE, Missing and Gangs Affiliation together with criminal exploitation and is a framework to allow regular high-level information sharing and strategic action planning to tackle child exploitation.

#### **Aim and Purpose of the Meeting:**

The meeting will discuss areas of concern by multi-agency partners where there are issues that prevent a case progressing, where themes are identified and trends analysis in relation to all forms of exploitation. This will include intelligence from our MEGA Panel in terms of geographical profile as well as individual profiling.

The purpose of the MACE meeting is to have tactical and strategic oversight of Child Exploitation information, intelligence and activity in London Borough of Bromley including Victim Offender location and trend profiles. This will inform the multi-agency partnership in relation to disruption, support and vision

#### **The key function of the MACE meeting is:**

- To have strategic and tactical oversight of exploitation information, intelligence and activity in London Borough of Bromley and across borough boundaries.
- To remove blockages or obstacles in themes identified through examples of cases, as well as considering and directing resources and activity in response to trends identified from cases highlighted as barrier.
- To identify, discuss and deliver a partnership response to short, medium and long-term themes trends and patterns emerging from exploitation.
- To gather information and data to feed into and maintain a meaningful local Exploitation Problem Profile
- To work collaboratively to ensure the overarching safeguarding and welfare strategy of children and people who are being, or are at risk of being, exploited.
- To be assured that action taken against those intent on abusing and exploiting children and young people by prosecuting and disrupting perpetrators and reviewing data as a form of modelling and predicting – demand analysis.
- Where necessary or relevant, information will be shared with other strategic and operational panels such as MARAC, MAPPA, MEGA , community Safety Partnership and the Children Safeguarding Partnership Executive as agreed by the MACE Chair.

#### **Frequency of Meetings:**

The MACE meeting will take place at the Civic Centre, London Borough Bromley on a Tuesday afternoon where possible. The duration of the meeting is 2 hours, between 14.00 – 16.00.

The meeting will be co-chaired by Detective Inspector Mark Hine and the Local Authority DCS ( in his absence the Assistant Director, Children's Social Care David Dare will assume responsibility for chairing this meeting).

**Membership of Meeting:** The following professionals and agencies represent the core membership:

**Chair Person:** Detective Inspector, Public Protection, SN BCU  
**Co- Chair Person:** Local Authority, Director of Children's Services  
**Co-Chair (Deputy):** Assistant Director Children's Social Care, LBB  
**Attendees:** Head of Service, Children Looked after and Care Leavers, LBB  
Head of Service, MASH, Referral and Assessment, EDT, LBB  
Group Manager Care Leavers/16+, LBB  
Youth Support Programme Manager, LBB  
Police (DC in Children & Families Hub)  
Police (DS in Children & Families Hub)  
CAIT, Police  
Police  
Director, Education, LBB  
Quality Assurance and Improvement Lead, SEND, Education, LBB  
Head of Service SEND, LBB  
Head of Service, School Standards and Adult Education, LBB  
Assistant Director Public Protection, Environment. LBB  
Head of Trading Standards and Community Safety, LBB  
Head of Assessment and Care Management, Adult Social Care, LBB  
Head of Service, Adult Social Care, Mental Health, LBB  
Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children  
Programme Lead. Public Health, LBB  
Assistant Director, Programme Delivery, Public Health, LBB  
Assistant Director, Housing, LBB

Other agency representatives should be considered and invited as appropriate.

All attendees must be of appropriate seniority to have strategic oversight of their area of business and in position to commit resources.

**Information Sharing:** Any information that is shared must be NECESSARY – PROPORTIONATE and RELEVANT and should be provided giving due consideration to the following:

- S11 Children Act 2004 obliges relevant agencies to ensure that its "functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children".
- Sec 29 Data Protection Act (DPA) 1998 allows for the disclosure of personal information without consent to detect or prevent a crime. It contains a defined category of public interest-The protection of vulnerable members of the community. Examples of cases meeting these criteria are young people who are vulnerable to or involved in gang activity, vulnerable to child sexual exploitation and victims of domestic abuse.

**Attendance and Administration Arrangements:**

The meeting will be administered by the DCS' PA

- Sending invites to meeting attendees and collating responses to these
- Recording information shared in the meeting and circulating this to attendees as appropriate.
- Feeding back decisions from the meeting to Lead Professionals – to be the responsibility of the leads on the MACE Panel.

Meeting attendees are responsible for researching subjects of the MACE within their own data bases prior to the meeting and for deciding, using their professional judgement what information is appropriate to share.

The representatives for each agency are responsible for agreeing what information/ intelligence should be passed other groups, organisations and strategic meetings in consultation with the MACE Chair, and for progressing this within their own local referral pathways.

The Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) is responsible for overseeing partnership activity to safeguard children and young people at risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE) in Bromley.

The MACE reports to be presented at the Adults Social Care Board, Bromley Safeguarding Children's Partnership and others as appropriate.

Child exploitation is a priority for the Bromley Safeguarding Children Partnership and will be part of its annual report.

## Appendix 3 – Bromley Profile (Child Exploitation) HIGH LEVEL SUMMARY

**Any child can be exploited.** People who exploit and abuse children do not particularly care about a child's gender, race, age, sexual orientation or where in the borough they live; They are looking to exploit any existing vulnerabilities.

A 'victim profile' can be detrimental if it results in practitioners narrowing their focus. Although it is more useful for practitioners to know the signs of exploitation and how to intervene so they are alert to every potential exploitation case, it can be useful to understand the local picture in order to plan preventative work.

The local analysis identifies known hotspot locations of CSE/CCE activity – it is predominantly **open spaces**. Precise locations are shared at MEGA and MACE meetings. Victims live all over the borough and attend different schools/colleges. Much child exploitation occurs **online**.

### **CSE**

CSE in Bromley is predominantly **peer-on-peer**, with some gang-related association and on-line grooming.

The main factors identified by analysis associated with an increased risk of CSE are:

- Aged 14-16 years
- Being female
- Going missing from home or care
- Not in attendance at a mainstream school / attending a Pupil Referral Unit
- Technology capable

A large proportion of the CSE cases involve 'grooming' with the victim not necessarily recognising the exploitative nature of the relationship. Other common factors present included:

- Substance misuse (alcohol and drugs)
- Friends and associates playing a role
- Higher risk internet usage (e.g. sexual bullying via circulation of explicit material, naked 'selfies' or meeting the perpetrator online)

**Online CSE** has increased over the last two years as children and young people identify that there is profit to be made from **uploading and selling sexual imagery online**. The increase in online CSE is also due to the fact that children and young people do not feel they are at risk of harm when they are in the sanctity of their homes/bedrooms and some parents lack knowledge about the risks to their children using the internet unsupervised and accessing particular websites. This form of exploitation affects twice as many females as males, mostly white British girls.

### **County Lines and Drugs Market**

Areas that Bromley children have been found to be County Lining/drug dealing include: Worthing, Crawley, Southend-on-Sea, Hastings, Great Yarmouth, Bournemouth, Liverpool, Birmingham, Devon, Portsmouth, Brighton, Coventry, Exeter, Margate, Scotland, Wales, Peckham, Streatham, Hounslow, Croydon.

Average age for County Lines activity is 16 years. Predominantly males, who are either White British, Black British Caribbean, Black British African, mixed heritage White and Black Caribbean, Any Other White.

Drugs markets adapted during lockdown with more local selling. A very potent 'ecstasy' (actually PMA, rather than MDMA) new to the local market has adversely affected even experienced drug users. There has been a higher number of presentations to A&E for drug and alcohol misuse. The drugs most often seized from young people intending to supply are cannabis, cocaine and amphetamines.

The commonest illegal drugs taken by Bromley young people is **cannabis** (with an increase in cannabis edibles) and **nitrous oxide**. In the last Year 10 SHEU survey (anonymous health and wellbeing survey of 14-15 year-olds conducted in school) in 2019, 12% of Year 10 males in Bromley and 10% of Year 10 females said they had ever taken cannabis, and similar proportions had ever taken any drug. 6% said they had used cannabis in the last month and 7% said they had used other drugs in the last month.

### **Serious Youth Violence**

Bromley has one of the lowest **knife crime** and robbery rates in London. However, there were a number of non-fatal stabbings of young people in Summer 2022.

Most of the violence that occurs is in the major towns in the borough, including Bromley town centre. Bromley young people also travel to shopping districts outside the borough, such as Stratford Westfield, to commit crime.

In the last SHEU survey in 2022, 7% of the 2969 participants said that they at least 'sometimes' carried a **weapon** or something else for protection when going out. 7% of pupils said they have been threatened or harmed by someone with a weapon; 23% said friends have been. 15% said they didn't feel safe in school.

There is one small, established **gang** in Bromley which does not fit the usual London gang model in terms of structure, size or hierarchy. M20 was originally formed by a group of primary school friends to protect themselves against outsiders but it later developed into a criminal gang dealing in crime (predominantly knife crime and robberies), drugs, exploitation, and extreme violence. Their main territories within SE20 include - South Penge Estate, Betts Park, The Groves Estate, Queen Adelaide Road, High Street, Anerley Road. They are also known to frequent Beckenham, Orpington, and Bromley Town Centre. Members are mostly male, over the age of 18 and not in the care system.

Historically there have been internal conflicts within the gang and with neighbouring gangs in Lewisham, which led to an M20 gang member being convicted for the murder of a 15-year-old male, who was killed in Bellingham, Lewisham, for his affiliation to Lewisham-based gang B-Side. Conflicts extend to Croydon (CR7, Valley Parkers, S/Block) and Lambeth.

Notably, social media fuels tensions between rival gangs.

Recently the landscape surrounding gang activity has changed in the borough. Some M20 members have received long-term convictions, and others have been removed from the Gangs Violence Matrix due to no activity in over two years. Local intelligence has identified that M20 has gone underground, removed from public opinion but still running county lines.

The gradual decline of M20 reports has created a vacuum for other gang members from Lewisham to be active across parts of the borough. Some of the borough youth violence reports have been in connection with the gang named GIC; GIC is a sub-group of the Lewisham gang Block 6. The

intelligence gathered has connected young people known to the MEGA panel to this gang. Further concerns are that older members of this gang are criminally exploiting some Bromley young people.

Members of non-Bromley gangs live in the borough. They are not concentrated in a particular town.

### **Trafficked Children/ Modern Day Slavery**

Very few foreign children come to notice. There has been one incident of children forced to work in a nail bar. British children have been forced to work for Organised Crime Groups to cultivate cannabis, sell drugs and transport drugs (county lines), work in car repair shops and car washes.

### **Radicalisation**

Numbers of referrals locally are low and Homeland Security advises local areas do not publish these. It is accurate to say that the types of radicalisation locally mirrors the pattern found nationally.

In the year ending 31 March 2021, there were 4,915 referrals to Prevent in England and Wales. This is a decrease of 22% compared to the previous year (6,287) and the lowest number of referrals received since comparable data are available (year ending March 2016). This decrease is likely to have been driven by the effects of public health restrictions that were in place throughout the year to control the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

The Police made the highest number of referrals (1,770; 36%), followed by the Education sector (1,221; 25%). The year ending 31 March 2021 saw the lowest proportion of referrals received from the Education sector since comparable data are available, likely due to the closure of schools and universities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Most referrals were of males (4,316; 88%), those aged 15 to 20 accounted for the largest proportion (1,398; 29%).

The number of referrals discussed at a Channel panel (1,333) and adopted as a Channel case (688) saw smaller reductions compared with the previous year, decreasing by 7% and 0.6% respectively.

Of the 688 Channel cases, the most common were cases referred due to concerns regarding Extreme Right-Wing radicalisation (317; 46%), followed by those with a mixed, unstable or unclear ideology (205; 30%) and concerns regarding Islamist radicalisation (154; 22%).

Nationally, there are new threats from groups such as of the INCEL movement – an online community of young men who consider themselves unable to attract women sexually, typically associated with views that are hostile towards women and men who are sexually active. We have not seen this borne out in Bromley yet but are alert to the threat.

### **Teenage Relationship Abuse**

Most recorded incidents of domestic abuse where the child is a victim is perpetrated by a sibling, parent or other household member. However, a few cases are brought to the attention of agencies where the domestic abuse is within a peer relationship. One homicide occurred in a neighbouring borough where a 17-year-old female, who was in an abusive relationship, died.



From 01/04/2021 to 26/11/2021, Bromley & Croydon's Women's Aid (BCWA) IDVA had six clients aged 16-17 years. In addition, the BCWA Young People Team Manager, whose projects are not funded by MOPAC but by another funder, reported that: 3 young people aged 16-17 years are attending YP support groups, and she has a further 14 clients in this age group for one-to-one outreach support.

During 2021, there has been one male aged 17 years heard at the Bromley DAPP (Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Panel) for violence towards his parent, and a further two men aged over 18 who were heard at DAPP for abuse towards 17 year-old female ex-partners. There are currently no 16 or 17-year-old perpetrators on Bromley's DRIVE programme.

In the last SHEU survey, 21% of Year 10 students in Bromley stated there were controlling behaviours in their relationships.

### **Bullying and Social Isolation**

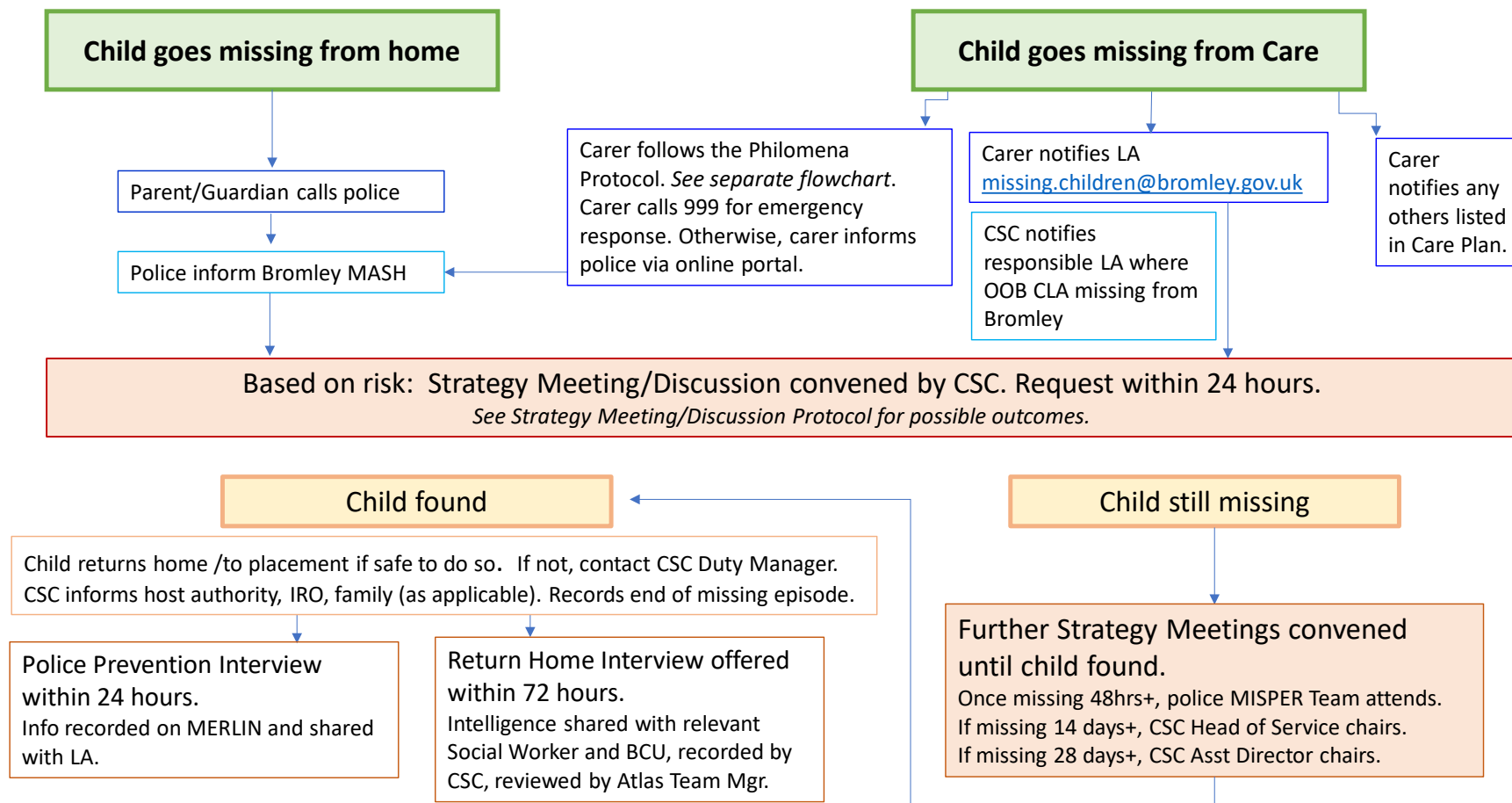
The C19 pandemic has resulted in social isolation for all but it has acutely affected some children and young people. Older adolescents living independently and care leavers have been particularly impacted.

In the last SHEU (health and wellbeing) survey of year 10s (14-15 year olds) in the borough in 2022, 12% said they had been bullied at/near school in last 12 months. Those most negatively affected were children with special educational needs or disabilities, young carers and those who identified as LGBT.

### **Organised Begging**

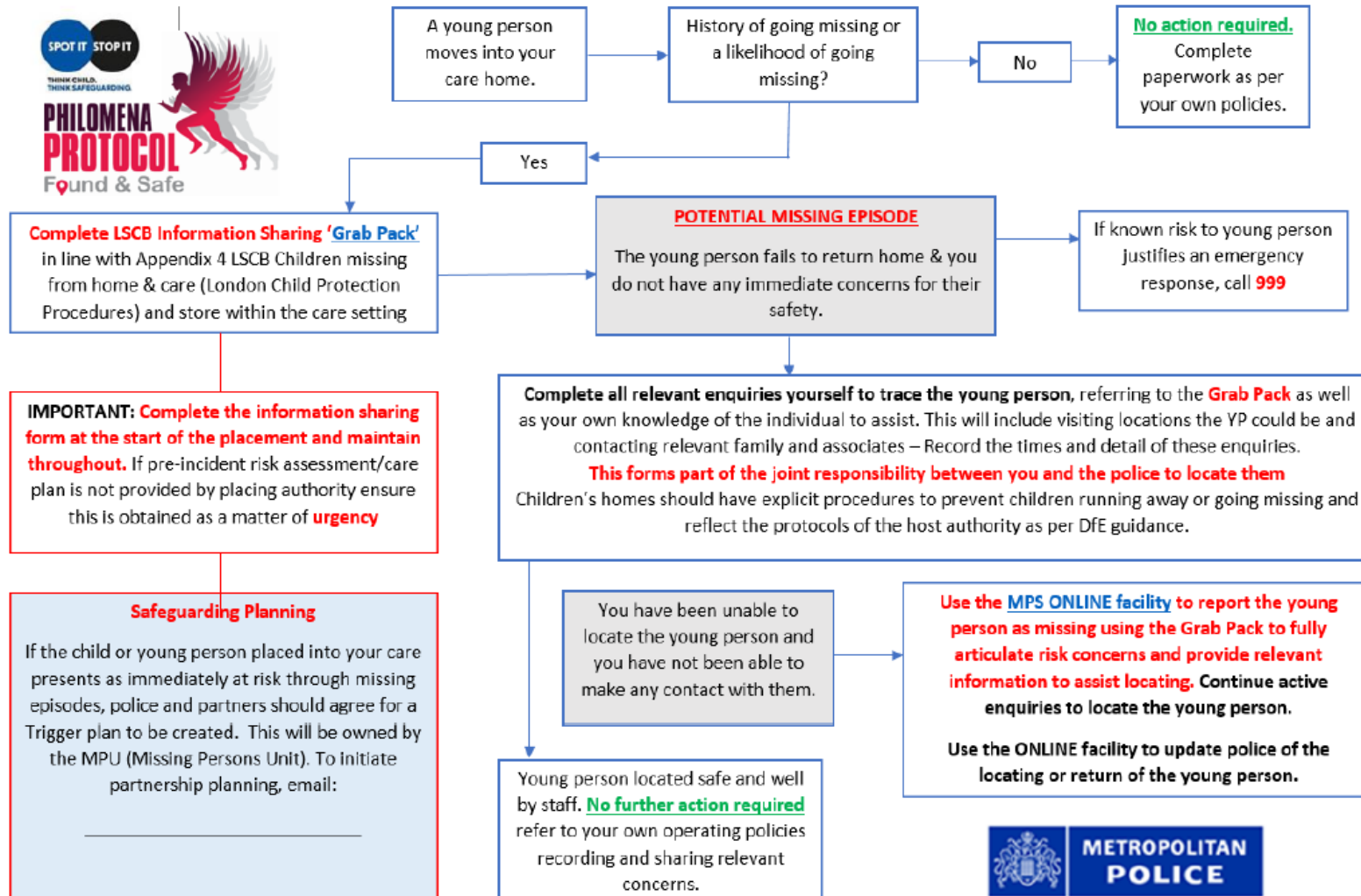
This has not been an issue involving children in Bromley. There have been incidents of adults in Bromley Town Centre.

## Appendix 4 – Bromley Pathways to Support re Child Exploitation



Where child alleges harm or the professional suspects child has been exploited, leads to investigation and assessment by police/CSC. See *exploitation flowchart*.

# The Philomena Protocol



*The Philomena protocol outlines the process to take when a young person is being reported missing.*

**Suspicion or identification that a child is being exploited (sexually, criminally, to have extreme views etc)**

**Referral to Bromley MASH Front Door**

MASH Front Door processes enacted.  
 If child open to CSC, allocated social worker informed.  
 If unknown child, threshold of need applied. RAG rating. If required, case is 'MASHed' and additional intelligence gathered.  
 MASH Team Manager decision. Outcome recorded and shared with referrer.  
 Cases discussed at MASH Morning meeting. ATLAS Team Manager attends.

**Based on risk: Strategy Meeting/Discussion convened by CSC. Request within 24 hours.**

*See Strategy Meeting/Discussion Protocol for possible outcomes. Additional outcomes for exploitation cases below.*

Crime Report/Non-Crime Report created by Police. Add information to Crimints, using appropriate CCE, CSE flags and information markers. Police investigate any crime.

SW opens an Exploitation Episode on Liquid Logic.  
**Exploitation Risk Assessment**  
 RAG rating + professional judgement = decision on whether Low/Med/High Risk YP

NRM referral made if appropriate

Referral made if appropriate to Channel Panel, Police Gangs Unit

**LOW RISK CASES**  
 ATLAS Team Manager records on Case Record.  
 Recommends services to Social Worker for YP.  
 SW monitors Safety Plan with Core Group as per all open CSC cases.

**MEDIUM/HIGH CASES**  
 Tracked at **MEGA PANEL**  
 YP discussed fortnightly/monthly. YP's Safety Plan updated and previous actions checked.  
 Mapping for complex cases/places/connections

Strategic intelligence shared with MACE Panel who update local profile

Liaison with other relevant panels (Channel Prevent; YJS Risk & SG; Out of Court Disposal, MAPPA etc)

## Appendix 5

### Support for Exploited Bromley Children and Young People

- Social Work interventions (BSCS) from SG teams, LAC teams, Staying Put etc
- Staying Together team (BSCS)
- Rescue & Respond (for County Lines)
- National Referral Mechanism (NRM)
- Youth Justice Service Prevention Services
- LBB Targeted Youth Services
- Safer London
- PACE
- St Giles Trust (gang diversion; Mentoring)
- Bromley Children Project
- Bromley Y (mental health and emotional wellbeing)
- Bromley CAMHS (Oxleas)
- CGL/ Bromley Changes (substance misuse)
- School Nursing (BHC)
- Sexual Health Services (BHC)
- LBB Housing
- Probation Services
- LBB Community Safety (Prevent radicalisation) with Police colleagues
- NYAS
- Mary Dolly Foundation (CSE prevention)
- *All services that reduce other vulnerabilities eg NEET*