

# **How the Complex Safeguarding Hub Works in Bolton**

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# 1. Introduction

1.1 The Complex Safeguarding Hub has been developed and is delivered as part of the Bolton Safeguarding Children's Partnership. The offer is part of the multi -agency strategic response to tackling youth exploitation in the Borough.

1.2 The aim is to reach, intervene and reduce the risks faced by children who are vulnerable to exploitation. As part of the Greater Manchester Partnership (GM), the service aims to meet the collective definition and goals summarised in the GM mission statement.

***'By 2020 all children in Greater Manchester who are vulnerable to exploitation or other forms of serious and organised criminality will be protected by services which will be delivered in a co-ordinated, informed and consistent way with improved outcomes for children, families and their communities'***

1.3 In delivering services, the Complex Safeguarding Hub (CSH) will respond in line with partnership expectations that

- We recognise any child may be at risk from exploitation and we put children at the centre of what we do
- We will work in ways that promote equality of opportunity and build stable, trusting relationships with children
- We will listen to what children tell us, treating them with respect and kindness
- We know children cannot consent to being exploited; exploitation is not a 'lifestyle choice', for a child it is child abuse
- We understand how culture and diversity may impact on children and we will respond to each child's unique circumstances
- We don't give up on children or stop helping them because 'they' don't engage; we stop and think about the reasons why we aren't connecting with them; we are persistent in our work
- We will take a whole family approach and offer help and support to promote a child's strengths
- We can rely on our peers, managers and leaders; we can trust them to provide effective support and constructive challenge when needed
- We all have a role to play in tackling exploitation in Bolton whether this is in our professional or private life.

1.4 To deliver the services to children and young people who are seen as being exploited or vulnerable to exploitation supplemental services have been constructed as the Complex Safeguarding Hub which aims on a multi- agency basis to provide the following elements

- Promote and provide information and advice regarding identification of exploitation
- Provide guidance regarding contextual safeguarding measures to reduce risk in the community by awareness, risk reduction, safety practices as well as the use of current intelligence and trends in exploitative behaviours seen in the community

- By direct work involving the engagement and support of children as well as their families
- Direct disruption approaches including pursuing the criminal aspects of exploitation and the use of the law to investigate, issue warnings and prosecute
- To work in a coordinated way in conjunction with the children’s professional network under Bolton’s Safeguarding Children’s Partnership.

1.5 To deliver this the Complex Safeguarding Hub plans and delivers services using a ‘hub and spoke response’ to service delivery. Characterised by *Figure 1*

### Hub and Spoke Delivery

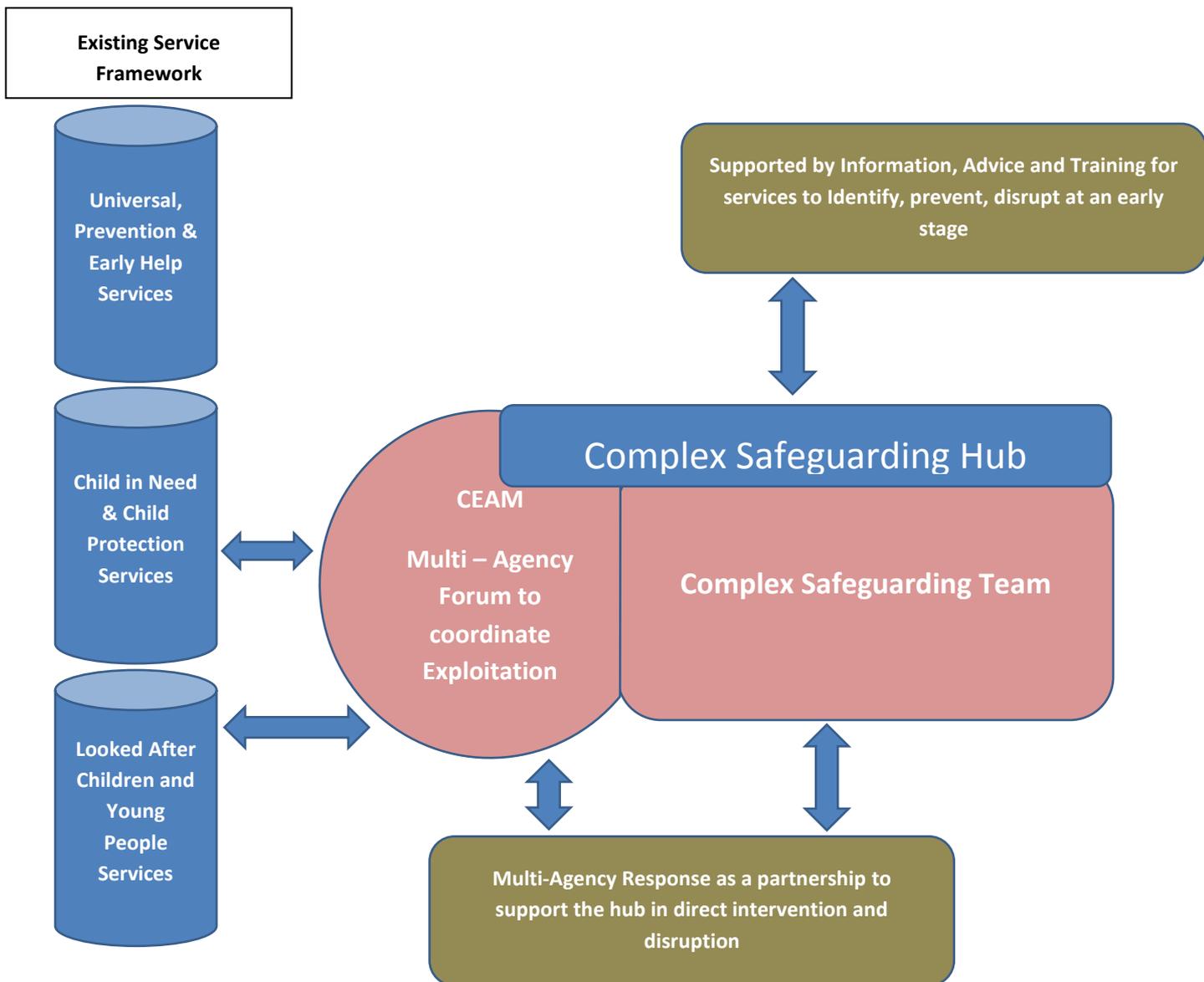


Figure1.

1.6 The Complex Safeguarding Hub will therefore focus on exploitation through the delivery of bespoke interventions formulated on a multi-Agency basis. These targeted interventions reflect the understanding of need and who is best placed to offer support and intervention for the young people at risk. This will involve Social Workers, Family Support Workers and Police Officers based within the hub delivering direct casework interventions working in a coordinated pattern with Partner Agencies. Plan formulation and partner agency participation is through the CEAM forum. Composition of the partnership is listed in *Figure 2*.

CEAM Membership	Complex Safeguarding Team
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Safeguarding Service</b> – Representative Lead Professional and a Member of the Complex Safeguarding Hub</li> <li>• <b>Police</b> – Representatives for CCE, CSE and where necessary from community teams, Police Officer for missing or Intelligence</li> <li>• <b>Urban Outreach (RUNA)</b> – One representative</li> <li>• <b>Early Help Forum</b> – Named Participant</li> <li>• <b>Bolton NHS Foundation Trust</b></li> <li>• <b>Youth and Play Services</b> - One representative able to link with relevant 3<sup>rd</sup> party partners</li> <li>• <b>Youth Offending Service</b> -</li> <li>• <b>National Probation Service</b> -</li> <li>• <b>Community Safety</b></li> <li>• <b>Safeguarding in Education</b></li> <li>• <b>Regulatory Services</b></li> <li>• <b>Environmental Health and Housing Standards</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Core Members</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Police Officers – CCE</b></li> <li>• <b>Police Officers – CSE</b></li> <li>• <b>Social Workers</b></li> <li>• <b>Family Support Workers</b></li> </ul>
	<p><b>Affiliated Members</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Missing Coordinator</b></li> <li>• <b>YOS CCE Champion</b></li> <li>• <b>MASS Representative</b></li> </ul>

*Figure 2.*

1.7 The operation of CEAM is outlined in the CEAM Terms of Reference, and operating tools linked to the planning and service delivery and should be read as supplemental to this document.

1.8 The service will focus on those young people where there is evidence of exploitation and who are considered to be medium or high risk. The Service is positioned accordingly and rests alongside existing risk management structures.

1.9 With all referrals being directed to the MASSS and work being undertaken within existing structures and risk framework, operations in respect of the work undertaken by the Complex Safeguarding Hub will be under current Information Sharing agreement and protocols.

## 2. Threshold & Access to the Complex Safeguarding Hub

2.1 The Complex Safeguarding Hub has been developed as a vehicle to address situations which are complicated and offers unique challenges to the existing National Policy Risk Framework. As such it requires a different and supplemental approach to current practice.

2.2 It is recognised that young people are universally vulnerable to exploitation affected by the environment within which they live. Family life and relationship experiences as well as their own developmental needs will impact on their vulnerability. This shapes perceptions and choices made at a time where the exercising of choice and testing their ability to manage is part of growing up and developing their identity for young people.

2.3 Service delivery focuses on those at highest risk. This is on the basis that **all** provision has a responsibility to identify and mitigate risk for the children and young people they are working with. For those who are showing signs of vulnerability, services should use their own resources and existing frameworks to identify their needs, plan and provide interventions in order to reduce the vulnerability and divert at the earliest opportunity so they are prevented from being in a position where they can be exploited.

2.4 For this cohort of young people the Complex Safeguarding Hub will support professionals to reduce vulnerability at an early stage by offering information, advice and guidance to support their understanding and approach. This is to be delivered at a strategic level, service level and where necessary on an individual practitioner level. The focus will be on supporting an understanding of exploitation; contextual safeguarding and working with partners to promote early identification and diversion. The offer is listed in *Figure 3*

Prevention Offer	
Provision	Purpose
1. Email drop box for professionals to request individual advice	To support professionals regarding issues or concerns they need advice on
2. Triage Tool to support understanding threshold	To assist individuals to think through what they are seeing and the level of risk
3. Information Briefings	To keep services up to date with advice, guidance, local procedures, national legislation etc.
4. Training in respect of recognition and response to exploitation and contextual safeguarding	To promote professionals understanding, identification and response to exploitation including relevant interventions and support.

5. Promotion of intelligence sharing across the services	Understanding contextual safeguarding and use of intelligence to assist prevention, disruption and prosecution.
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Figure 3

2.5 Where concerns indicate a young person may be being exploited the **Exploitation Triage Tool** (See Appendix 1) may be referenced- This will aid an understanding of the level of risk and indicate what level of response may be necessary. As part of determining what response is necessary, it is key to identify whether there are clear signs and behaviours indicating that exploitation is taking place. Remembering that exploitation may be identified from cumulative information or by an event The Exploitation Triage Tool allows the professional to reflect on the presenting situation and whether there are genuine worries for the young person, what can be evidenced and the degree of threat they are experiencing. Defining the risk as Low, Medium or High will assist in decision making, as to whether the matter can be dealt with by Early Help and Prevention Services.

2.6 Referral to the MASSS should be made if the Triage Tool suggests medium or high risk AND the referring agency are of the view the child requires support by either Child in Need (S17) or by child protection (S.47) processes. Significant efforts should be made to explain and gain consent for a follow on referral at this level.

2.7. Needs and vulnerabilities will be assessed as set out in the document **Framework For Action** published by Bolton Safeguarding Children’s Partnership.

<https://www.boltonsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/downloads/file/36/framework-for-action>

2.8 Upon acceptance of the referral the family will be subject to a single assessment to complete a full understanding of the child and family circumstances and start the process of the identification of need and subsequent support that may be required. It is essential that a holistic understanding of the child’s circumstances is completed in order to plan. This will include the concerns and context that relates to their experience of exploitation to date. With the needs identified the case will progress in the usual fashion within social care in accordance with perceived risk.

2.9 As part of the assessment process each case should also be looked at in respect of known risks that present to practitioners involved in working with a family and young person. Where there are concerns relating to professional safety, this should be considered in the planning intervention, shared with other professionals involved in order to minimise risk by the workforce. A formal Risk Assessment should be completed.

2.10 Where the concerns are predominantly surrounding exploitation, the evaluation of risk is the important element in deciding how best to approach it. High risk needs to be recognised and reflected within child protection processes, regardless of the perceived level of threat in the home. Processes in relation to Child in Need or Child Protection should be progressed in the usual manner.

2.11 Where the risk of exploitation is assessed as low, interventions to address the concern will be addressed in existing care plans. Where the risks are assessed as medium or high the allocated social worker will make a referral to the next available multi agency CEAM meeting. Discussion at the CEAM meeting will be the main pathway to allocation and oversight by the Complex Safeguarding Hub.

2.12 A small number of cases may require urgent and immediate crisis intervention as part of a section 47 investigation, in this instance the Social Worker can make direct representation to the social care manager of the Complex Safeguarding Team. Equally Police representatives within the MASS should also make direct approaches to Police Team in the Complex Safeguarding Hub to facilitate advice or attendance at the Strategy Meeting and deciding actions. Intervention will commence whilst the case waits for the next available CEAM meeting.

2.13 The process for referral to CEAM and support by the Complex Safeguarding Hub is laid out in *Figure 4*.

### Referral Pathway

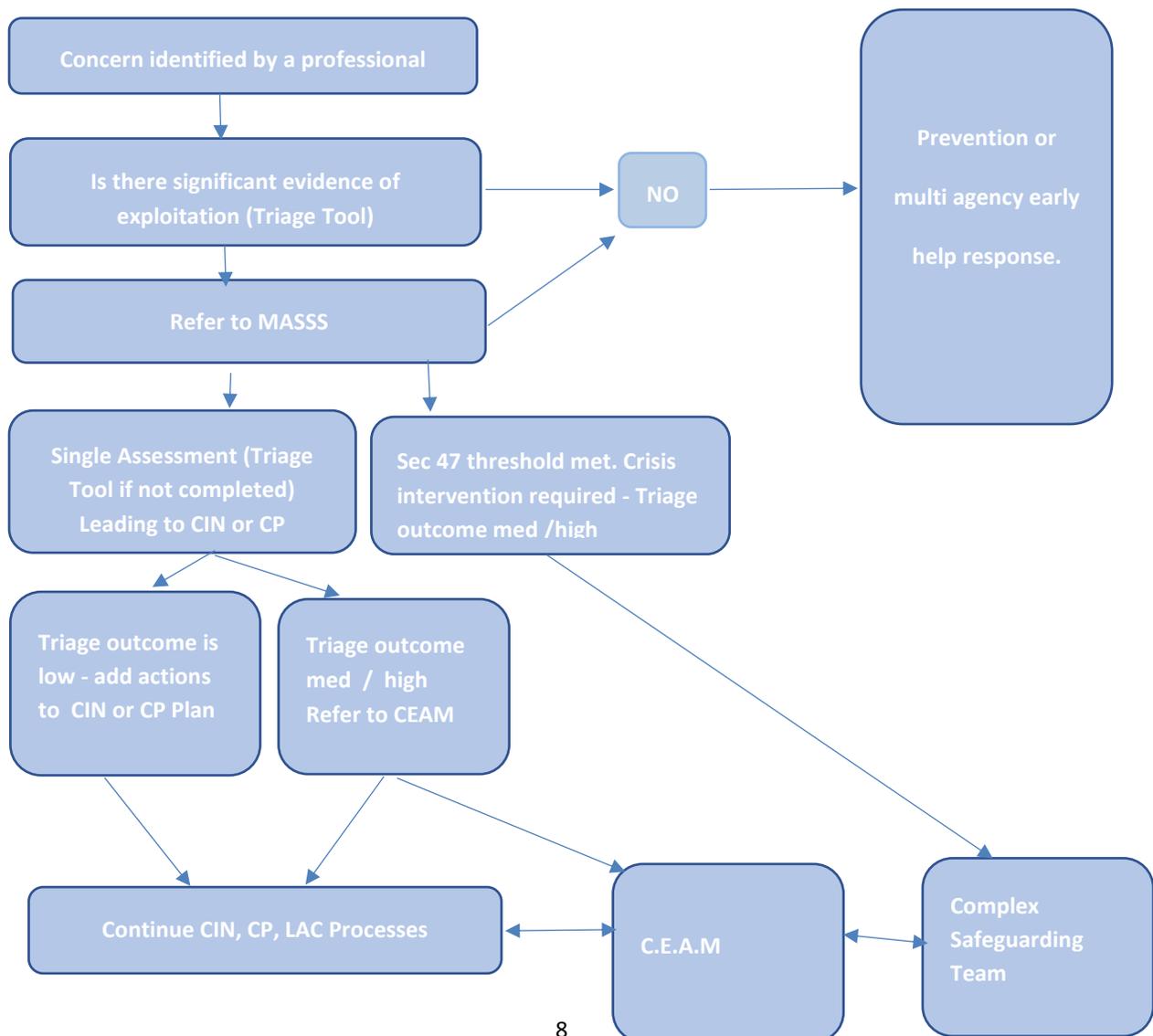


Figure 4

2.14. What has been described is the process to follow where it is identified that exploitation is thought to be a feature of a child's needs where the child in question is newly referred to Social Care. However the potential for exploitation can be hidden for periods of time or can develop at any time throughout a child's life, including those who are already seen as vulnerable and receiving support through Child in Need, Child Protection or indeed as a Child Looked After. In these circumstances the Triage Tool should still be applied and be part of a referral through to CEAM for discussion about additional appropriate support.

### **3. CEAM**

3.1. Where screening indicates medium or high risk of exploitation all cases should be discussed by the multi agency panel at CEAM. This fortnightly meeting held by the Hub's partners will look to evaluate the information presented on a child or young person and draw up an analysis of risk and consider how best to intervene and support community practitioners already working with the young person.

3.2 A description as to the activities at CEAM can be seen at Appendix 2, CEAM Terms of Reference. The CEAM panel will consider the information provided by the allocated Social Worker as Lead Professional who will attend with the current Plan, for discussion. CEAM will review and consider actions and whether with additional supports and Hub adoption of the case with further intervention will reduce the risk. Recommendations will be made including whether a worker from the Complex Safeguarding Team will be allocated to co work with the Social Worker. Such discussions are aimed at identifying imaginative and creative approaches to reduce risk. Once agreed the expectation is for the strategy to be implemented. A CEAM panel review will be set for between 2 weeks but no longer than 8 weeks.

3.3 It is recognised that there may be occasions where CEAM will have concluded that current provision and approach is sufficient and may not allocate a Complex Safeguarding Team Worker. The allocation of a worker will not be an automatic provision, as a result of being adopted by CEAM. There are circumstances where an additional worker would cut across significant interventions already in place and potentially generate conflict or confusion which is to be avoided. Issues such as consent for worker involvement or lack of engagement may impact on decisions at any time and will be discussed on a case by case basis.

3.4 However should it be agreed that a Complex Safeguarding Hub social care worker be allocated, they will remain involved, working alongside the allocated Social Worker, in order to support the objectives of the Plan in place.

## 4. Operational Practice

4.1 The processes described relate to the interaction between the Complex Safeguarding Hub and Social Care community teams. The involvement in CEAM and ongoing work within the Hub relates to significant partnership working with our core partner the Police. The Complex Safeguarding Team is staffed accordingly with both social care staff and Police Officers dedicated to address exploitation and pursue an approach which is aimed at safeguarding the victims of exploitation but also from the perspective of crime prevention, disruption and the use of the criminal law to hold perpetrators to account including prosecutions.

4.2 This necessitates close and constant communication in respect of the coordination of interventions. This includes the management of information and activity supporting the Police requirements relating to the collection of criminal evidence and to support operations to counter complex criminal behaviour and organised crime groups. As such this will impact on information sharing. Guidance will be offered on an individual basis as part of the Complex Safeguarding Hub planning.

4.3 The starting point for planning interventions will be at CEAM and actions will be identified to be undertaken across the partnership. Such recommendations should be taken by the Lead Professional and integrated into the child's plan regardless of format. It is a principle that practitioners should be working from one up to date plan to ensure consistency in intervention.

4.4 Once a case is adopted by the Hub through CEAM, in all circumstances a specialist exploitation risk assessment will be completed to understand in more detail the risks from an exploitation perspective using the Greater Manchester Assessment Tool. The outcome will contribute to our understanding of the vulnerabilities and challenges for the young person and as such the findings will be fed back into case planning for and at the next CEAM.

4.5 Throughout both social care worker and the community lead professional will be working to the one plan for the young person. However, the practitioners involved will retain very distinct roles.

- **Community Social Worker** (CIN, CP or LAC) – The social worker will focus attention on supporting the young person in respect of outstanding needs and their relationships with family and the risks specifically to siblings. There will be a focus on maintaining links and provision by community and universal services for health and education needs as well as Parenting Interventions which assist in reflection and the impact of their decision making on what is happening to their child. This work to be undertaken within the context of planning and review arrangements under CIN, CP and Children Looked After.

The work undertaken therefore by the workers will be aimed at strengthening the relationships between the young person and the family. Working to support re engagement by all with the young person and look to community sources to offer alternative choices for the young person that is meaningful to them, as a way of giving the young person alternative options to meet their needs than their current path. This will often involve understanding the young person's educational and developmental needs and facilitating ways to address identified deficits.

- **Complex Safeguarding Hub Worker** – The additional worker will engage in a different way specifically working alongside the young person and focused on engagement and discussion with them regarding the activity and risks they find themselves in and where appropriate supporting them in working alongside the Police regarding identified ways to disrupt and support any criminal investigations. A close working relationship with the community Social Worker is necessary to ensure the young person and family receive a coordinated and supportive relationship to change the degree of risk a young person is at.

4.6 The activity will continue to be subject to review through Child in Need Meetings, Core Groups and Care Planning Meetings in the usual way informed by the views of CEAM.

4.7 The additional layer of support recognises the live issues and challenges associated with dealing with exploitation. The response needs to reflect current activity and changes within which a young person can be exploited. Responding to opportunities and managing risk in accordance with a fluid picture within which the young person lives. As such, a key feature of the Complex Safeguarding Hub is the **Daily Governance Meetings** as shown in *Figure 5*.

4.8 This meeting, as the name suggests, is held daily and scans information regarding vulnerable young people from Police sources and incidents recorded in other agencies. The daily research supports the tracking of young people, the provision of live intelligence about the behaviour and movement of young people, families, their behaviour and in addition the behaviours and actions of perpetrators and persons of interest exploiting the young people. It contributes to the daily assessment of risk, indicating if there is fluctuation. Response is in real time and additional actions are undertaken to mitigate new threats and allow for the exploration of approaches to disrupt or intervene. Information is shared with lead professionals and recommended action is discussed and shared.

### Daily Governance Meeting

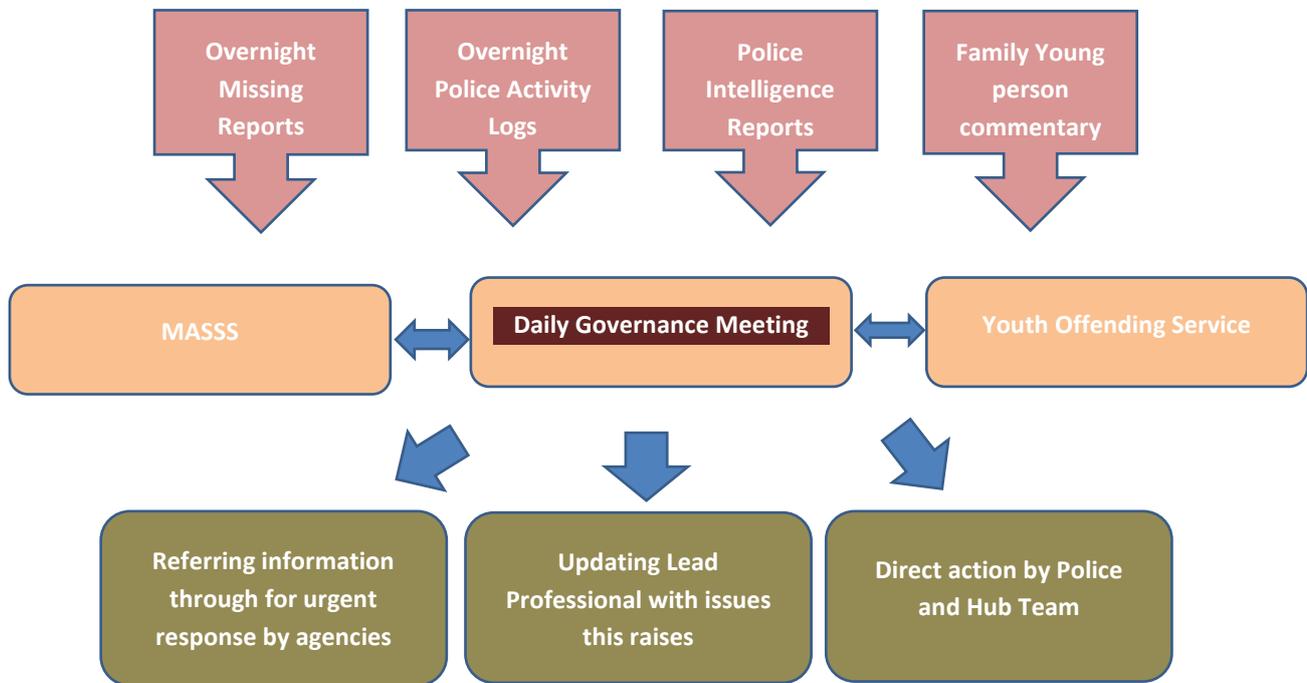


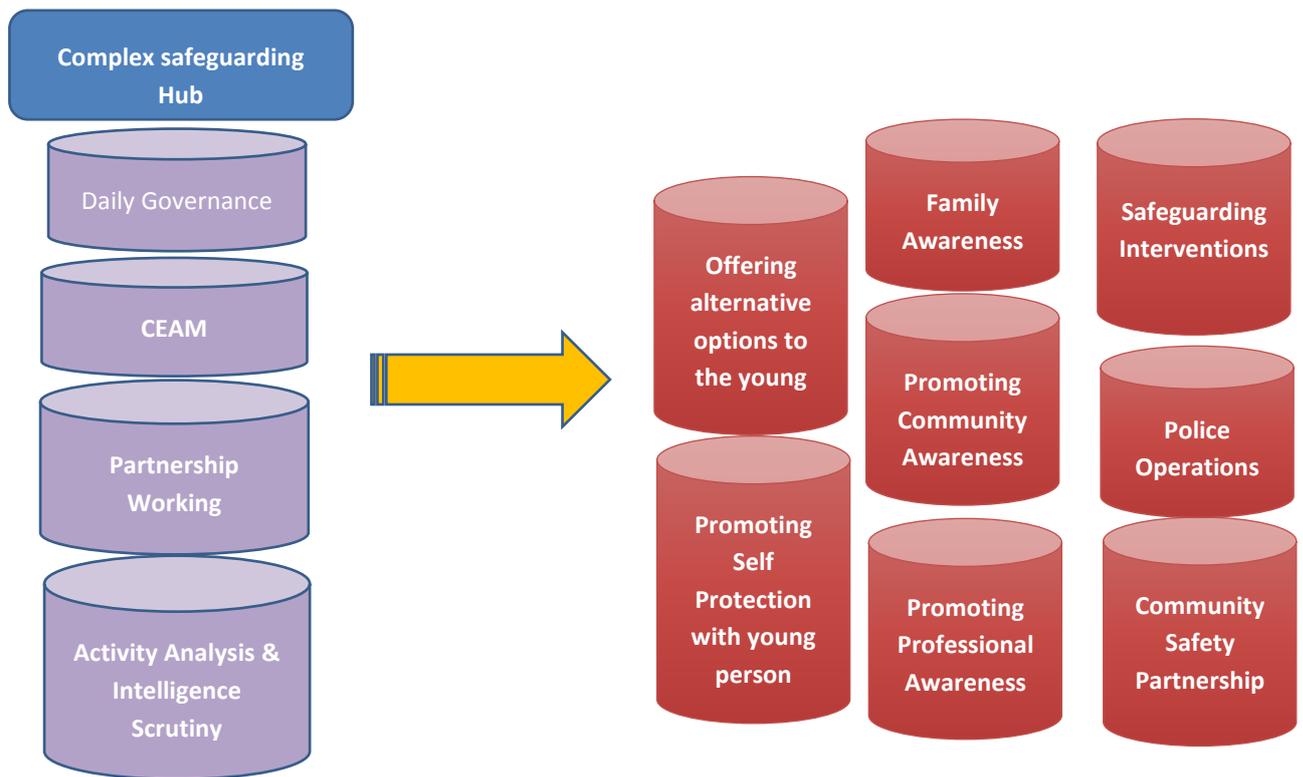
Figure 5.

4.9 Workers within the Complex Safeguarding Team will have a caseload of young people who they are directly linked with and will work with the young people on actions identified in CEAM and integrated into the young person's plan. The emphasis is upon working alongside the young person in a consistent manner building upon the rapport and promoting trust in discussing their experiences and actions or choices they can make at any one time. This also includes supporting others such as family or professionals to understand the challenges the young people face and the difficulties in changing their relationships with those who aim to exploit them. This forms a perspective of understanding and gauging the risk the young person faces and when disruption or intervention is appropriate.

4.10 This is a process of balancing how best to intervene at any one time. Staff will need to be aware of the complexities of networks and organised abuse involving multiple young people in constant communication with each other as well as multiple abusers. On occasions this will require move substantive coordinated efforts to intervene and disrupt through working closely with Police Operations as a way of managing the intelligence relating to perpetrators and how to break such organisations down.

## 5. Disruption

5.1 In order to be effective, a core element that has to be integrated throughout is the concept of disruption. This needs to be at every level of intervention, in order to reduce risk for the individual but also to reduce the risks to other young people within the community from being exploited. Thus the hub holds a lot of information in respect of current community vulnerabilities and must look at issues from a contextual safeguarding perspective and apply actions strategically, thematically or through Police Operations in order to effectively disrupt and remove threats in our community. As defined in *Figure 6*



*Figure 6.*

5.2 The Complex Safeguarding Hub looks to deliver disruption in a variety of ways, by working with partners and offering support to ensure there is a coordinated approach to disruption. The integration into care planning on an individual child basis is essential in delivering consistent and trustworthy support to the child, engaging with them to change behaviours, access alternative activities as well as protection by direct disruption including prosecution of the perpetrator.

5.3 The individual engagement work is core to the activities of the staff who work in the hub. Surrounding that direct interaction is the multi-agency working that will be undertaken in conjunction with professional colleagues across the children’s professional network. This includes family awareness and working to reduce familial needs that have impacted on the child’s sense of wellbeing and have increased alienation from the home, focusing on making homelife a happier experience where necessary and ensuring families are aware of actions that they can take to reduce opportunities for exploitation.

5.4 The application and re engagement of alternative community services will also be an integral part of the approach to disruption. Offering activities and support to

increase confidence, self worth and individuals' ability to access positive activities and education provision. This may involve presenting a challenge to partner agencies to be creative or inclusive as well as persistent in the offers made to support the young person in order to move forward positively.

- 5.5 Such actions will be addressed at every stage of service planning, including during discussions where immediate action is required, this could be in respect of a presenting situation or information heard at the Daily Governance Meeting or part of planning at CEAM at every review of activity undertaken. The Police are involved at every stage and will consider how best to ascertain the identification of locations and perpetrators, implementing disruption where possible and prosecute when able those perpetrators.
- 5.6 In addition consideration must be given in respect of the information held as a whole and the recognition that exploitation by perpetrators can be organised and involve a number of abusers as well as a number of young people. The shape and location of these groups can adapt to presenting barriers and change rapidly in how and with whom they operate. As such, efforts to disrupt have to be equally malleable with adjustments being regularly made. In such circumstances the Police will work to approach the matter in a coordinated pattern to maximise the opportunity to address a network by prosecution. Such approaches may involve coordination through Operations with which the Hub will work to support by engaging in actions to assist.
- 5.7 Information and the experience of young people and the direct work undertaken in respect of disruption, whilst informing current intervention in respect of the individual young people, also informs our understanding of the risks and vulnerabilities within the community. The hub will as part of the work undertaken, will utilise what has been learnt and link with the wider information collated to inform the contextual safeguarding initiatives that can be undertaken in the community. Disruption by education of and informing licenced services such as taxis and venues in the community of concern is essential to promote community safety. This information is collated on a regular basis with the issues identified shared within the Community Safety Partnership to inform intervention and planning from a community perspective. The intent is to maximise the opportunities to reduce the risk of exploitation within Bolton in a coordinated way.
- 5.8 It is also recognised that some disruption methods undertaken may not be fully disclosed or shared across the partnership. Disclosure may inform how best to counter disruption methods by the perpetrators, where they are known. Such decisions and actions will be governed by guidance relating to criminal investigations and will be solely a matter for the Police.

## **6. Intelligence**

- 6.1 Ensuring information is shared and fully utilised, in order to gain an understanding of activity in the community, which can be more hidden, is key in delivering successful interventions and effective disruption.

- 6.2 Partnership information, families' views and the child's perspective and what activity patterns can be understood are essential in contributing to planning. There are three main ways that information is collected with the intelligence being shared within the Complex Safeguarding Hub.
- 6.3 The first level of intelligence relates to information gleaned from any source. The Children's Partnership have received access to and have been encouraged to use an Intelligence Referral Form to submit information deemed to be relevant to the Police Intelligence Mailbox for review. The relevant information deposited is reviewed by the Police to assist in understanding what activity is thought to be happening. The provenance of this information is a key feature in interpreting the information shared and is asked to be part of the information sharing process.
- 6.4 The Police will collate, review and consider what is relevant and assists in understanding the picture of activity. This is combined with other Police reporting and notes drawn together. Police must exercise through their systems due caution in how information is shared and what is appropriate to share to inform disruption, which is led by other services, compared to the holding of information for investigative use in exploring potential criminal prosecutions. The Complex Safeguarding Hub accepts this requirement and values information shared with partners as being considered and proportionate to support the wider approach to disruption.
- 6.5 The second element and focus on managing information is through the Daily Governance Meeting which checks and collates activity across Police and Social Care reported incidents and information that has occurred overnight and is reviewed for consideration of immediate action or changes in approach every day, this is to ensure service delivery remains responsive to risk and presenting vulnerabilities.
- 6.6 The final element relates to consideration and analysis by CEAM to reflect on known activity with the child and their family from across the professional network. This information including that of the Police Information which is appropriate to share, will be analysed and therefore inform planning and the production of interventions that can be integrated in the Care Plan.
- 6.7 This collection of intelligence will also assist the Complex Safeguarding Hub in having an overview of the activity in the community and will therefore also inform guidance on the wider community safety initiatives, by feeding back issues relating to geographical issues and themes of concern to the Community

Safety Partnership for further intervention the mechanism of which is detailed in the Disruption Section.

## **7. Bolton Safeguarding Children’s Partnership Objectives**

7.1 The service has been built and is being delivered in accordance with the expectations and requirements as laid out in the Bolton’s Exploitation Strategy as adopted by the Bolton Safeguarding Children’s Partnership. The Complex Safeguarding Hub is central to the delivery and coordination of services in Bolton relating to exploitation. The Hub aims to deliver upon the three domains as defined through the Exploitation Sub-Group.

### **1.Prepare, Promote, Prevent**

The service will undertake the following core tasks in accordance with need.

- Offer bespoke advice and consultation to individual practitioners with regards to casework
- Offer guidance, training and information supporting awareness, recognition and response
- Maintain up to date information and links to supports services which can be accessed by the partnership
- Collect data relevant to the planning of services and inform the Department as to the profile of activity and performance in respect of children’s experience of exploitation in Bolton
- Act as a focal point for intelligence gathering and identification of themes, trends and areas of concern to inform prevention and disruption in respect of child exploitation
- Collect information and coordinate activity linked to children going missing
- Hold and produce data and analysis of patterns of missing in Bolton

### **2.Protect and Repair**

The service will

- Hold a Daily Governance Meeting (DGM) for live tracking and prioritisation of risks and threats linked to missing and exploitation. The meeting will facilitate day to day information sharing and action planning.

- Utilise collected information to inform community network and partners of current threats and promote disruption and minimising of risk approaches in a coordinated fashion across the professional network
- Direct intervention and allocation of a one to one worker to undertake relationship based work with the young person and their family to engage, educate and build greater resilience and disrupt with a view to reduce risk and protect from exploitation
- To coordinate activities aimed at care and protection, with that of criminal investigations targeting disrupting perpetrators.

### **3. Prosecute and Disrupt**

The service will

- Work jointly to support children to make informed choices to provide evidence aimed at progressing lines of enquiry and the use of the law to disrupt and prosecute
- Work with social care in support where risks are not adequately being dealt with through parenting or the situation becomes so unsafe as to warrant legal proceedings and the child to become looked after
- Where appropriate disruption will involve direct approaches to perpetrators and those who facilitate access in order to reduce risk to the child
- Intelligence gathered will be analysed and information provided to the wider partnership to inform planning and targeting by the wider community partnership increase the safety of Bolton as a community

7.2 This manual defines how these expectations will be delivered in Bolton. As part of the governance arrangements the performance data from the service, the effectiveness of interventions and working relationships will all be subject to each organisation's quality assurance processes but oversight as an integrated service will be undertaken by the Bolton's Exploitation Sub Group who will constantly review activity and offer advice to participant agencies as to the effectiveness of their interventions.

## **8. Partnership Commitment to the Hub**

(Commitments being developed)