

# Disrupting Exploitation

Best practice guidance



**The  
Children's  
Society**



**BRITISH  
TRANSPORT  
POLICE**



**Child Sexual  
Exploitation  
Taskforce**

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We would like to extend our thanks to all the professionals that provided examples of their practice that we have showcased in this guidance.

A draft version of the guidance was subject to a process of consultation, and the views of consultees were considered in completing the final version. We would also like to extend our thanks to all the professionals who supported this process.

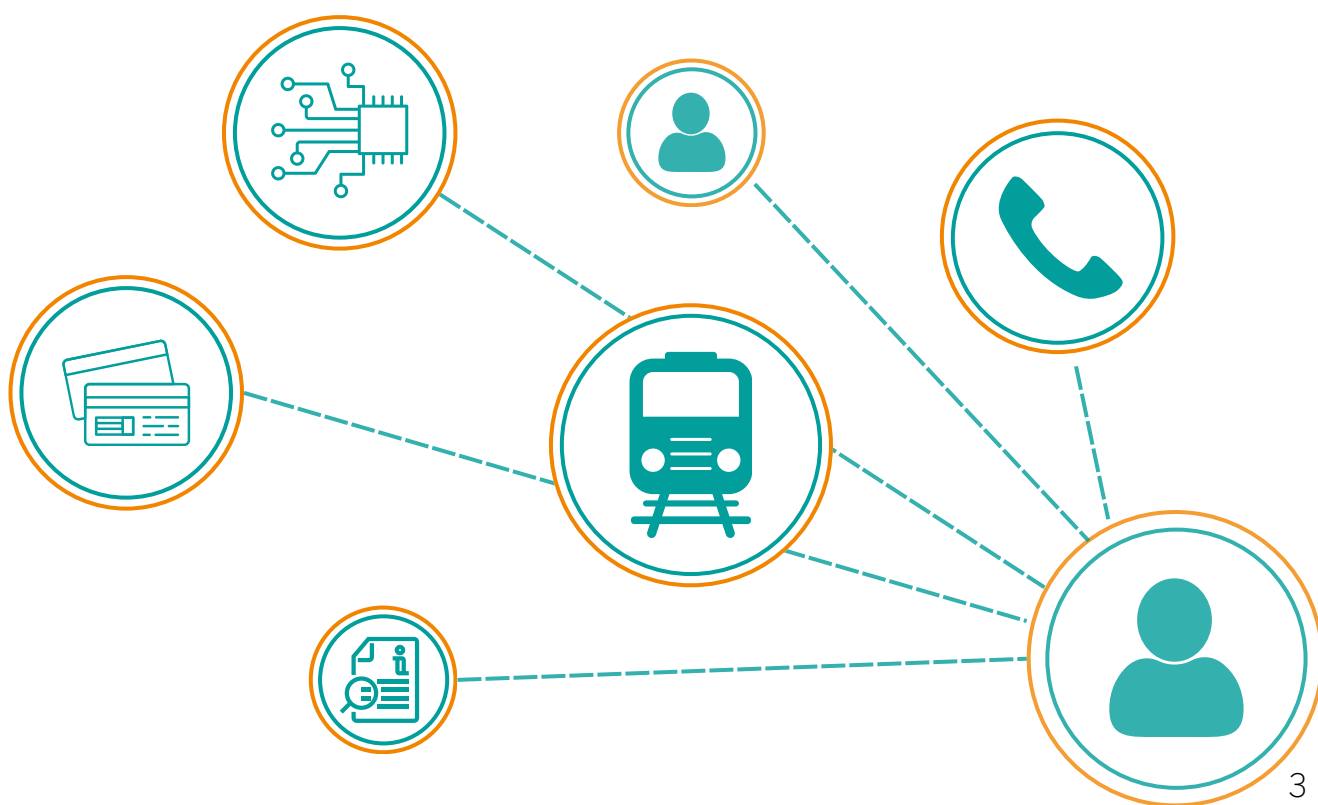
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## Foreword

Child sexual abuse and exploitation, particularly group-based offending, represents one of the most complex and devastating harms faced by children and young people. Its impact is profound and long-lasting, not only for victims and survivors, but for families, communities, and the professionals committed to protecting them.

As policing and safeguarding partners, we share a collective responsibility to do everything in our power to prevent abuse, disrupt offending, and pursue those who seek to harm children.

As highlighted by HMICFRS, there is clear evidence that we must strengthen and broaden our approach to disruption, working more effectively across agencies, sectors, and communities. We know that arrests alone are not enough. We must be more creative, more collaborative, and more strategic in how we prevent exploitation, target the environments that enable it, and support those affected.

We cannot tackle this harm in isolation. Meaningful and effective disruption relies on deep partnership working across agencies, sectors and communities, drawing together our shared intelligence, expertise and capacity to protect children. Through work with the CSE Taskforce, and our close collaboration with The Children's Society, we have been able to contribute directly to the development of this guidance, bringing operational insight, specialist knowledge and learning from practice to inform and shape its content. This product reflects that joint endeavour. It provides a consistent, evidence-led framework that supports us all to intervene earlier, safeguard more effectively, and relentlessly disrupt those who seek to exploit children.



## Assistant Chief Constable Becky Riggs

**National Police Chiefs' Council Lead for Child Protection and Abuse Investigations**

## Introduction

In 2023, The Children’s Society’s national Prevention Programme was commissioned by the Home Office to develop a self-assessment for multi-agency partnerships focused on their collective practice to disrupt child exploitation.

This guidance, published alongside the assessment, seeks to provide a benchmark for multi-agency good practice in this area. It follows on from [an introduction to the topic](#), published in 2023.

This guidance has been developed in close collaboration with the National County Lines Coordination Centre, the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Taskforce, and the British Transport Police.

[The self-assessment can be found here](#), alongside a glossary of terms which may be of use when reading this guidance.

**“Disruption is a multi-agency effort which relies on working together and sharing information. A consistent approach to disruption practice must be embedded across the multi-agency team, including the judiciary, through guidance and training. And improved systems are needed for cooperation on disruption activity across forces and other agencies. Improving disruption will also require a focus at a strategic leadership level on supporting local forces to understand the importance of disruption and their role in implementing strategies that can support it.”**

Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse, 2021<sup>1</sup>



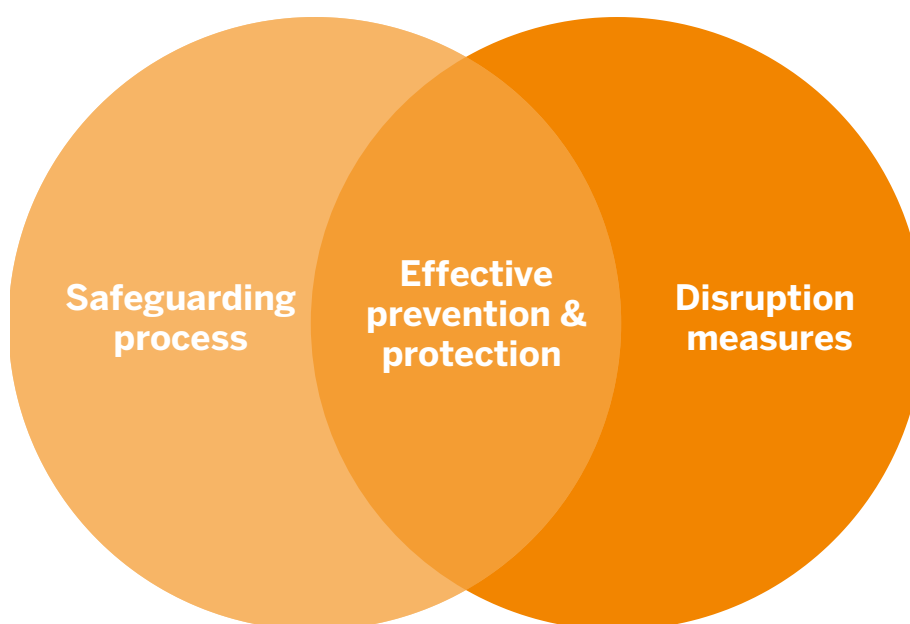
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1. Wager, N, et al. CSA Centre. Police disruption of child sexual abuse: Findings from a national survey of frontline personnel and strategic leads for safeguarding [Internet]. 2021: 8 [Accessed 2026 Jan 15]. Available from: <https://www.csacentre.org.uk/app/uploads/2023/10/Police-disruption-of-child-sexual-abuse-survey-findings.pdf>.

## Improving knowledge and training

The exploitation of children and young people is a complex and ever-evolving form of abuse. For professionals looking to safeguard young people from exploitation, a two-pronged approach is needed: on one hand, focusing on the interventions needed to safeguard each individual victim; and on the other, taking action to stop the perpetrator from harming both the individual victim and others, also known as disruption.

**It is imperative that we consider and address both safeguarding and disruption in tandem in order to successfully protect all young people from exploitation.**



It is also important that safeguarding partnerships have a joint understanding of what disruption is and their own role in supporting and enabling it. In this guidance, all disruption activities focus on either a location or a perpetrator.

Exploitation is an offence under the Modern Slavery Act 2015. In some cases, there will be separate offences also committed (e.g. sexual offences) but it is important to recognise the exploitation experienced by the victim in addition to other crimes and, as such, it is crucial to centre knowledge and training on this legislation.

In February 2025, the government announced the introduction of a new child criminal exploitation offence under the Crime and Policing Bill, as well as new civil preventative orders, a new offence of cuckooing and (in June 2025) an offence to tackle internal concealment. At the time of writing, this is still proceeding through the legislative approval process.

The level of knowledge needed about disruption tactics will vary significantly across a multi-agency partnership.

All professionals within a safeguarding partnership, such as a safeguarding board, should have basic knowledge about the exploitation of children and vulnerable adults, including how to identify and report it. Professionals should also be curious beyond their remit to successfully identify and report exploitation.

**Example:**

Trading Standards inspect a vaping shop and find a mattress and condoms in a rear room. This could be an indicator or potential evidence of sexual exploitation and, as such, should be reported.<sup>2</sup>

Professionals working directly with children should be aware of the disruption measures outlined within the [Child Exploitation Disruption Toolkit](#). They should know how to advocate for these measures being considered in all suspected cases of exploitation. Additionally, they should be able to identify an act that would indicate that an offence of slavery or trafficking could occur, and know how and with who to share the information for a civil order application.

**Example:**

A youth worker shares information that they are concerned for a young person they support who is unable to receive their allowance as the bank has closed their account due to 'fraudulent activity'.

Specialist exploitation professionals that have a significant role in addressing cases of exploitation, such as social workers and police, need more advanced disruption training that includes what disruption measures are available, the evidence needed, and how to apply for these, even if they don't hold responsibility for making the applications directly. This is so that they can identify and advocate for suitable disruption measures and identify the professionals that need to be involved to ensure disruption is successful.

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2. Home Office. Child exploitation disruption toolkit [Internet]. 2022 [Accessed 2026 Jan 15]. Available from: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/63106669e90e076ebfb7f419/Child\\_Exploitation\\_Disruption\\_Toolkit\\_082022.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/63106669e90e076ebfb7f419/Child_Exploitation_Disruption_Toolkit_082022.pdf).

**Example:**

A child is suspected to have been exploited within a private address. The social worker therefore invites a representative from the housing department to discuss.

These specialist staff should also have knowledge of how to contact their relevant legal service teams within the police and local authority, as it is these teams that will present an application for a civil order in court.

**Exploitation professionals**

receive advanced disruption training. They know what disruption measures are available and how to apply for them.

**Professionals working directly with children**

are aware of the disruption measures outlined within the Child Exploitation Disruption Toolkit. They also know how to advocate for said disruption measures.

**All professionals**

have a basic understanding of exploitation, grooming, relevant legislation, and appropriate language.

## Examples of promising practice

With the support of The Children's Society's Prevention Programme, **Wakefield's Safeguarding Children's Partnership** has embedded entry-level and disruption-specific training across the partnership. They have also begun utilising tools to monitor and assess operational approaches to disruption.

**Avon & Somerset Police** have invested in a child exploitation prevention coordinator whose role is to deliver training to young people, professionals, the public and business, in addition to improving relationships between services to better responses to exploitation. This has enabled the area to have a more consistent approach to the provision of training on exploitation.



**Swansea Council** was part of an original pilot to adopt contextual safeguarding. This has allowed the area to build relationships with licensing, housing, and fire services and other 'non-traditional' partners, and to include them in meetings to discuss disruption tactics. This means that they are used to attending meetings to discuss exploitation and know which powers they can use in their contribution to disrupting it. The council has also developed business engagement packs and training for 'non-traditional' safeguarding partners to share knowledge on, so that all organisations in the area can play their role in keeping children and young people safe in Swansea.



**Operation Luka** in Greater Manchester involves a clear multi-agency approach to identifying and disrupting exploitation. In their own words, “Operation Luka is a concerted multi-agency effort which sees police, the local authority, children and adult social services, early help practitioners, NHS staff, and other key partners co-locate to bring their experience and expertise together to safeguard young people to disrupt and investigate criminality.”

This approach has supported an increase in the sharing of information.

As part of the proactive operation, police and social workers deploy to the city centre to engage with young people in an informal setting to foster trusted relationships. This also presents the opportunity to gather and further develop intelligence pictures relating to young people and who they’re associating with. By increasing their interactions with young people, they have been able to locate those who have been reported missing and return them home safely, preventing any possible further harm by implementing safeguarding measures to minimise the risk of them going missing again.

“All of these proactive operations are supported by specialist police in their Complex Safeguarding Hubs and Child Protection Investigation Units, who conduct hours of painstaking investigations to bring perpetrators to justice, while their partners offer specialist support to victims and survivors to ensure investigations are progressing at a pace which is comfortable for them.”<sup>3</sup>

In 2024, Greater Manchester Police reported that they had been able to “safeguard 173 children in Manchester city centre through safeguarding referrals”, that they had “arrested 29 alleged perpetrators” and that “nine suspects have been charged and are now awaiting trial.”

Operation Luka has also encouraged the use of civil orders such as Sexual Risk Orders and Slavery and Trafficking Risk Orders, which impose strict conditions on suspected offenders to allow the effective management of their movements to minimise future offending.

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3. Home Office. Child exploitation disruption toolkit [Internet]. 2022 [Accessed 2026 Jan 15]. Available from: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/63106669e90e076ebfb7f419/Child\\_Exploitation\\_Disruption\\_Toolkit\\_082022.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/63106669e90e076ebfb7f419/Child_Exploitation_Disruption_Toolkit_082022.pdf).

4. Greater Manchester Police. Partnership operation in Manchester is seeing more children safeguarded, as recognised in the latest HMICFRS inspection. [Internet]. 2024 [Accessed 2026 Jan 7]. Available from: [Partnership operation in Manchester is seeing more children safeguarded, as recognised in the latest HMICFRS inspection | Greater Manchester Police](#)

## Embedding support and expertise

We recognise that, for many professionals, exploitation is one of many safeguarding issues they need to prioritise. It is therefore not feasible for everyone to hold all the knowledge needed to disrupt perpetrators of exploitation. Given this, it is crucial that multi-agency partners can access support to help them consider, apply or advocate for disruption measures. Nationally, this expertise can be accessed by contacting the [National County Lines Coordination Centre](#) for support with disrupting criminal exploitation and the [Child Sexual Exploitation \(CSE\) Taskforce](#) for sexual exploitation. However, both are police organisations with capacity focused on strategic goals, and they advocate for police forces to build in proactive capability to support their partners locally. It is therefore recommended that this expertise is built into safeguarding partnerships who also hold essential local knowledge and context. This expertise should be built from agencies such as policing and social care, who are predominantly responsible for managing incidents of exploitation and have the relevant legal teams to progress civil orders.

Partnerships should be conscious of the capacity of the expertise available. In some examples of promising practice that we have highlighted below, one or two people were found to be sufficient, but partnerships might want to consider having a small team of experts, including representatives from different agencies and sectors that can offer expertise. Within partnerships, these might be described as 'SPOCs' (single point of contact) who have enhanced training from national sector experts and suitable experience with each disruption tactic to understand evidential thresholds and procedures.

Police and local authorities will have in-house or contracted legal services teams who provide legal advice and support to frontline teams around obtaining a range of civil orders. It is crucial for any roles providing disruption expertise to hold a good working relationship with members of these legal teams to ensure that any application for civil orders is as successful as possible.





## Examples of promising practice

### **Suffolk public sector leaders**

have taken a collaborative approach towards tackling criminal exploitation by providing £1.4m to support a countywide work programme across 2024–2027. This innovative programme includes a bespoke countywide exploitation training offer and a police criminal exploitation partnerships officer role.

### **Dyfed Powys Police**

have invested in their own protective orders officer who has had extra training on how to apply for civil orders and other disruption tactics. At the time of writing, the role is still new, with more time needed for it to be embedded as a resource for professionals in the area.

## Considering disruption in multi-agency frameworks

As soon as there is a concern that a child is being exploited, a [multi-agency strategy meeting](#) should be arranged, with all relevant professionals identified in the child's life in attendance. The purpose of this meeting is to ensure all agencies have the ability to share all information relevant to the exploitation concern, and to agree a safeguarding plan for the child and whether there is a need for a [Section 47 enquiry](#). It also provides an opportunity to plan and action a referral into the [National Referral Mechanism](#) and to share information on the plan for a criminal investigation into the modern slavery being committed.

According to the College of Policing, "Every report of modern slavery must be investigated from the point of disclosure or suspicion, and should be conducted in accordance with standard [investigative practice](#)".<sup>5</sup> This means that there should not be a delay in recording and investigating the exploitation to await a referral into the National Referral Mechanism. The Slavery and Trafficking National Policing Standards require forces to "proactively pursue slavery and trafficking offending to achieve sustained public protection, going beyond safeguarding by investigating cases even where victims do not support the prosecution",<sup>6</sup> also known as evidence-led investigations. Victims of exploitation are groomed to commit criminal acts or engage in sexual acts, and part of the method of grooming is to convince the victim that they have autonomy of choice or to threaten them with harm should they disclose. This means victims of exploitation cannot be expected to disclose or identify the harm that is being done to them and may believe that they are responsible for it. They should therefore not be expected to support a prosecution, nor should this be necessary for one to proceed.

In any multi-agency meetings discussing exploitation, professionals should ensure that there is a safety plan for the abused child, including any interventions, alongside a plan to stop the person or persons perpetrating the exploitation. This includes considering where and how the exploitation is taking place. It might include consideration of using [ancillary orders](#) such as [Sexual Risk Orders](#) or [Slavery and Trafficking Risk Orders](#). The College of Policing states that "officers should ensure that orders are considered to disrupt and prevent any further offences, and to provide protection for potential victims".<sup>7</sup>

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5. College of Policing. Modern slavery investigation [Internet]. 2015 [Accessed 2025 Dec 05]. Available from: <https://www.college.police.uk/app/major-investigation-and-public-protection/modern-slavery/modern-slavery-investigation>.

6. College of Policing. Modern Slavery [Internet]. 2015 [Accessed 2026 Jan 26]. Available from: <https://www.college.police.uk/app/major-investigation-and-public-protection/modern-slavery>.

7. College of Policing. Modern slavery investigation [Internet]. 2015 [Accessed 2025 Dec 05]. Available from: <https://www.college.police.uk/app/major-investigation-and-public-protection/modern-slavery/modern-slavery-investigation>.

It is important that both the safety plan and the criminal investigation are discussed as a multi-agency partnership at regular intervals, as no one agency has all the information or powers to stop this complex form of harm. The [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2023\)](#) guidance details expectations around information sharing: “Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children”.<sup>8</sup>

**“Using civil orders powers available to police and partners can be an effective tool to disrupt those who are targeting children for criminal purposes. The Child Exploitation Disruption Toolkit lists a range of useful tools available to frontline professionals in disrupting child criminal exploitation activity. For example, Slavery and Trafficking Risk Orders, and Slavery and Trafficking Prevention Orders can place prohibitions on the offender in order to disrupt child criminal exploitation activity.”<sup>9</sup>**

Even though not all professionals have the power to apply for disruption tactics such as civil orders, they do hold a responsibility to protect children from harm, which includes actions to disrupt perpetrators of exploitation. Disruption should therefore be included as an agenda item in all exploitation-related multi-agency meetings in order to ensure it is being considered regularly and consistently.

Relevant professionals involved in these meetings need to be aware of open modern slavery investigations and other possible tactics that are available, being considered or being actively applied for. Relevant professionals in this context are those directly involved in the safeguarding of the child victim, including social care. It might also include professionals providing direct support to the young person or services such as the [Independent Child Trafficking Guardianship service](#).

Professionals in the partnership should acknowledge their responsibility in considering which tactics might be used to disrupt exploitation, rather than seeing these as the sole responsibility of policing. While police may hold the power to apply for many of these tactics, they may not hold all the information needed to ensure a strong application is submitted. It is also possible that advocacy is needed to encourage the police or local authority to consider disruption tactics, particularly as some professionals may not be aware of the powers available to them.

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8. HM Government. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 [Internet]. 2023: 19 [Accessed 2025 Dec 05]. Available from: <https://www.college.police.uk/app/major-investigation-and-public-protection/modern-slavery/modern-slavery-investigation>.

9. HM Government. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 [Internet]. 2023: 114-115 [Accessed 2025 Dec 05]. Available from: <https://www.college.police.uk/app/major-investigation-and-public-protection/modern-slavery/modern-slavery-investigation>.

It is important that the language used in these discussions is not victim-blaming, and instead acknowledges the complexity of exploitation, including that victims are often exploited to harm others.<sup>10</sup> Consideration should be given to embedding approaches across the agencies which make up the partnership, such as child-centred policing<sup>11</sup> and the [Tackling Child Exploitation Practice Principles](#) for responding to child exploitation and extrafamilial harm.

Disruption tactics should be proportionate to the risk involved, and the partnership should also be aware of the dangers of 'adultification' and how this can impact negatively.<sup>12</sup> With this in mind, we would strongly discourage the use of disruption powers against children other than as a choice of last resort where it is necessary to impose conditions on them to safeguard another child. In such situations, we also advocate for safeguarding interventions to also be in place for these children.

The 2023 HMICFRS (His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services) inspection into the police and law enforcement response to group-based sexual exploitation in England and Wales highlighted that "most forces'" use of disruption was limited and didn't always involve partner agencies. For example, disruptions predominantly revolved around measures such as arresting suspects and the use of bail conditions, which might only have a short-term effect. Other options, such as targeting fast-food and taxi businesses or other locations where offending is committed, weren't considered by all forces. An area for improvement was made for all chief constables to work with their statutory safeguarding partners to "review, promote and make sure that relevant group-based child sexual exploitation disruption and prevention initiatives are implemented effectively in their forces."<sup>13</sup>

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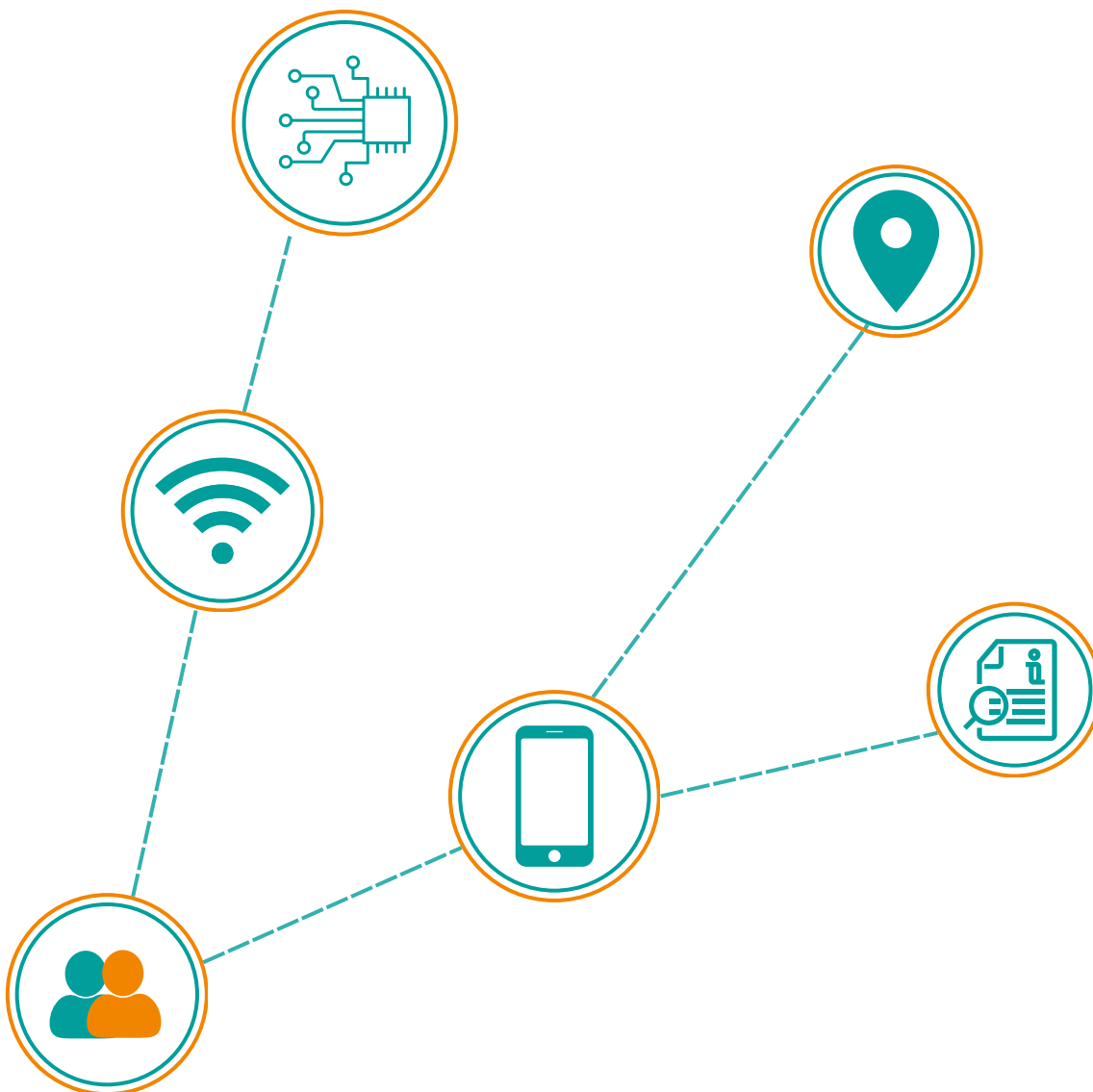
10. The Children's Society. Child exploitation and abuse: an appropriate language guide [Internet]. 2024: 16 [Accessed 2025 Dec 05]. Available from: <https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/2024-11/Appropriate%20Language%20Guide%20Final%20%28English%29.pdf>.

11. National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC). Child Centred Policing at the heart of our service. [Internet]. 2024 [Accessed 2026 Jan 07]. Available from: <https://news.npcc.police.uk/editorial/child-centred-policing-at-the-heart-of-our-service>.

12. Jahnine Davis. Adultification bias within child protection and safeguarding. [Internet]. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation; 2022 [Accessed 2026 Jan 07]. Available from: <https://cdn.websitebuilder.service.justice.gov.uk/uploads/sites/32/2022/06/Academic-Insights-Adultification-bias-within-child-protection-and-safeguarding.pdf>.

13. HMICFRS. An inspection of the effectiveness of the police and law enforcement bodies' response to group-based child sexual exploitation in England and Wales [Internet]. 2023 [Accessed 2026 Jan 15]. Available from: <https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/publication-html/effectiveness-of-police-and-law-enforcement-response-to-group-based-child-sexual-exploitation/>.

In some cases, there might be a need to move a child to safeguard them, particularly if there are concerns about risks within the home or a lack of a protection. This should be considered carefully given the likely ongoing nature of the exploitation via technology and potentially increased risks of moving children away from their support networks. Consideration should still be given to other available disruption tactics for the perpetrator. Information sharing is key if children and their families are moved to ensure all agencies in the new area are aware of the risks.



## Examples of promising practice

**The National County Lines Coordination Centre** has developed training that includes the use of 'evidence tables' to record evidence of exploitation that can be used to support applications for civil orders, which does not necessarily constitute a criminal offence. We strongly endorse this practice and recommend that multi-agency partnerships consider adopting it for use in all relevant meetings.

For example:

Incident	Evidence used in STRO application
Child with a train ticket	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• CCTV of ticket being purchased</li><li>• Additional information</li></ul>
Child's behaviour changes during safeguarding visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Statement from social worker who witnessed it</li><li>• Statement from police officer who has obtained and reviewed child's call data for that specific call</li></ul>



**The PAN Merseyside Multi-Agency Protocol**<sup>14</sup> is a set of principles that the partnership will:

- apply proactive problem solving to address the risks associated with victims, perpetrators and locations
- take proactive action against those who are intent on sexually or criminally abusing and exploiting children and young people
- use data and intelligence to develop an understanding of child exploitation taking place across Merseyside, implement disruption tactics and ensure services are commissioned which can meet identified need.

It also provides guidance on using multi-agency child exploitation meetings as:

- a framework to allow regular information and intelligence sharing and action planning from a range of sectors
- a governance structure to ensure all medium to high concerns about child exploitation have been assessed and responded to appropriately via safeguarding and enforcement agencies
- a process to ensure child exploitation identified needs have been responded to via the lead practitioners plan
- a forum that identifies and respond to gaps in provision and to escalate any identified concerns within agencies.
- a process to identify any child who presents as a victim of exploitation and also a risk towards other children to ensure risk is identified and managed appropriately
- a meeting to focus on the 4 'P' objectives (prepare, prevent, pursue, protect)
- a forum to recognise good practice to share learning and ensure services try all approaches to engage children being exploited
- to consider transitional pathways for anyone turning 18 years old who is still assessed as being exploited
- to monitor NRM referrals in terms of multi-agency involvement, crime recording, investigation, result and outcome for perpetrators, and to ensure all child exploitation perpetrators that present a threat, harm and risk will be brought to the attention of local policing for a range of disruption opportunities to be considered.

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14. Knowsley Safeguarding Children Partnership, Merseyside Police, Sefton Local Safeguarding Children Board, St Helens Safeguarding Children Partnership, & Wirral Safeguarding Children Board. PAN Merseyside Multi-Agency Protocol [Internet]. 2020 [Accessed 2026 Jan 08]. Available from: <https://trixcms.trixonline.co.uk/api/assets/knowsleyscp/a22b3214-47dd-4110-a20b-bf485f66139e/cse-protocol.pdf>.

**Future Voices** was commissioned by Surrey Council to develop a risk and vulnerability management (RVM) arrangement and the current investigation approach into organised and complex abuse. These have been co-designed between agencies and led by children's services and police. The key shift has been to focus on: children who are, or may become, victims of extrafamilial harm and abuse; the identification and disruption of adult offenders; the identification and multi-agency response to key contexts including groups, places and spaces; and ensuring key themes are identified and addressed.

To achieve this, the partnership have focused work with children, families and agencies on how to increase safety for and around individuals, groups and locations. This has led to a proactive approach to identifying risks and harms, working to increase safety that includes the disruption of harm. This development has led to a more responsive way of understanding and addressing problems, combining day-to-day activity, direct support and action for individuals, groups and places, and joint working across agencies to develop a shared response in the places and spaces where harm occurs. The RVM process is jointly chaired by the area adolescent service manager and the divisional detective inspector responsible for child exploitation and child abuse – who both have oversight of respective operational activity.



In developing the RVM, a key theme that arose was the tension between agencies working to address risks and harms in the community where children were often both victim and perpetrator of harm, particularly for serious violence and drug supply. In one example, the local authority initiated complex and organised abuse procedures to specifically work to draw information from across multiple stakeholders involved with a significant number of children who were either exposed to or harmed by significant extrafamilial harm where it was suspected adults or organised groups were directly linked. While this investigation remains underway and it is not possible to quantify the full impact, there is key learning that will support other local authority partnerships. Some of these key points include:

- Police and children's services mapped the children, adults and contexts impacted, ensuring all relevant stakeholders were identified, and highlighted the children who were believed to be most at risk of harm, agreeing 'high risk' category should any of those children be reported missing.
- In response to the neurodiversity and additional needs of the children impacted, a universal tool was created to ensure communication was accessible, appropriate, effective and consistent.
- A joint investigation plan with a joint agency tracker (of investigative actions) was operationalised through weekly tasking meetings, ensuring all activity was held within one place to progress the overall investigation.
- Central adolescent resources (RHI/missing, contextual safeguarding, and safer intervention teams) were used alongside police capabilities to review historical missing and significant incidents including devices, comms and social media, identifying any leads relevant to the investigation and ensuring proactive enquiries to prevent and protect.

**The Manchester Safeguarding Partnership** has created a tackling exploitation and complex safeguarding strategy for 2024–2027, which sets out a collective ambition bringing together local communities, voluntary organisations, and statutory and independent agencies across the city of Manchester to work closely with those at risk of or being exploited to understand what matters and what works. The aim is that the strategy will result in tangible action that will prevent the exploitation of others, protect those who need it, and both disrupt and prosecute abusers, which together, will generate long-term change.<sup>15</sup>



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15. [Manchester Safeguarding Partnership. Tackling Exploitation and Complex Safeguarding in Manchester 2024–2027 Strategy. \[Internet\]. 2024](#)



**In Telford**, the local authority has two dedicated social workers who work closely with the police exploitation team detective sergeant to review all referrals that indicate exploitation. This ensures a timely strategy meeting where they can map out the information held by all partners, allowing them to identify what they don't know and who might hold the information. They actively review the people causing harm and the social workers have good knowledge of disruption tactics, and so, alongside police, they quickly identify immediate measures that can be put into place to disrupt perpetrators.

## Application of disruption tactics

Exploiters are not restricted by geographical borders, and the human trafficking they perpetrate often involves moving victims across these borders. It is these boundary lines and the way professional practice can be limited by them that assists perpetrators in avoiding detection and prosecution. To disrupt them, partnerships should collaborate effectively with one another across these boundaries, including through the sharing of intelligence and resources. For example, if a child is being moved to another area, then a multi-agency meeting should be convened to share information, safeguarding concerns and any disruption plans between both the hosting and the placement partnership.

For the application of civil orders to be successful, they should include as much information about the exploitation that has occurred and the risk to the victim as possible. This should reflect and collate the information that has been collected throughout all relevant multi-agency discussions. Relevant professionals in the partnership should know what evidence is needed so that they can identify when they have information that can support an application, ensure it is shared, and advocate for it to be acted upon – even if it sits outside of their role or ability to apply for the actual order. A suitability review should be built into the multi-agency exploitation frameworks so that a prompt exists for disruption tactics to be reviewed. For example, if it is decided that it is not suitable to apply for a Slavery and Trafficking Risk Order, is there a prompt built into the agenda for future meetings for this decision to be reviewed?

Both police and social workers should have good relationships with their legal services team to get early advice and support around the use of civil orders, alongside quicker applications in court. If there are roles with disruption expertise within the partnership, then they are best situated to build this relationship. Legal services and the team holding expertise should review learning from successful and unsuccessful applications to disseminate learning and improve the quality of future applications.



Expert advice and support should be sought from the National County Lines Coordination Centre (NCLCC) and the Tackling Organised Exploitation programme (TOEX) when there is limited expertise and experience in disrupting exploitation or where there are multiple perpetrators and victims to ensure timely and successful applications. Police are best suited to make this contact as they are police organisations.

We recommend that any application for a civil order includes [the evidence table](#) provided in section three ('Considering disruption in multi-agency frameworks') above (or some version of it) and includes as much multi-agency evidence as possible. This might include evidence that is considered 'hearsay'<sup>16</sup> and evidence that might not be considered admissible in a criminal court as the burden of proof for civil orders is on the 'balance of probability' rather than 'beyond all reasonable doubt'.<sup>17</sup> This might also include evidence from a parent or carer, teacher, or another professional with regular and ongoing contact with the child about how their behaviour or appearance has changed and why that might be evidence of exploitation. It is most important that the 'anchor statement'<sup>18</sup> by the applicant (e.g. the police officer on the case) has a strong narrative about the chronological evidence and why the order will be effective. It should also detail any orders that have been ineffective, for example where a Child Abduction Warning Notice has been breached.

Those who hold the power to apply for disruption tactics should have knowledge of the evidence needed for a successful application, the process of application, and the timeline involved so that relevant partners can be informed when considering an application.

It is important that partnerships make sure their approach to the application of disruption tactics also ensures that victims are safeguarded, including victims who have been exploited into adulthood. The partnership should also be able to evidence that the applications made for disruption are equitable, including with regards to race, gender and neurodivergence, and that any disproportionality is reviewed in order to ensure applications do not reflect individual or systemic biases and discrimination. Professionals should be aware how the disruption tactics used will affect the young victims. Silence can create fear for young people so, where possible, young people should be informed why disruption tactics are being used. A trusted adult should be identified for a young person so that support can be given throughout the disruption process.

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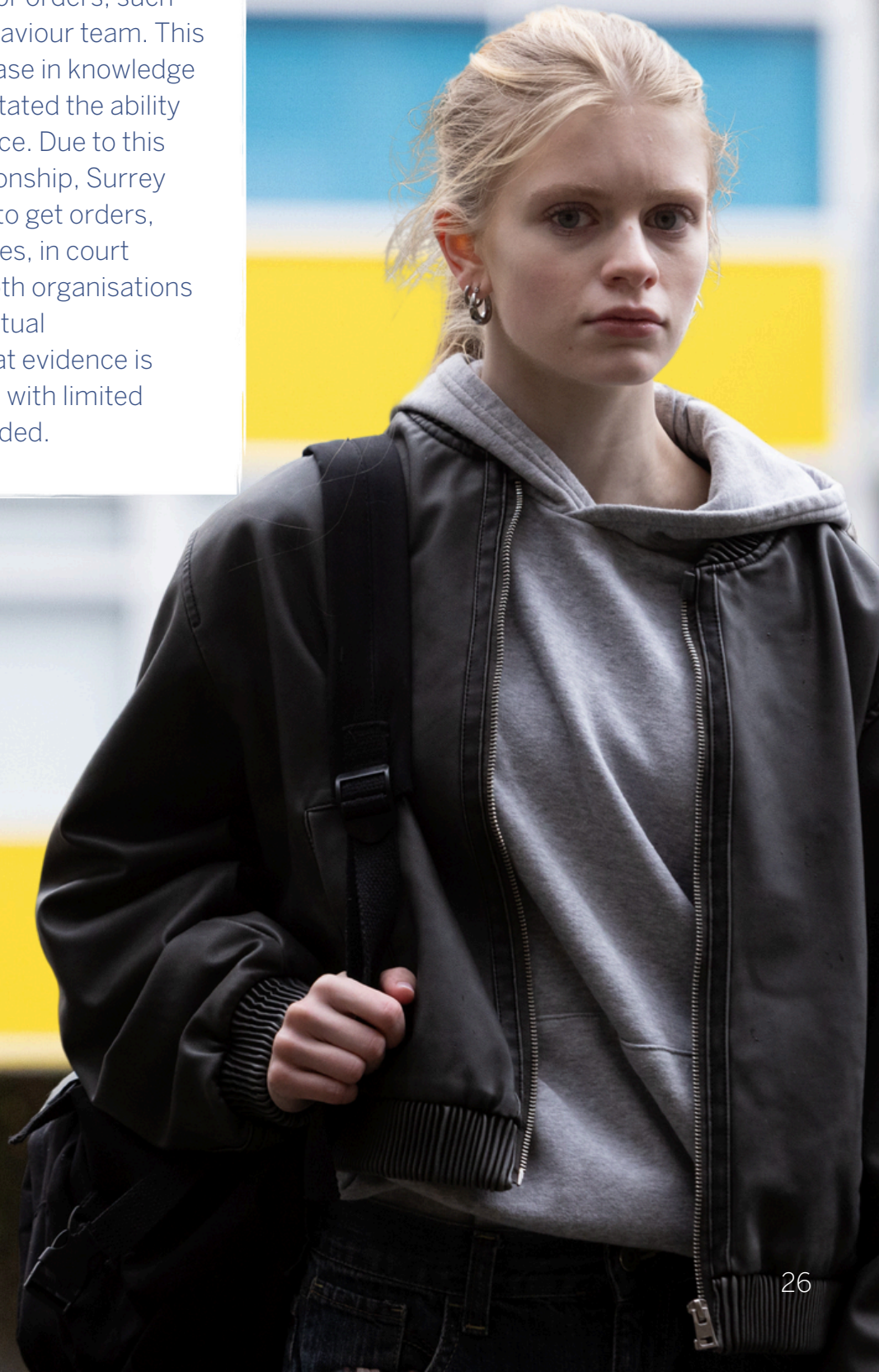
16. In [Section 114 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003](#), 'hearsay' is defined as a 'statement not made in oral evidence ... [that is] evidence of any matter stated'. Great Britain. Criminal Justice Act 2003. Chapter 2. London: The Houses of Parliament.

17. Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). The Code for Crown Prosecutors [Internet]. 2018 [Accessed 2026 Jan 26]. Available from: <https://www.cps.gov.uk/publication/code-crown-prosecutors>.

18. College of Policing. Code of Practice for the Police National Computer (PNC) and the Law Enforcement Data Service (LEDS): Guidance part B [Internet]. 2022 [Accessed 2026 Jan 15]. Available from: <https://assets.college.police.uk/s3fs-public/2022-03/Code-of-Practice-PNC-LEDS-Guidance-Part-B.pdf>.

## Examples of promising practice

**In Surrey,** the police commission a legal services team that has built strong relationships with the officers who regularly apply for orders, such as the anti-social behaviour team. This has enabled an increase in knowledge sharing and has facilitated the ability to get early legal advice. Due to this strong working relationship, Surrey Police are often able to get orders, such as closure notices, in court within 24 hours as both organisations have developed a mutual understanding of what evidence is needed for all orders, with limited preparation time needed.





**The Essex Proactive Orders**

**Enforcement Team** was initiated following a domestic homicide review and is now a central point of expertise for all proactive orders. They can be tasked directly from the public protection tasking process, and have therefore improved the disruption activity within the policing area.

**The Northamptonshire Disruption**

**Team** is a proactive team of constables dedicated to supporting the wider child exploitation hub. The team acts on intelligence and supports in disrupting exploitation across the county, including enforcing orders. They provide proactive support so that other teams can focus on the investigations and desk-based enquiries.

**The Tackling Organised Exploitation Programme (TOEX)** is an intelligence capability that provides dedicated intelligence and analytical and technical expertise in support of forces undertaking complex organised exploitation investigations such as modern slavery and human trafficking, organised immigration crime, county lines, adult and child sexual abuse, and exploitation.

TOEX teams are embedded within each of the regional organised crime units (ROCU) as well as there being a dedicated team covering London and a national team who oversee regional activity. The TOEX network highlight victims to be safeguarded and ensure those seeking to profit from exploitation – including localised crime and the organised criminal networks behind it – are disrupted and brought to justice.

The TOEX website details some examples of how the programme has supported partnerships in disrupting exploitation.<sup>19</sup>

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19. TOEX. Case studies [Internet]. (n.d) [Accessed 2026 Jan 15]. Available from: <https://www.toexprogramme.co.uk/case-studies>.

**In Dorset,** an individual was found to be trafficking vulnerable children around via a vehicle and grooming them to commit offences. The National County Lines Coordination Centre supported Dorset with an STRO application. It was identified that the individual who the order was being applied for was also suspected to be criminally exploiting children in Hampshire and had been stopped on one occasion with a missing child. This then strengthened the application process by including evidence and intelligence from both forces, and is an example of where there was good communication between forces (supported by NCLCC) to submit a joint application where someone was offending across both police areas.



## Example of redacted supporting evidence from non-policing partner

Supporting statement for an application of a Slavery and Trafficking Risk Order.

Adult of concern : [REDACTED] DOB: [REDACTED] Date of statement: [REDACTED]

- I, [REDACTED], am the exploitation lead for children and young adults, and the modern-day slavery coordinator within children's services, [REDACTED] I have worked for the local authority as a senior social worker since [REDACTED]. I am also registered with Social Work England.
- This statement is written in support of the application by [REDACTED] Police for a Slavery and Trafficking Risk Order in respect of [REDACTED] DOB: [REDACTED]
- Over the last two years, there have been increasing concerns raised in respect of the children on the [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] and their risk of being criminally exploited. This has involved the children being groomed and exploited to commit acquisitive crime, thefts, violence and drug distribution across the local area. The adult of concern/exploiter linked to all of the above children is [REDACTED]. This is through intelligence gathering by police, observations/sightings by police and professionals, and information shared by children and members of the community. Due to the fear and risk of repercussions, the sources remain confidential.
- As detailed within the bundle provided by [REDACTED] Police, there are multiple NRMs (National Referral Mechanisms) completed for young people in [REDACTED] with [REDACTED] identified as the exploiter. Three of the NRMs have been redacted and added to the bundle. Please note that these NRMs must remain redacted to safeguard the sources and other children due to the risk of repercussions from [REDACTED] and others associated with him.

- Child A is a 17-year-old. Child A has a conclusive ground decision for their NRM identifying them as a victim of modern-day slavery. Child A is subject to a child protection plan under the category of physical harm. The risk of harm is extrafamilial and outside of the home. Child A is heard at MACE. This is a multi-agency panel whereby all young people are discussed by strategic leads from partner agencies to put together a robust safety plan to reduce and manage the risk of exploitation for a young person. For a child to be presented to MACE, the child is assessed as being at high risk of exploitation or actively exploited via an OCG or county line [REDACTED]
- Child B is a 12-year-old. Child B has a conclusive ground decision for their NRM identifying them as a victim of modern-day slavery. Child B is subject to a child protection plan under the category of physical harm. The risk of harm is extrafamilial and outside of the home. Child B is heard at MACE.
- Child C is a 14-year-old. Child C has a conclusive ground decision for their NRM identifying them as a victim of modern-day slavery. Child C is a looked-after child and is subject to a Care Order. Child C was placed in a secure placement out of area and a further two other placements to safeguard him from the risk of exploitation. Child C is heard at MACE.
- Three other young people have NRMs which are not shared in the bundle due to the detail within these which would identify the sources. This would increase their risk of harm if these were to be shared. [REDACTED] is identified on all three NRMs.
- In summary, anyone under the age of 18 CANNOT consent to their own exploitation. If a child is trafficked for the purpose of criminal exploitation, then they are victim of abuse.

- There is a profound impact on children who are criminally exploited: detrimental impact on one's mental and physical health, witnessing violence, threats made to their family and friends, becoming a regular missing person, breakdown in relationship with parents/caregivers, school attendance dropping, physical injuries, being in fear and anxious daily, acquired drug debt to exploiters, substance misuse, alcohol misuse, stealing to repay debt to exploiters resulting in coming to the attention of police, obtaining a criminal record, carrying weapons to protect themselves, and sometimes moving on to a groom model (being exploited to recruit other children and young people). In summary, anyone being actively exploited may suffer significant trauma and will have long term effects on their emotional wellbeing if they are not safeguarded and put in a place of safety at the earliest opportunity by professionals around them.
- ██████ was spoken to by his child's social worker due to the concerns around exploitation of children and the fact that ██████ is observed by professionals and police with children either with him walking around the estate or in properties which are predominantly used for drug use and drug supply with ██████ and associates. ██████ response is "I cant help it if they all follow me". ██████ has no care for children being around drugs and distribution, which includes children in his own family or links via his girlfriend's family.
- What is evident to the exploitation team within children's services is that, since ██████ was remanded into custody, the risk of exploitation and physical harm to all children mentioned above and others has decreased. There have been fewer injuries and threats reported to us since ██████ has been remanded into custody. The children now feel in a safer position to talk to professionals and accept support to move forward with their lives, recover from the harm/trauma they have suffered, and reach their full potential in life which they deserve as children.

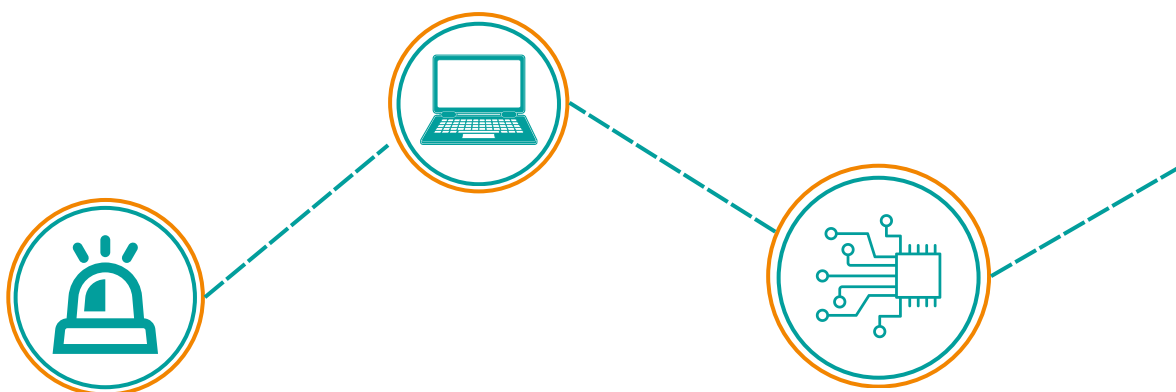
- [REDACTED] has been heard at MACE for the last two years as an adult of concern/exploiter. Throughout partnership working with [REDACTED] Police and information shared within MACE panels, I am aware that [REDACTED] is mapped as a principle member to a [REDACTED] based organised crime group (OCG) in [REDACTED] (drug supply). The OCG itself exploits children to commit crime, whether that be enforcement by way of violence, thefts, acquisitive crime, or drug supply. The OCG is linked to numerous serious incidents including 47 murder, firearms discharge, and serious violence by way of stabbings/slashings incidents. This just shows the level of risk to our vulnerable children in the local area.
- Given the above concerns shared within this statement, I fully support the application by [REDACTED] Police and the granting of a Slavery and Trafficking Order for [REDACTED] due to the continued risk to the children in the local area when he is released from prison. It is paramount that the physical and psychological well being of our children is protected.
- Exploiters Notices have been served on [REDACTED] and conversations have been held with him around the concerns, which has not deterred him away from the exploitation of children, as such this is the most appropriate next step for disruption and safeguarding of under 18s in the local area.

## Recording disruption tactics

As professionals might change during the course of an investigation, it is important that all discussions are recorded. This includes discussions around the disruption tactics that are considered or applied for, why they might be precluded at that time, and actions around additional information that might be needed to support discussions of disruption tactics being used in the future. It is important that all relevant professionals have access to the discussion or application recordings. This might be in a system where all practitioners can access the minutes, such as the use of Microsoft SharePoint or [ECINS](#). These recordings should be protected in line with the [Data Protection Act 2018](#).

It is important that any disruption tactics including the use of Child Abduction Warning Notices and Exploitation Warning Notices are recorded by police on the Police National Computer<sup>20</sup> and Police National Database. This ensures that other police forces are aware of the risk posed by – and restrictions imposed on – the perpetrator. Police officers should refer to their force policy for recording disruptions on the Police National Computer and Police National Database.

If the applications for disruption tactics are only held on police systems, police should consider the use of 'Z occurrences' or a crime related incident (CRI) occurrence to record all the disruptions that relate to a perpetrator or group of perpetrators acting together.



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20. College of Policing. Code of Practice for the Police National Computer (PNC) and the Law Enforcement Data Service (LEDS) Guidance part B [Internet]. 2022 [Accessed 2026 Jan 15]. Available from: <https://assets.college.police.uk/s3fs-public/2022-03/Code-of-Practice-PNC-LEDS-Guidance-Part-B.pdf>.

In London, **ECINS** has been used across all boroughs as a central referral system for criminally exploited children who are trafficked out of London. The system has improved the ability to record information about individual children which leads to an improved response. Outcomes recorded are:

**“Over 700 hours in administration time saved per year. The number of collaborative teams involved in the process has increased from four to more than 40 because of the ease of use and secure information sharing features. Within a short amount of time, the project managers were able to collect enough data to analyse and identify hot spots of youth trafficking, and then proactively begin to develop early intervention programs and resources in those regions to support the vulnerable population and deter criminal influence.”** <sup>21</sup>



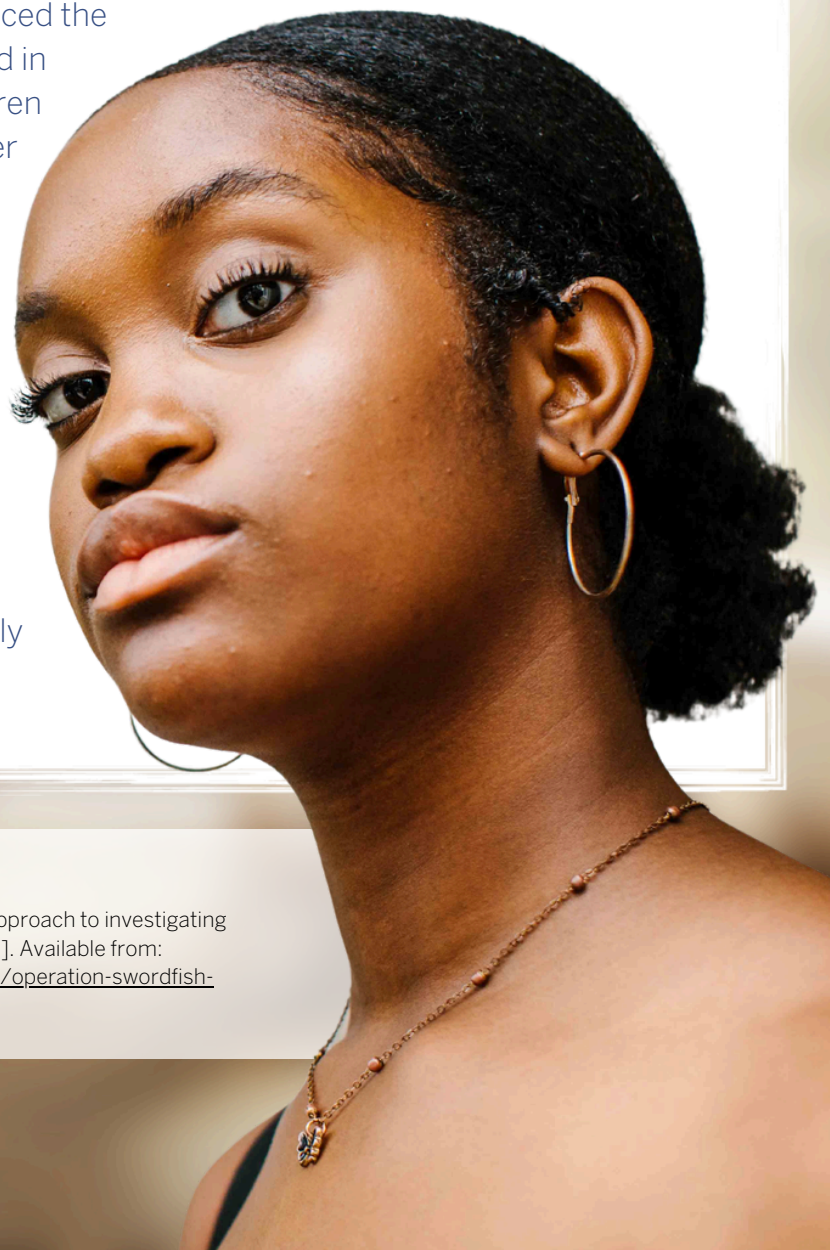
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21. Empowering Communities with Integrated Network Systems. ECINS Helps UK Rescue Vulnerable Youth from Drug Trafficking [Internet]. (n.d.) [Accessed 2026 Jan 26]. Available from: <https://ecins.com/case-studies/ecins-helps-uk-rescue-vulnerable-youth-from-drug-trafficking/>.

**Operation Swordfish** was instigated in late 2024 following the tragic murder of a child who had been subject of exploitation.<sup>22</sup> The operation was introduced to improve how the force protects and safeguards exploited children by shifting investigative responses from being incident based to child focused, and in doing so move beyond simply responding to individual events to identifying and disrupting those responsible for that child's exploitation.

To achieve this, Sussex Police put in place a mechanism wherein, once a child was designated under Operation Swordfish, all associated investigations, regardless of type, are reallocated to a detective sergeant for distribution within their team. This ensures robust oversight and coordination across investigations and enables the detective sergeant – as the responsible officer – to build a more holistic picture of that child and the exploitation they are experiencing. Responsible officers open 'proactive investigations' focused on developing the intelligence picture to identify risks and exploiters, so that activity to mitigate and disrupt these crimes can be undertaken. Responsible officers become the police point of contact in relation to that child for partner engagement and activity, overcoming the persistent issue of broad yet shallow responsibility.

The instigation of the operation reduced the number of individual officers involved in investigations relating to these children from 291 to a commensurate number of qualifying children (currently 51 for Sussex). Consolidating the investigations has enabled responsible officers to build a better understanding of individual children being exploited, identify common factors, and investigative opportunities existing across seemingly distinct investigations. At the same time, this approach has enabled additional scrutiny of a tightly defined cohort of children.



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22. College of Policing. Operation Swordfish – a holistic approach to investigating child exploitation [Internet]. 2025 [Accessed 2026 Jan 15]. Available from: <https://www.college.police.uk/support-forces/practices/operation-swordfish-holistic-approach-investigating-child-exploitation>.

## Monitoring disruption tactics

For the monitoring of disruption, two levels are required: operational monitoring of disruption measures after they have been implemented; and strategic monitoring of disruption approaches and their outputs. Both of these should be built into existing multi-agency structures.

Agencies that are involved in a situation where disruption measures are utilised should know when the conditions established in a disruption measure are broken and how and to whom they should report this information. Agencies might refer to one person from each service that is involved, for example the designated safeguarding lead from the school. It is, however, important that all the agencies involved in responding to the situation of exploitation are aware of these conditions so that there is greater ownership across each agency to monitor them.

A plan for monitoring each disruption measure that is applied should be considered before the application. It is important that the partners exploring which disruption measures are relevant consider how each one would be monitored, and how often checks will be made and by who. This will increase confidence across relevant agencies that attempts are being made to disrupt the exploitation. It will also increase the information that is shared and might support further applications being made in the future.

It is also important that, when conditions are imposed on individuals and locations, the nature of the conditions are shared with relevant frontline staff such as neighbourhood policing officers. It should also be considered if the information is relevant to be shared with other frontline professionals.



The [Criminal Justice Act 2003](#) established multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) to protect the public, including victims of crime, from serious harm by sexual or violent and other dangerous offenders. There are certain types of offenders that would come under the monitoring of MAPPA. Generally, offenders would have committed a sexual offence, terrorism offence, or a serious violence offence detailed in the relevant legislation.<sup>23</sup> Where someone has been convicted of a sexual offence under schedule three of the [Sexual Offences Act 2003](#), or a Sexual Risk Order has been applied, the Management of Serious or Violent Offenders (MOSOVO) team could be used to monitor the conditions. A modern slavery offence is not listed under the schedule of offences that would allow MOSOVO to monitor offenders, and so thought should be given as to who is most suitable to monitor any conditions imposed.

**“For the use of criminal and civil orders and notices to be effective in disrupting child sexual abuse, they need to be monitored and enforced following a breach, and frontline personnel need to know about them.”<sup>24</sup>**

Where any disruption tactics in place are breached, proactive effort should be made to either arrest the relevant offenders or use the evidence of the breach to apply for a more restrictive order. An example of this includes when a Child Abduction Warning Notice is issued and contact with the young person continues – either the offender should be arrested for abduction (or another relevant offence if applicable) or the evidence of a breach should be used in the application for a Slavery and Trafficking Risk Order.

Strategic monitoring of tactics used should be available to the partnership, which links to the following section on 'Effectiveness of disruption'.

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23. College of Policing. Managing sexual offenders and violent offenders [Internet]. 2017 [accessed 2026 Jan 15]. Available from: <https://www.college.police.uk/app/major-investigation-and-public-protection/managing-sexual-offenders-and-violent-offenders>.

24. Wager, N, et al. CSA Centre. Police disruption of child sexual abuse: Findings from a national survey of frontline personnel and strategic leads for safeguarding [Internet]. 2021: 8 [Accessed 2026 Jan 15]. Available from: <https://www.csacentre.org.uk/app/uploads/2023/10/Police-disruption-of-child-sexual-abuse-survey-findings.pdf>.

## Examples of promising practice

### **Humberside Police's Child Sexual Exploitation Team and**

**Operation Makesafe lead** for the force have created the CAWN (Child Abduction Warning Notice) app, built on Microsoft SharePoint, which supports governance, data quality and timely reviews of CAWNs. The CAWN app connects to Power BI and also has a RAG rating colour scheme as the six-month review date draws near and sends out automatic email reminders that a CAWN is due to be reviewed. Reviews are carried out by an officer of the rank of sergeant or above and managed by the Makesafe lead. The lead also ensures that PNC is updated and that the police occurrence remains open until the CAWN has been closed. CAWNs were not being actively used across the force and were not being reviewed, partly due to the fact that a CAWN search does not tally with PNC. Since the implementation of this system, there has been a significant increase in the number of active and appropriate CAWNs in place across Humberside that are properly reviewed and monitored. This is due to the fact that the app makes it easier to locate the CAWN, related offences and linked intelligence, which makes collating evidence much easier. It is suggested that such an approach could be duplicated for other disruption tactics.



## Effectiveness of disruption

Partnerships should be able to assess if the disruption tactics they are using are effective in stopping perpetrators from continuing to exploit young people. This might be possible because the partnership has a review system in place so that they can evidence that the tactics used are effective.

- Does the partnership know how many modern slavery investigations are open and lead to successful prosecutions or are closed with no further action?
- Does the partnership know how many children are reported as being exploited in their area at that time?
- How many children are no longer being exploited due to successful disruptions and prosecutions?
- Did the tactic/s used have the desired outcome or an indirect outcome?
- Is the victim's voice reflected in any such review of the tactics' effectiveness?

It is important that partnerships are aware of what impact the disruption tactics have had. For example, have the tactics effectively stopped the exploiter/s from further harming the known victim/s or harming others more widely? Or have they been able to continue the harm or to proceed to harm other victims? The approaches used to stop exploiters will need to be based on the specific methods they are using to groom and abuse children and the locations and/or adult facilitators that are helping enable it. The tactics used should also aim to be effective beyond the short term. Exploitation specific 'problem profiles'<sup>25</sup> should be created for each partnership and should be reviewed regularly so that there is an effective understanding of how exploitation presents in the area and what barriers exist to prevent effective disruption for that partnership.

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25. "A problem profile is a police intelligence product that provides a greater understanding of established and emerging crime or incident series, priority locations, or other identified high-risk issues." From: Home Office. Child exploitation disruption toolkit [Internet]. 2022: 8 [Accessed 2026 Jan 26]. Available from: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/63106669e90e076ebfb7f419/Child\\_Exploitation\\_Disruption\\_Toolkit\\_082022.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/63106669e90e076ebfb7f419/Child_Exploitation_Disruption_Toolkit_082022.pdf).

Exploiters will continue to change their ways of operating, and so disruption tactics must be applied and adapted with ability to effectively respond to this reality. There will never be a 'one size fits all' disruption response to exploitation. The use of places and spaces to facilitate exploitation will be ever evolving, as will the dynamics and makeup of a community. It is therefore important that the partnership is aware of any notable changes and responds to them appropriately. This might include needing to involve new and different agencies and partners, including 'non-traditional' partners such as local businesses, and will be driven by the relationships that are built and sustained across the community, including everyone from faith leaders to local shops and transport providers and everyone in between.

All agencies in the partnership that work to prevent and disrupt exploitation should be aware of what effective disruption looks like in practice so they can strive to replicate success. This should be obtained by having the knowledge and experience of using disruption tactics and reviewing how well they stopped the harm when previously used.



## Examples of promising practice

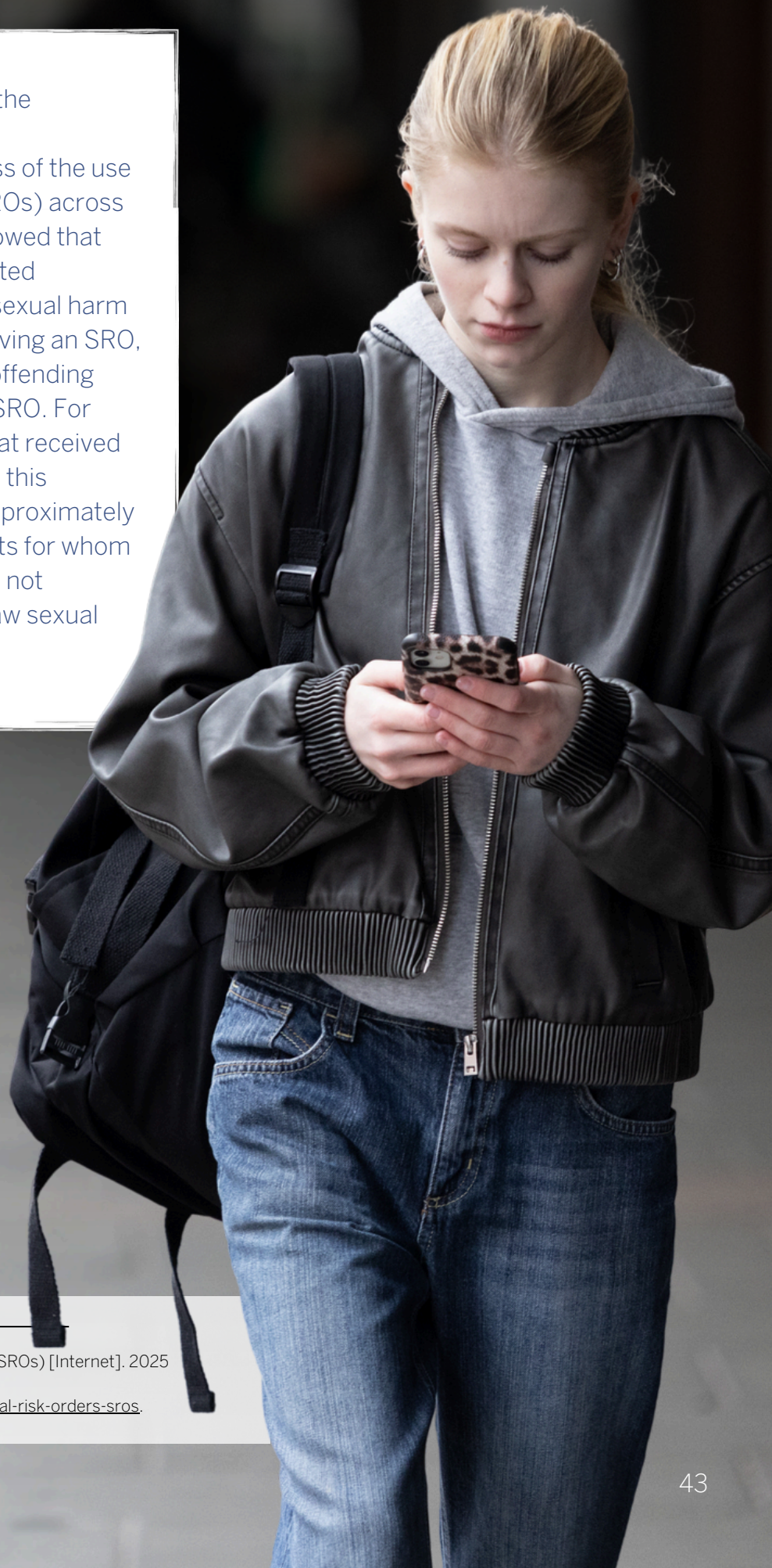
**Swansea Council** were aware that several young people who had all been identified as victims of exploitation and trafficking were making daily visits to a barber shop in the city centre. Money was seen being exchanged between these young people and adults in the barber's. The police had limited intelligence and little was known about the business and its owners or the property ownership. A contextual meeting on the location was held with professionals in the infographic below.



Increased visits were made to the location by those who could support, and business engagement packs focusing on safeguarding children in the area were implemented. The intelligence picture grew alongside the support provided to the young people identified. Positive enforcement action was taken by the local authority leading to the business ceasing to operate.

## Examples of promising practice

Research undertaken by the **Metropolitan Police** assessed the effectiveness of the use of Sexual Risk Orders (SROs) across the UK.<sup>26</sup> The findings showed that subjects of SROs committed approximately 85% less sexual harm per month following receiving an SRO, when compared to their offending level before receiving an SRO. For higher-harm offenders that received SROs of greater duration, this reduction increased to approximately 93%. Conversely, subjects for whom SROs were discussed but not subsequently obtained saw sexual harm increase by 68%.



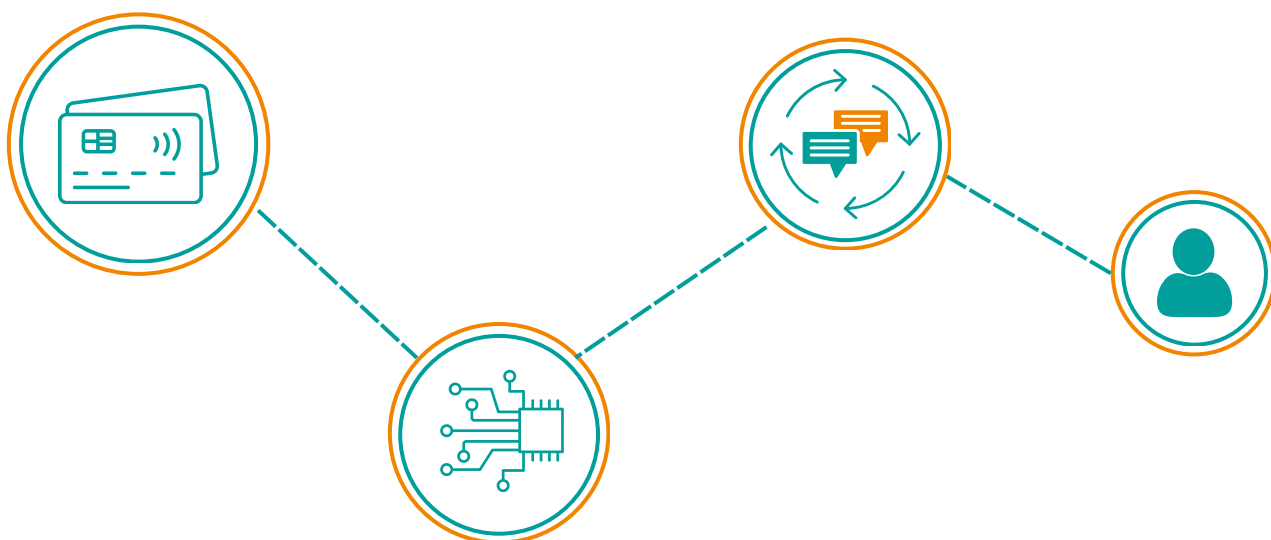
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26. College of Policing, Sexual Risk Orders (SROs) [Internet]. 2025 [Accessed 2026 Jan 15]. Available from: <https://www.college.police.uk/article/sexual-risk-orders-sros>.

## Continual improvement and review

To effectively tackle the threat of exploitation and keep pace with the ever-changing approaches of exploiters, it is crucial that partnerships strive to make improvements in their approach to disruption. An example of this might be the use of young people's [bank accounts to launder money](#) and the tactics needed to disrupt this form of harm might be held by the expertise within economic crime teams.

Communities hold a lot of information that can support effective disruption, and so it is important that partnerships engage these effectively with this in mind and support them to share this information. It is important for the partnerships to have a method for communities to easily submit information, such as an online portal or link, and to consider anonymous reporting methods to address any fears that community members might have about identification. A feedback loop,<sup>27</sup> which shares the impact of information shared by the community where possible, would likely encourage greater information sharing and help build a sense of collective responsibility in tackling exploitation. In order to keep communities aware of exploitation and what information they might have to share, awareness campaigns should be used, such as [#LookCloser](#).



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27. A feedback loop is a process where the output of a system is returned as input, influencing future outputs and allowing the system to self-regulate and adapt.

Strategic oversight is crucial to ensuring a consistent approach to reviewing disruption and embedding learning back into the training offered by the partnership. If there is significant learning from a particular disruption tactic used, the partnership should ensure that this learning is shared in a timely manner with those that are regularly involved in disrupting and responding to exploitation (the tier two professionals noted in the 'Improving knowledge and training' section of this guidance). We further recommend that the strategic level of the partnership implement an impact measurement system to review disruption tactics used across the partnership. This would allow the partnership to easily see if one approach or tactic is not working, explore the reasons for this, and consider alternative approaches. It is also important for there to be effective pathways for sharing learning between the operational and strategic levels of the partnership as both will have unique insights to share. Partnerships should also reflect on how they are embedding national recommendations or strategies in relation to exploitation, for example the [HMICFRS inspection into group-based CSE](#)<sup>28</sup> and the [national strategy for county lines](#).<sup>29</sup>

Partnerships should further consider the use of peer review processes to support improvement. For policing, support for this can be sought from the [Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme](#) regarding thematic reviews and the [Hydrant Programme](#) for investigation reviews.

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28. HMICFRS. An inspection of the effectiveness of the police and law enforcement bodies' response to group-based child sexual exploitation in England and Wales - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services [Internet]. 2023 [Accessed 2026 Jan 15]. Available from: <https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/publication-html/effectiveness-of-police-and-law-enforcement-response-to-group-based-child-sexual-exploitation>.

29. National County Lines Coordination Centre (NCLCC). Disrupting County Lines: Policing Strategy 2024-2027. 2024 [Accessed 2026 Jan 15]. Available from: <https://cdn.prgloo.com/media/748eae528e9b4b609551b3772f6330ff.pdf>.

## Examples of promising practice

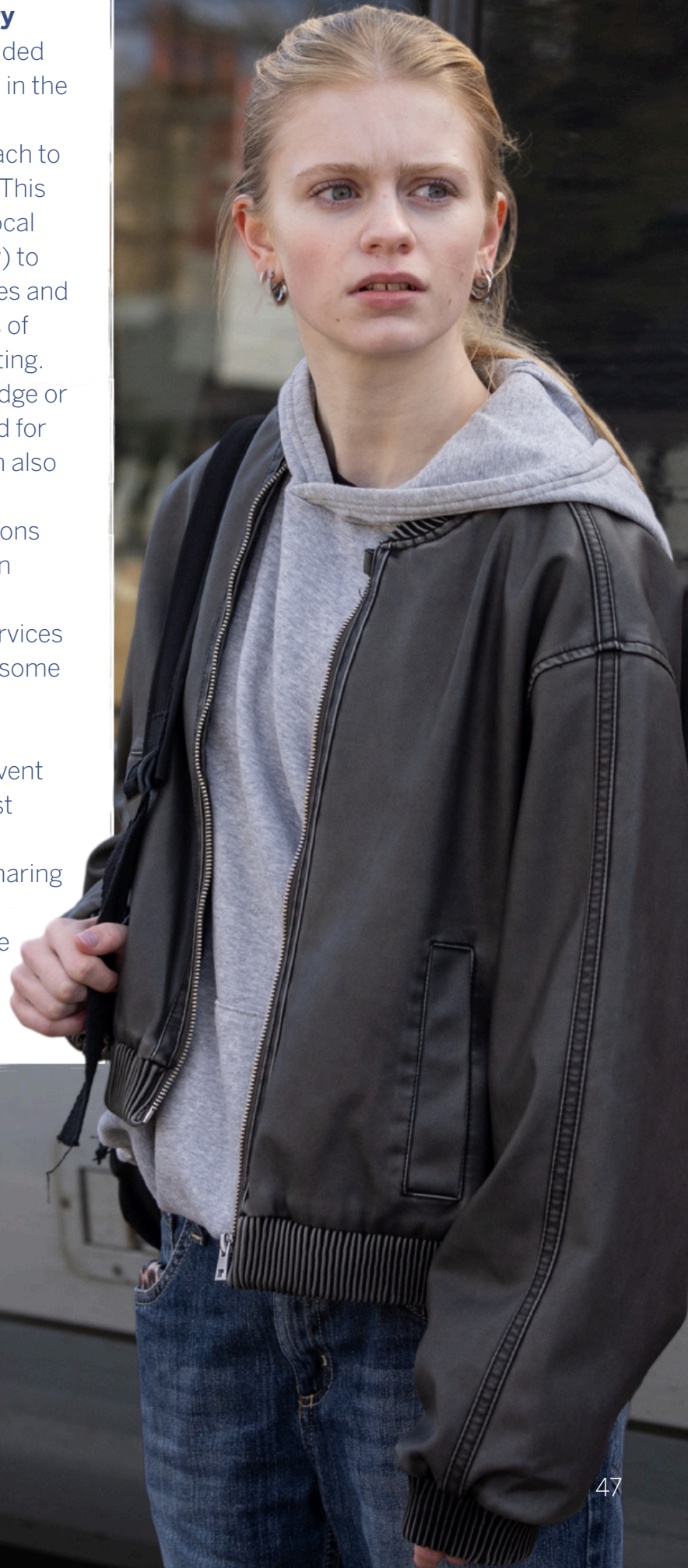
### **Wakefield Safeguarding Partnership**

have embedded an audit system where occurrences of exploitation are reviewed to ensure the appropriate disruption tactics are being considered and that they are being used to disrupt adults, not child victims who have been coerced to exploit others.



**British Transport Police County Lines Taskforce**

have an embedded safeguarding team which support in the development and delivery of a collaborative safeguarding approach to their policing operational activity. This includes bringing partners from local agencies (statutory and voluntary) to raise awareness to both businesses and the general public about the signs of exploitation and encourage reporting. Information about gaps in knowledge or reluctance to report can be shared for further action. Other agencies can also join in contextual safeguarding assessments within the train stations which have led to improvements in physical safety as well as ongoing collaboration across children's services and train operating companies in some instances. Local services joining operational activity has also led to numerous opportunities to prevent further harm, particularly amongst some of the most vulnerable communities as well as prompt sharing of information to ensure swift protective responses and on some occasions same day strategy meetings.



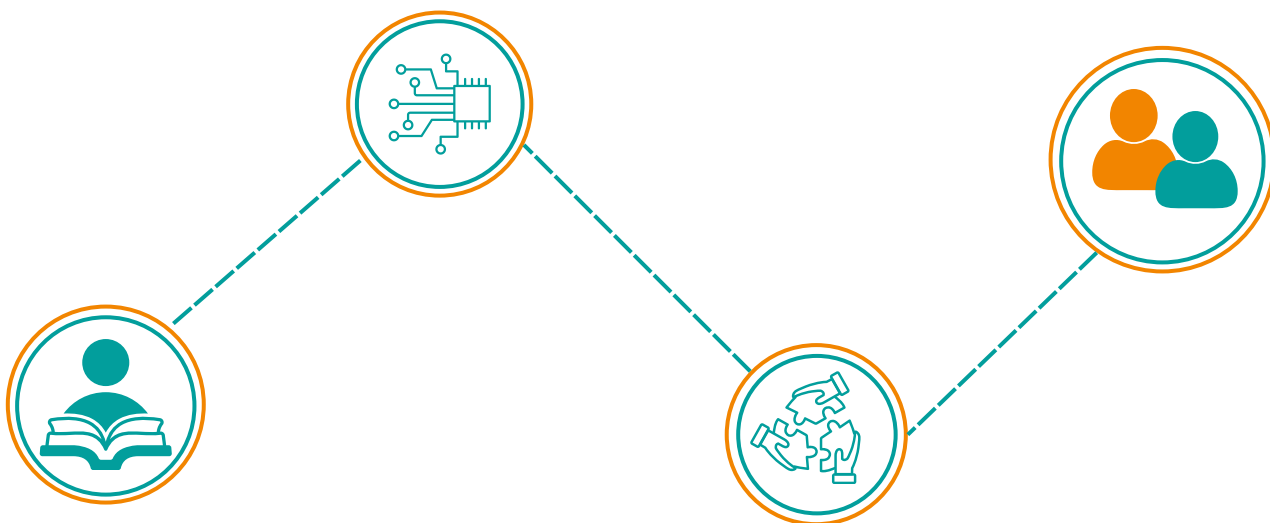
## Conclusion

Safeguarding children and young adults from exploitation requires more than actions to protect individual victims – it demands a coordinated, proactive effort to identify and disrupt perpetrators, harmful environments, and the wider systems that enable exploitation to occur. This guidance emphasises that effective disruption is only possible when all professionals across the partnership understand their role, share information openly, and embed child-centred, non-victim-blaming practice.

A strong foundation of training, accessible expertise, and robust multiagency structures is essential. Strategy meetings must take place promptly, with disruption considered as a core component of every response, not an optional or police-only activity. Civil orders and other tactics must be informed by high-quality, multiagency evidence, supported by strong relationships with legal services and regularly reviewed to ensure continued relevance and proportionality.

Recording, monitoring, and evaluating disruption activity enables partnerships to understand what works, adapt to emerging risks, and maintain accountability. As exploitation methods continue to evolve, so must the partnership's approach – drawing on community intelligence, maintaining updated problem profiles, and embedding learning into ongoing training and strategic planning.

By working collaboratively, sharing responsibility, and continuously improving practice, partnerships can build a resilient system capable of preventing exploitation, protecting young people, and disrupting those who seek to harm them.



## Suggested resources for further support

<p><b><u><a href="#">Home Office Child Exploitation Disruption Toolkit</a></u></b></p>	<p>This toolkit lists many relevant disruption tactics and could be used as a point of reference in creating training or to refer to within safeguarding meetings.</p>
<p><b><u><a href="#">The Children’s Society’s Prevention Programme</a></u></b></p>	<p>A Home Office-funded programme working to improve responses to child exploitation across England and Wales. This includes supporting safeguarding partnerships to embed knowledge around disruption. Please email <a href="mailto:prevention@childrenssociety.org.uk">prevention@childrenssociety.org.uk</a>.</p>
<p><b><u><a href="#">Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance</a></u></b></p>	<p>Relevant for England, this statutory guidance states, “Using civil orders powers available to police and partners can be an effective tool to disrupt those who are targeting children for criminal purposes. The Child Exploitation Disruption Toolkit lists a range of useful tools available to frontline professionals in disrupting child criminal exploitation activity. For example, Slavery and Trafficking Risk Orders, and Slavery and Trafficking Prevention Orders can place prohibitions on the offender in order to disrupt child criminal exploitation activity”.<sup>30</sup></p>

30. HM Government. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 [Internet]. 2023: 114–115 [Accessed 2026 Jan 15].

Available from:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6849a7b67c7ba25f610c7db3f/Working\\_together\\_to\\_safeguard\\_children\\_2023\\_-\\_statutory\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6849a7b67c7ba25f610c7db3f/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023_-_statutory_guidance.pdf).

<p><b><u><a href="#">Hydrant Programme peer review and support booklet</a></u></b></p>	<p>The Hydrant Programme offers support for continued professional development which can be tailored to non-policing partners.</p>
<p><b><u><a href="#">National County Lines Coordination Centre (NCLCC) Guidance on the Use of Slavery and Trafficking Risk / Prevention Orders</a></u></b></p>	<p>This guidance is directed at promoting the use of Slavery and Trafficking Prevention and Risk Orders by individual forces.</p>
<p><b><u><a href="mailto:NCLCCMailbox-.Centre@Met.Police.uk">NCLCCMailbox-.Centre@Met.Police.uk</a></u></b></p>	<p>Email for operational support from the National County Line Coordination Centre.</p>
<p><b><u><a href="mailto:HydrantEnquiries@npcc.police.uk">HydrantEnquiries@npcc.police.uk</a></u></b></p>	<p>Email for operational support from Hydrant.</p>
<p><b><u><a href="#">Practice Advice for Investigating Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation</a></u></b></p>	<p>This is an official document for police investigators and details specific knowledge around disruption in CSE cases. It should be consulted by those holding expertise and can be obtained by contacting Hydrant at the contact details provided above.</p>

<p><b>National County Lines Coordination Centre, National Orders Working Group (NOWG)</b></p>	<p>This a group run by the Continuous Improvement Team in the NCLCC where police and partners attend to increase their knowledge and awareness of ancillary orders and injunctions which are available in disrupting exploitation and organised criminality. Each month, a guest speaker will provide an input into the benefits, successes, barriers and good practice with lesser-known orders as well as those more commonly used. The group are also involved in leading the way in identifying methods of overcoming areas which require improvement, such as the management of orders as an example. Please contact the NCLCC for an invite.</p>
<p><b><u>Operation Makesafe</u></b></p>	<p>In the HMICFRS 2025 progress report on the inspection into group-based sexual abuse, a recommendation was made for all forces to adopt Operation Makesafe.<sup>31</sup></p> <p>Each force should have a Makesafe lead who is responsible for embedding this in their force. These officers will likely hold knowledge and expertise around disrupting exploitation within and nearby to business premises, and particularly within the hospitality industry.</p>

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31. HMICFRS. Inspection of the effectiveness of police and law enforcement bodies' response to group-based child sexual exploitation: A progress report [Internet]. 2025 [Accessed 2026 Jan 15]. Available from: <https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/publication-html/effectiveness-of-police-and-law-enforcement-response-to-group-based-child-sexual-exploitation-progress/>.

<p><b>NCLCC Power app</b></p>	<p>The NCLCC hosts the Power app, which all police forces have access to. This app is a resource for police that provides knowledge relating to county lines exploitation and guidance on using disruption tactics, including applications for civil orders.</p>
<p><b><u>Disrupting serious and organised criminals – menu of tactics</u></b></p>	<p>The National Crime Agency’s (NCA) ‘menu of tactics’ is a document that was developed to assist anyone who is looking to disrupt a criminal, particularly those involved in serious and organised crime, at a local level and by working with partners. It will help you to identify the appropriate tactics and powers that are available to law enforcement and partner agencies to disrupt criminality. It is designed to support a ‘problem-solving approach’ to the disruption of criminals using a breadth of existing law enforcement measures and other agency tactics. The problem-solving approach encourages greater focus on understanding the cause of a problem so that tactics can be more effective and more efficient in the longer term. The menu provides ideas to assist in forming a coherent, creative disruption plan, with a combination of different tactics from many different agencies.</p>

<p><b><u><a href="#">A spotlight on children placed out of area as a result of extrafamilial harm</a></u></b></p>	<p>This spotlight briefing by the Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme (VKPP), now part of the National Centre for VAWG and Public Protection (NCVPP), reflects on the operational and/or strategic police practice learning drawn from both published serious case reviews (SCRs) and other publications reflecting the challenges of placing children and young people in out-of-area care settings. It is also relevant for non-policing partners.</p>
<p><b><u><a href="#">Sexual Risk Order and Prevention Order guidance</a></u></b></p>	<p>Home Office guidance on Part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, and details guidance on the application of Sexual Harm Prevention Orders and Sexual Risk Orders.</p>
<p><b><u><a href="#">Slavery and Trafficking Prevention and Risk Orders guidance</a></u></b></p>	<p>Home Office guidance and forms for practitioners about Slavery and Trafficking Prevention Orders and Slavery and Trafficking Risk Orders</p>
<p><b><u><a href="#">Police Disruption of Child Sexual Abuse: Findings from a national survey of frontline personnel and strategic leads for safeguarding</a></u></b></p>	<p>More than half of the 38 strategic leads in policing who responded to the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse's survey provided examples of information collected by their forces to monitor efforts to disrupt child sexual abuse. The data collected covered activities including the issuance of notices and orders, the use of disruption-supportive measures such as flags and trackers, and safeguarding referrals.</p>

<p><b><u><a href="#">It Was Hard to Escape: Safeguarding children at risk from criminal exploitation</a></u></b></p>	<p>This review from The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel aims to identify what might be done differently by practitioners to improve approaches to protecting children who find themselves threatened with violence and serious harm by criminal gangs.</p>
<p><b><u><a href="#">Support for forces from the Hydrant Programme</a></u></b></p>	<p>Information on the support available from Hydrant's Learning, Review and Peer Support team.</p>
<p><b><u><a href="#">Peer review offer from the VKPP</a></u></b></p>	<p>Information on the peer review offer from the Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme (VKPP) to assist forces in the delivery of their National Vulnerability and Public Protection Strategy.</p>
<p><b><u><a href="#">Social care peer review</a></u></b></p>	<p>The Local Government Authority (LGA) offer peer challenges and diagnostics to underpin the LGA sector-led improvement support, assisting local authorities on their improvement journey.</p>

<p><b>Practice Advice for Investigating Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation</b></p>	<p>This guidance document has been created by The Hydrant Programme and states “Disruption tactics to prevent perpetrators from committing sexual offences against children have been both underused and poorly recorded nationally. Forces should ensure CSE teams are resourced sufficiently to ensure proactive work can take place to disrupt offenders and locations or they should have access to those capabilities. Disruption is not solely a police role; all statutory and voluntary agency professionals involved in the safeguarding and investigation of CSE have an important role to play in disruption activity that addresses where it is happening, how it is happening, and who are the perpetrators.”</p> <p>(This document is restricted for police. Investigators should contact Hydrant for a copy.)</p>
<p><b><u>Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner Review of Risk and Prevention Orders</u></b></p>	<p>This review of STROs and STPOs from 2022 details recommendations, including around the monitoring of them.</p>
<p><b><u>Guidance for Obtaining and Managing Slavery and Trafficking Prevention and Risk Orders</u></b></p>	<p>New guidance from the Modern Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime Unit (MSOICU) on obtaining and managing STROs and STPOs. This important guidance also includes example prohibitions that could be applied for, and example police statements and applications.</p>

**Across the country, young people are suffering unseen and unheard – struggling with their mental health, living in poverty, and in danger from exploitation and abuse.**

At The Children’s Society, we know a brighter future is possible. That’s why we’ve been working for more than 140 years to protect every childhood. We make sure young people can access vital support when they need it most and campaign for a world where every child can grow up safe, happy, and hopeful.

Together, we can build a society for all children: a society where children can thrive, not just survive.

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