

Quick Reference Guide (QRG)

Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Multi-Agency Child Exploitation meeting (MACE) is a multi-agency case management forum coordinating support and interventions to reduce the risk of child exploitation (CE) to children and young people up to the age of 25 years where they are screened at medium/high risk of or being criminally or sexually exploited.

This requires agencies and professionals to work together with parents and children to alert them to the signs of grooming, exploitation and county lines. This process enables broader agencies, outside of the statutory sector, to contribute to reducing the risk and impact of child exploitation on individuals, families and communities.

MACE is managed and administered through the Partnership Exploitation and Missing Hub.

Confidentiality

Any agency in attendance or in receipt of information will be signed up to the local Information Sharing Protocol.

All members will sign or agree to a confidentiality form at the start of each meeting stating:

- *All information discussed is strictly confidential and must not be disclosed to third parties. All documents circulated in connection with the meeting are to be considered restricted documents and must not be disclosed to third parties.*
- *The retention of all documentation in a secure location is the responsibility of the receiving agency. If disclosure is sought to a third party, then permission must be received from the Chair of the meeting.*
- *The disclosure of information outside of the MACE meeting will be deemed to be a breach of the subject's confidentiality and a breach of the confidentiality of the agencies involved. It may be considered an offence under the Data Protection Act.*

Criteria for MACE Referrals

All children and young people at medium/high risk of Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), County Lines, Modern Slavery and Trafficking, Gangs, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

In cases of criminal exploitation, we know that powerful, adult gang members recruit and arrange or facilitate the travel of children (and vulnerable adults) for the purpose of selling drugs, firearms or sex on their behalf. Children often are missing from home/care or school as a result and child sexual exploitation and peer on peer abuse often takes place in the context of criminal exploitation. Criminal exploitation often occurs without the child's immediate recognition, with the child believing that they are in control of the situation. Criminal exploitation of children includes for instance children forced to work on cannabis farms or to commit theft.

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

Gangs specifically target vulnerable children and those who do not have support networks. Children with special educational needs, mental health problems or disabilities are known to be purposely targeted. Gangs also look for emotional vulnerability, such as children experiencing problems at home, absent/busy parents or bereavement. The gangs seek to fill that emotional gap for the child and seek to become 'their family'. More recently, gangs are increasingly looking to recruit 'clean skins' ie. young people with no previous criminal record who are unlikely to be stopped by the police. Potentially a child involved with a gang or with serious violence could be both a victim and a perpetrator. This requires professionals to assess and support his/her welfare, safety and wellbeing needs first and foremost whilst where necessary, needing to assess and respond at the same time in a criminal justice capacity.

Human trafficking has been traditionally understood as the movement of children and adults across hard borders for the purposes of forced labour/domestic servitude and into the sex market. There have been high profile cases where young people smuggled into the country are working on cannabis farms and nail bars. Whilst this occurs, particularly in the context of modern slavery, trafficking also occurs internally and young people are moved across soft borders, between families and non-related adults. It is important to remember that young people being exploited through criminal exploitation are also victims of trafficking; as they are having their travel arranged or facilitated for the purposes of them being exploited. Child trafficking is defined as the 'recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt' of a child for the purpose of exploitation. In these cases, the MACE will make a referral to the National Referral Mechanism.

Scope of MACE

- Share and clarify information to identify risks
- Establish exact nature of the concerns
- Ensure good quality assessments are undertaken which focus on the needs of the child/young person and family
- Consider intelligence, map locations and extra familial risk factors
- Establish risk for any other children, including siblings and peers
- Share information pertaining to a suspected perpetrator(s) with Police, i.e. car registration, nickname/alias, descriptions/tattoos, premises/locations, etc
- Consider the disruption and prosecution of perpetrators
- Consider a referral using the National Referral Mechanism in cases where a child/young person may have been trafficked
- Complete a MACE action plan and identify risk level
- Review cases and ensure that actions have been taken to reduce victimisation, disrupt and sanction offending to prevent harm
- Ensure that agreed actions are carried out in a timely manner
- All agencies will be required to attend the meeting having checked their agencies records and provided a short update in writing prior to the meeting

Frequency of meetings

Meetings will be held every 4 – 6 weeks and Chaired by a professional from the Exploitation and Missing Hub/Safeguarding Service.

Panel Members

When the exploitation has been identified as CSE the panel required to complete checks to identify if they are known and bring information to the initial meeting would be:

Police CSE Co-ordinator (Hub Link)	Youth Offending Team manager	School Nurse/ Midwife/ Safeguarding Nurse RWT/ CYPIC Nurse/GU
Social Worker	360 Substance misuse team	Exploitation Analyst
Connexions	Designated safeguarding lead – school	Representative from The Way- youth zone
Adults Transition Safeguarding Lead	MASH Social Worker if not open	Power 2
Base 25	Strengthening Families worker	Voluntary / Community Sector Representation (to be determined).

When the exploitation has been identified as CCE or modern slavery the panel required to complete checks to identify if they are known and bring information to the initial meeting would be:

Police CID (Hub Link) Police Offender Manager (Hub Link) Police Locate (Hub Link) Police Intel (Hub Link)	Youth Offending Team Manager (Hub Link)	School Nurse/ Safeguarding Nurse RWT/ CYPIC Nurse
School Panel rep. -Police	360 Substance misuse team	Exploitation Analyst
Other third sector providers who are able to offer a level of support	St Giles Trust- Hospital St Giles Project	BASE25
Neighbourhood Police Officer/ PSI where not CSE	Designated safeguarding lead – school	Community Safety Team/Partnership representative
Early Intervention – (Hub Link)	Other relevant health providers	Inclusions Manager/ Attendance manager
Adults Transition safeguarding lead	Power 2	Catch 22
Connexions		

After the initial MACE meeting, members who are working operationally from any of the organisations mentioned above, as well as key workers from the local authority, will be required to attend further review meetings. There may also be a need to invite specific officers from Environmental Health, Licensing, Housing or other key Departments relevant to the exploitation identified. Other relevant external agencies such as key Voluntary Sector members or Community Volunteers who hold relevant information may be asked to submit information or attend part or all the review meeting. All members attending review meetings will be required to submit short written updates prior to the scheduled meeting date to be used in the final written record of the meeting.

Escalation to CEMOG

A case may be escalated when panel members have exhausted areas of investigation/disruption and require the wider partnership to support with the case by providing a deeper dive into the situation. This will be escalated by the Chair of the meeting.

In addition, locations and persons of interest may also be escalated where there are clear patterns and trends which link incidents.

Professionals' meeting

A professionals' meeting will be convened when the Exploitation Hub have identified more than 1 young person involved or linked to a situation to share information and Intelligence which other professionals may be aware of.

This will be an opportunity to discuss intelligence; disruption methods being used and to inform next steps.

A multi-agency professionals meeting is a tool to support practitioners who have a genuine desire to work openly with families, but who may need the opportunity to talk with other professionals to make an informed decision as to whether the case should step back into MACE or progress to CEMOG. They may also be helpful where professional disagreements arise that are impacting on effective work with the family, or where professionals need an opportunity to reflect on the plans for working with a family when progress is not being made

Click here to [access](#) Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together Escalation Policy.

Accountability

Information from MACE meetings will be analysed by the Exploitation Team and an up-to date picture of victims, offenders and locations will be regularly presented to CEMOG and the Exploitation Priority Group.

The Exploitation and Missing Hub will be responsible for ensuring that the MACE is working effectively and having a positive impact on the lives of children, young people and families. As part of this, MACE plans will be audited and quality assured quarterly by a multi-agency subgroup from the CEMOG.