



Task and Finish Group Report

**Child Exploitation Task and Finish
Group**

April 2020

**Task and finish group concerning Child
Exploitation**



Chairperson's Foreword

I am very pleased to present this report to the Children and Young People's scrutiny committee, as requested at our meeting on 15 July 2019.

Keeping children in Herefordshire safe is at the heart of Herefordshire Council's responsibilities, and there are few issues local people care about more deeply than the wellbeing of our young people. More than simply an internal or procedural piece of work, our task was undertaken in the spirit of serving our local community.

The Task and Finish group met on three occasions, and the process was interesting and enlightening for all of us, despite Child Exploitation being such a distressing subject.

I am extremely grateful to the witnesses from our local partners, who gave up their time to prepare and present to us what Child Exploitation is, how it works, how it's being tackled, how the various agencies work together, and what more could and should be done. Their outspokenness was very helpful. Thanks in particular to West Mercia Police and West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre.

The contributions from Lucy Belcher from the Children's Society, who supported the work of the group by contributing questions and suggesting recommendations, were also extremely useful.

The evidence, explanations and patience from our own officers with specialist knowledge and experience in this area were invaluable.

I am very grateful to my fellow Task and Finish group members, Cllr Paul Andrews, Cllr Jennie Hewitt, Cllr Peter Jinman, Cllr Mike Jones and Cllr David Summers. I appreciate their commitment to understanding the issues, and to collaborative group work, as well as their determination to produce constructive and meaningful recommendations.

Finally, I would like to thank Matt Evans for his care and sensitivity in organising meetings and witness sessions, and drawing up minutes and recommendations. I appreciate how he transformed the presentations, and the group's many wide-ranging discussions, into this report.

This report isn't a ticked box; it is part of an ongoing process to assure, and ensure, that we are doing all we can for our young people. I trust it will be a useful contribution to the work of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Diana Toynbee, April 2020
Chairperson of the Child Exploitation Task and Finish Group

1 Executive Summary

1.1 At its meeting on 15 July 2019 the children and young people scrutiny committee requested the convening of a task and finish group concerning Child Exploitation as part of the setting of its work programme priorities. The committee agreed that the review would cover the issues of child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE). The topic was identified by the scrutiny committee as a priority over concerns regarding county lines activity, as a form of child criminal exploitation, in the West Midlands. Furthermore it is felt to be a critical element of the work of the scrutiny committee to scrutinise data relating to child sexual exploitation and examine initiatives and projects to address its incidence in Herefordshire.

1.2 The task and finish group undertook three meetings. The first meeting was focused on providing a background on child exploitation in Herefordshire. The second meeting was a witness session which involved the engagement of stakeholders, partner organisations and relevant agencies. The witness session consisted of a series of presentations followed by questioning of witnesses by the task and finish group. The group met for a third and final time to resolve its recommendations to the scrutiny committee.

1.3 The group learnt at its first meeting that Child Exploitation was defined as occurring:

“...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 any criminal / sexual activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.”

1.4 The task and finish group developed an understanding of the scale of Child Exploitation and the risk posed. An assessment from the representative of the Children's Society explained that the issue had received significant coverage in recent years, and awareness raising from media coverage may inform a perception that the level of Child Exploitation was increasing. This perception may be reinforced by the increase in reporting and detection arising from greater awareness. The trend around increased reporting was welcomed by the group and was seen as vital, given the significant challenge posed by under-reporting and identification. The group was also informed that an increase in Child Exploitation could be attributed, in some circumstances, to reductions in youth services and other forms of support for young people which could create a vulnerability for some sectors of young people in society.

1.5 With respect to child criminal exploitation the group was provided with details of the issue of county lines, which was recognised as a current, significant threat to children's safeguarding (and potential exploitation). The group was informed that both urban and rural areas were affected by county lines and different models of operation existed across the country. Due to the changing nature and understanding of the issue of county lines the assumption that those young people most likely to be exploited were deprived and from an urban background was changing, and it was now recognised that any young person could be subject to exploitation. The risk posed by criminal exploitation of children and county lines requires a contextualised safeguarding response, a broader approach to established safeguarding arrangements focusing on the family.

1.6 The group understood concerns that attention on county lines and child criminal exploitation should not detract nor diminish a focus on the problems of child sexual exploitation. Child sexual exploitation was distinct from criminal exploitation as it was most likely to occur within the family and required a different safeguarding response on the part of the council and partner agencies. The group understood that there were concerns that the widespread reporting of county lines had led to child sexual exploitation receiving less weighting in local strategies and policies. Whilst acknowledging the distinctions between child criminal and sexual exploitation the group was keen to examine Child Exploitation as a

whole, to understand the safeguarding response and the efforts of all partner agencies to the challenge it posed.

1.7 The purpose of the review conducted by the task and finish was to understand the challenge posed by Child Exploitation in Herefordshire and assess arrangements that were in place to address the risk. The group heard case studies and understood the impact on individual victims of exploitation was profound, causing significant harm. Using the current data modelling the risk of exploitation examined by the group suggested that a relatively small proportion of children in Herefordshire were at risk and that the scale of the issue in Herefordshire may not be as substantial as in other areas of the West Midlands or the country as a whole. This could be a consequence of the rurality of the county and small population but it should not minimise the fact that exploitation exists in the county and its impact on those affected is pernicious.

1.8 The group received detail of the work being undertaken locally to address exploitation and heard from relevant organisations and agencies at its witness session. It has been assured that strategies and policies are in place and work is ongoing in the county across different agencies and organisations to combat exploitation. The group developed an understanding of the complexity of the network of organisations addressing exploitation and the difficulty in distinguishing the functions and responsibilities of all agencies involved.

1.9 Following the presentations, discussions and questioning of witnesses the group produced recommendations on the following topics:

1. Publicising efforts to address Child Exploitation
2. The exploitation risk assessment tool and safeguarding thresholds of need
3. Data sharing
4. Mapping of current services and organisations
5. Promotion of training and raising awareness
6. Signposting and reporting tools
7. Annual Child Exploitation summit
8. Transition to adulthood for vulnerable young people
9. Licensing and safeguarding training
10. Children not in school

2. Composition of the task and finish group

2.1 Members of the task and finish group were:

Councillor Diana Toynbee (Chairperson)
Councillor Paul Andrews
Councillor Jennie Hewitt
Councillor Peter Jinman
Councillor Mike Jones
Councillor David Summers

2.2 The group also included a co-optee from The Children's Society, Lucy Belcher. Ms Belcher attended the witness session and participated remotely in meetings 1 and 3, providing feedback, questions and proposed recommendations via email.

2.3 Lead directorate officers – Chris Baird (Director Children and Families), Liz Elgar (Assistant Director Safeguarding and Family Support) and Cath Thomas (Head of Service Safeguarding and review).

3 Context

Why did we set up the task and finish group?

3.1 The task and finish group was convened to:

- Receive data on the incidence of Child Exploitation in Herefordshire.
- Learn from relevant agencies of projects and initiatives to address Child Exploitation.
- Assess partnership and joint working between agencies.
- Consider the introduction of the Child Exploitation disruption toolkit and examine its effectiveness.

What were we looking at?

3.2 The focus of the review was to:

- Develop an understanding of the range of child criminal exploitation, the latest data and statistics in Herefordshire and comparable data from other areas.
- Develop an understanding of the different forms of child sexual exploitation.
- Learn about legislative responsibilities and statutory guidance relating to Child Exploitation including the Child Exploitation disruption toolkit
- Learn about the current CSE projects and initiatives at agencies in Herefordshire to combat Child Exploitation and receive performance measures.
- Learn about the current CCE projects and initiatives at agencies in Herefordshire to combat Child Exploitation and receive performance measures.
- Develop an understanding of the joint working between agencies in Herefordshire and assess the effectiveness of partnership working.
- To consider how the latest guidance from central government, *the child exploitation disruption toolkit*, is being applied by local agencies and assess its effectiveness.
- To consider and agree recommendations to the children and young people scrutiny committee.

3.3 Through the review the task and finish group sought to establish:

- An understanding of the current statistics and data in respect of Child Exploitation;
- Assurance that partnership working between local agencies is effective and there are no gaps in the provision of services;
- Assurance that projects and initiatives are in place at local agencies to address Child Exploitation and they are effective; and
- Assurance that the latest guidance from Government is being applied and is effective in combatting Child Exploitation.

Who did we speak to?

3.4 Between November 2019 – December 2019, the group convened three meetings and engaged the following officers and witnesses:

Organisation	Officer/Witness
West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre	– Helen Stanbra, Counselling Services Manager – Sarah Melia

	– Laura Kuegler
Children's Charities	– Lucy Belcher, Service Manager – North, Prevention Programme, The Children's Society
Children and Families, Herefordshire Council	– Chris Baird, Director Children and Families – Liz Elgar, Assistant Director Safeguarding and Family Support Children and Families – Cath Thomas, Head of Service Safeguarding and Review – Gill Cox, Head of Looked After Children – Sue Rogers, Head of MASH and Assessment – Ruby Matthews, CSE Coordinator
Public Health	– Karen Wright, Director of Public Health – Lindsay MacHardy, Public Health Specialist
West Mercia Office of Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)	– Vicki Ridgewell, Exploitation and Vulnerability Coordinator – Karen Perry, Exploitation and Vulnerability Coordinator
Vennture	– Robert Thomas
West Mercia Youth Offending Service	– Keith Barham, Head of Service West Mercia Youth Justice Service – Marie Turner, Local Team Manager, West Mercia Youth Justice Service
West Mercia Police	– DCI Jon Roberts, Herefordshire Local Policing Area
Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group	– Sarah Dempsey, Deputy Designated Nurse Safeguarding

What did we ask?

3.5 The group focused on the following questions:

- What is Child Sexual Exploitation and what is the latest data of incidence in Herefordshire;
- What is Child Criminal Exploitation and what is the latest data of incidence in Herefordshire;
- Which local organisations and agencies have a role to play in combatting Child Exploitation and how do they work in partnership;
- What local projects/initiatives are in place;
- What preventative work is being undertaken to combat Child Exploitation;
- How are agencies working with other local areas to understand patterns/trends and work on preventative measures;
- How are local agencies seeking to implement the latest government guidance; and
- Is the government's latest guidance an effective tool to combat Child Exploitation?

3.6 From our research and talking to officers and witnesses did we fulfil the aims of the task and finish group contained in the terms of reference?

To assess the outcomes of the task and finish group it was agreed that the final report would examine whether the task and finish group had achieved the objectives contained in its terms of reference. An assessment against the objectives is provided below:

- i) Develop an understanding of the range of child criminal exploitation and the latest data and statistics in Herefordshire and comparable data

- ii) Develop an understanding of the different forms of child sexual exploitation and the latest data and statistics in Herefordshire.

Outcome – At the initial meeting of the group on 8 November 2019 a presentation was provided by the officers in the children and children and families' directorate and a representative of West Mercia Police. The presentation contained a definition of child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation and statistics of the risk of Child Exploitation in Herefordshire.

- iii) Learn about legislative responsibilities and statutory guidance relating to Child Exploitation including the child exploitation disruption toolkit

Outcome – At the meeting on 8 November 2019 detail of the responsibilities of different agencies was outlined, along with guidance from the Home Office and Department for Education. The responsibilities of separate agencies was also covered at the witness session on 2 December 2019 where the wide range of different organisations with a role in addressing Child Exploitation and the complexity of their interrelationship was evident. At the initial meeting of the group the introduction of the child disruption toolkit was listed as a challenge but there was no mention of its implementation at the witness session.

- iv) Learn about the current CSE projects and initiatives at relevant local agencies in Herefordshire to combat Child Exploitation and receive performance measures detailing their effectiveness.
- v) Learn about the current CCE projects and initiatives at relevant local agencies in Herefordshire to combat Child Exploitation and receive performance measures detailing their effectiveness.

Outcome – At its first meeting and through the witness session local agencies and organisations presented to the group their projects and initiatives. Performance measures were not included.

- vi) Develop an understanding of the joint working between local agencies in Herefordshire and assess the effectiveness of partnership working.

Outcome – Through the witness session the group developed an understanding of the coordinated work undertaken by agencies and organisations with responsibilities to address Child Exploitation.

- vii) To consider how the latest guidance from central government, *the child exploitation disruption toolkit*, is being applied by local agencies and assess its effectiveness.

Outcome – The implementation of the Child Exploitation disruption toolkit published by the Home Office was presented as a challenge but there was no detail at the witness session as to how local agencies and organisations were seeking to introduce measures contained in the toolkit. This could be the focus of a future witness session (see recommendation 7 below) with partner agencies and organisations asked if they used the Child Exploitation disruption toolkit and whether they had found it easy to implement.

- viii) To consider and agree recommendations to the children and young people scrutiny committee.

Outcome – The final meeting of the group considered recommendations which are provided below.

4. Summary of our findings

1. Publicising efforts to address Child Exploitation
2. The exploitation risk assessment tool and safeguarding thresholds of need
3. Data sharing
4. Mapping of current services and organisations
5. Promotion of training and raising awareness
6. Signposting and reporting tools
7. Annual Child Exploitation summit
8. Transition to adulthood for vulnerable young people
9. Licensing and safeguarding training
10. Children not in school

4.1 Publicising efforts to address Child Exploitation

The group learned that the serious case review (SCR) 'Katie' in January 2019 was the first SCR concerning CSE in Herefordshire. The SCR had looked at processes and mechanisms in place at local agencies and organisations to respond to cases of CSE and recommended learning points for all agencies.

Since the Katie SCR a significant amount of work has been taking place in Herefordshire to respond to the risk of Child Exploitation. Nationally there has also been a focus on understanding the risk posed to children and young people of criminal and sexual exploitation. The work undertaken in Herefordshire has included the following:

- Following the Katie SCR a review was carried out, in February 2019, of existing case files to assess if there were other children at risk of criminal and sexual exploitation.
- A new exploitation risk assessment tool has been established which has removed the distinction between CSE and CCE to span all exploitation.
- In Herefordshire a contextual safeguarding approach has been adopted following the review in February 2019. The approach provides a theoretical basis to children's safeguarding and recognises that the risks posed by the criminal and sexual exploitation of children tend to be present beyond the family environment.
- Complex strategy meetings have been established which involve a number of agencies working with children and adults. The complex strategy meetings utilise the contextual safeguarding approach, identifying links between victims, perpetrators and locations and addressing contextual risks.
- A people and places tracker is in use, which focuses on individuals and the disruption of exploitation activity. The tracker incorporates information relating to people who are at risk or potentially risky places.
- A prevent and disrupt operational group including housing enforcement, police intelligence, licensing, trading standards and standard safeguarding agencies operates using information from the people and places tracker to target individuals at risk and areas where exploitation is occurring.
- A child criminal and child sexual exploitation strategy delivery plan is in place together with a delivery group involving West Mercia Police and Herefordshire Council.
- Tackling Child Exploitation programme – Herefordshire Council submitted a successful bid to the Children's Society, together with West Mercia Police and the clinical commissioning group to look at support to examine how the Child Exploitation service is delivered in Herefordshire.

The group recognised the significant work that had been undertaken to understand the issue of Child Exploitation locally and establish structures and processes to respond to the challenge. The group felt that this work should be highlighted to the local community together with an assessment of the current level of risk in Herefordshire.

It is important that awareness is raised around Child Exploitation issues and that information is disseminated to the public to explain how to assist local agencies by reporting concerns. The group supports the undertaking of a coordinated publicity campaign between children's services and Public Health to promote the reporting of issues and concerns to assist Child Exploitation disruption and prevention work.

4.2 The exploitation risk assessment tool and safeguarding thresholds of need

The group received details of the work undertaken to understand the level of risk posed by Child Exploitation to children and young people in Herefordshire and to develop a risk profile. It learned that since the SCR an exploitation risk assessment tool has been introduced which identifies children and young people at moderate or significant risk from Child Exploitation. The statistics presented to the group indicated that as of October 2019 55 children and young people in the county were at moderate or significant risk.

The group understood that the current profile related to young people receiving a statutory service at level 4 of the safeguarding/levels of need thresholds established by the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB). The use of level 4 only to compile statistics of the risk of Child Exploitation to children and young people in the county was queried. It was questioned what effect the inclusion of children identified at levels 2 and 3 would have upon the data and whether this would increase the numbers of children and young people recorded as being at risk of Child Exploitation. The group were informed that work was being undertaken to enable figures of young people at level 3 to be used to establish a fuller assessment of risk to young people across the county.

The group supported this work and recommended that the executive expedite the inclusion of level 3 cases in the exploitation risk assessment tool to ensure a more detailed assessment of those children and young people at risk. The group also recommended that work was undertaken to potentially include those children presenting at the level 2 level of need threshold in the exploitation risk assessment tool.

4.3 Data sharing

During the meetings of the group the issue of data sharing, between agencies and organisations with responsibility for addressing Child Exploitation, was raised and conflicting evidence was heard about the ease of sharing data. The group heard about work the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) had undertaken which relied on the submission of data from local bodies including the council, the police and the clinical commissioning group. The police had submitted the required data but the piece of work had been impeded by the council nor the CCG providing the required data due to data protection concerns. In other evidence provided at the witness session it was commented by Herefordshire council that there were no known problems with the sharing of data.

The group were keen that where there are impediments to the sharing of data between agencies and organisations, these must be understood and action undertaken to resolve problems identified. This is particularly important if the CSP is to develop successfully a combined data set between agencies holding data to enable the identification of children at risk of exploitation. It was recommended that the executive work with partner agencies, in

particular the Police, to examine the potential impediments to the sharing of data and to propose solutions.

4.4 Mapping of current services and organisations

At the witness session the group gained an understanding of the range of different groups and bodies with responsibilities to address Child Exploitation. The range of organisations and agencies was complex and it was felt that even organisations tackling Child Exploitation may not understand the roles and responsibilities of other agencies and groups. It was likely that there would also be confusion on the part of the public around the network of organisations and their responsibilities.

It is important that work is undertaken to understand: the interactions between the organisations; where overlap existed; and where the best monies are being spent (cost benefit). It was noted that there were a number of strategic and operational groups, and acknowledged that at a strategic level there was some overlap in responsibilities and functions. The group heard that there was the opportunity to look at duplication collectively across organisations; due to the nature of Herefordshire as a small local authority the same individuals tended to attend different groups, which is an advantage when identifying duplication and making changes to existing structures.

To enhance the understanding of all organisations involved in efforts to address Child Exploitation and the public it is important that a mapping exercise of all current services is undertaken. This exercise should detail all those organisations locally that play a role in addressing Child Exploitation and list their responsibilities. It will highlight the duplication and gaps in the provision of services to address Child Exploitation and review the existing structure of organisations and agencies. Following completion of the mapping exercise the outcome should be communicated effectively with all those organisations identified, and the public.

4.5 Promotion of training and raising awareness

During the course of the witness session the group were shown a variety of training and awareness raising presentations that focused on Child Exploitation and in particular how these could be delivered in schools.

The role of dedicated safeguarding leads (DSLs) in schools was outlined to the group and it was explained DSLs helped ensure that schools were briefed and were aware of guidance and best practice. An educational safeguarding conference for schools took place on 13 November 2019 which involved exploitation coordinators from the council and other local groups, including West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre (WMRASC). WMRASC described its work in schools including: the SELFIE project, offering workshops to schools around sexual violence support and prevention; and the Branch project which works on a one-to-one basis with young people at risk of or the victim of child sexual exploitation. The council played a role with schools to highlight the options for training and development.

The group was interested in the work undertaken by the Children's Society and learned of national programmes including the tackling exploitation programme and the prevention programme. The Children's Society has a prevention officer who works across the West Midlands to raise awareness in different local agencies and share good practice around policies and processes.

The work of the exploitation and vulnerability coordinators, as funded by the Office of the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) was presented to the group. The coordinators had initially been funded up to 2021 and were involved in raising the awareness

of vulnerability and exploitation and working with local agencies to understand the provisions in place. Over 150 volunteers had received the training and the intention was to roll-out the training to door staff, retail security and a number of businesses in Hereford city centre to encourage the reporting of actionable intelligence to the police.

The presentation by the trainers from the OPCC at the witness session was highly regarded and it was felt that the training session provided by the exploitation and vulnerability coordinators would provide a valuable tool to schools or groups of schools to improve understanding of Child Exploitation and assist in the identification of the signs of exploitation. It was agreed that the training should be actively promoted to schools and also to members of the Council.

The group queried the level of work that had been undertaken with parish and town councils and the Herefordshire Association of Location Councils (HALC) to disseminate information about the identification of Child Exploitation and methods of reporting. Parish and town councils were gaining in importance through undertaking greater delivery of local services, and many could be in position to circulate information locally and be the 'eyes and ears' of the community. It was confirmed to the group that work with parish councils was planned, and, as a trial, a member of the exploitation team would attend a parish council meeting to provide a presentation. The group felt that town and parish councils should be provided with a briefing or update on Child exploitation and county lines; in particular at a forthcoming parish summit.

4.6 Signposting and reporting tools

The group learned of the Tell Someone website, an initiative undertaken between West Mercia Police, West Mercia Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the children safeguarding boards of Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and Worcestershire. The website was considered an effective tool to allow families, young people, professionals and the public to report concerns regarding the sexual exploitation of children. A Tell Someone app was in development to utilise the branding of the website and which young people or anyone with concerns could download to their phones. It was explained to the group that this initiative was at an early stage and further investment was required. The group was very supportive of the proposal as a method to signpost people and offer a user friendly and easy-to-use reporting tool.

It was essential that the council ensured that signposting of information about Child Exploitation is clear and reporting methods are easy for children and adults to use. It was recommended that the executive undertake a review of the signposting currently in place to identify easily implemented improvements across agencies and work with the organisations involved in the development of the new Tell Someone app to expedite its introduction.

4.7 Annual Child Exploitation Summit

The group felt that the witness session had been a helpful approach to understand the range of organisations and programmes involved in efforts to address Child Exploitation. The task and finish forum was a valuable forum for agencies and organisations to coordinate and network, and it was felt that the council should facilitate similar sessions, or an annual Child Exploitation summit, through the scrutiny committee. This would also be an opportunity for agencies and organisations to present how they were implementing the Home Office's exploitation disruption toolkit.

4.8 Transition to adulthood for vulnerable young people

The group was concerned about the safeguarding of young people transitioning to adulthood. It understood that the responsibilities of the council to provide services for looked after children and care leavers existed up to the age of 25. There was concern that vulnerable young people leaving child protection services at 18, such as those subject to a child in need plans, would no longer receive support through the council but may continue to be vulnerable to exploitation. Exploitation of vulnerable individuals does not stop at the age of 18.

It was reported to the group that work on adult exploitation was being undertaken at the council as an adult social care issue. The group felt that a clear pathway for vulnerable children (not in care) during transition to adulthood was necessary to involve a range of officers from both children's and adults' services. It was important that young people who were being exploited or who were vulnerable to exploitation still had access to support after the age of 18.

4.9 Licensing

As outlined under section 4.5 above, the group learned of the work being undertaken by the exploitation and vulnerability coordinators from the office of the police and crime commissioner (OPCC) to raise the awareness of door staff, retail security and other businesses in Herefordshire. It considered the recent changes to licensing arrangements for taxis which now included a requirement for taxi drivers to receive safeguarding training when applying for a license. The group felt that the provision of mandatory safeguarding training for other licenses such as premises licenses should be investigated by the executive.

4.10 Children not in school

The group learned of the important work of schools to identify and report safeguarding concerns and the council's work coordinating safeguarding training for teachers. There was concern that young people not engaged in school were at greater risk of exploitation as it provided perpetrators with a greater opportunity to exploit individuals and signs of exploitation would not be identified by teachers.

The group learned that the exploitation team at the council were doing some direct work with young people not engaged in school but that due to the resource required it was difficult to work with all children not in education that were considered at risk of exploitation. There was a proposal for the home education officer to access the contextual safeguarding training to ensure that: the signs of exploitation were recognised; detail could be provided to parents and families; and referrals to local agencies could be made. The group felt that work should be undertaken to determine the risk of exploitation to children not in school and whether additional resources should be dedicated to work with them.

The group also raised concerns about the risk of exploitation to children who were the subject of a fixed term exclusion from school. It was queried what risk assessment took place prior to the application of a fixed term exclusion. Confirmation was provided to the group that a proposal for all schools to complete a child at risk of exploitation form, to assess the risk to the child of Child Exploitation prior to an exclusion was being discussed at Head Teacher meetings, and secondary schools had agreed in principle to complete the form. The group felt that the introduction of this risk assessment should be expedited and recommended that the executive works with schools to ensure it was introduced universally across schools in the county.

5 Summary of Recommendations

From our findings, the task and finish group would like to make the following **10 recommendations** to the executive and ask that they are given appropriate consideration:

5.1 Publicising efforts to address Child Exploitation

That the executive:

- **undertakes an exercise to highlight to the local community the work that has been undertaken over the past year to coordinate local partners addressing Child Exploitation; and**
- **undertakes publicity to raise awareness of Child Exploitation issues locally and promote the reporting of issues and concerns to assist disruption and prevention work.**

5.2 The exploitation risk assessment tool and safeguarding thresholds of need

That the executive:

- **expedite the inclusion of level 3 cases in the exploitation risk assessment tool to ensure a more detailed assessment of those children and young people at risk; and**
- **investigate the potential of including those children presenting at the level 2 threshold of need in the exploitation risk assessment tool.**

5.3 Data sharing

That the executive works with partner agencies, in particular the Police and organisations in the CSP, to examine the impediments to the sharing of data and propose solutions where issues exist.

5.4 Mapping of current services and organisations

That the executive facilitates a mapping exercise of all current Child Exploitation services provided by local organisations and agencies and publicises the finalised map to all organisations, agencies and the public.

5.5 Promotion of training and raising awareness

That the executive:

- **Considers the promotion of the training from the exploitation and vulnerability coordinators to schools or groups of schools;**

- Investigates the provision of the training from the exploitation and vulnerability coordinators to all members of the Council; and
- Arranges the hosting of a parish summit on Child Exploitation to raise awareness throughout the local community and inform parish and town councils how to contribute to disruption and prevention work.

5.6 Signposting and reporting tools

That the executive:

- Undertakes a review of the signposting of information concerning Child Exploitation to identify improvements that could be easily accomplished across agencies; and
- Works with organisations involved in the development of the new reporting Tell Someone app to expedite its introduction.

5.7 Annual Child Exploitation summit

That the children and young people scrutiny committee considers the scheduling of an annual Child Exploitation summit as part of its work programming.

5.8 Transition to adulthood for vulnerable young people

That the executive develops a clear pathway for young people (not in care), vulnerable to exploitation, during transition to adulthood to ensure that services and access to support continues over the age of 18.

5.9 Licensing and safeguarding training

That the executive considers what other licenses granted by the council could include a requirement for mandatory safeguarding training.

5.10 Children not in school

That the executive:

- undertakes a review of the risk of exploitation to children not in school and determines whether additional resource should be dedicated to the home education team to assist in the identification of safeguarding concerns relating to children not attending school; and
- works with schools to ensure that a Child Exploitation risk assessment is conducted on individual pupils ahead of the application of fixed term exclusions.

Title of review	Child Exploitation Task and Finish Group
Scope	
Reason for review	<p>The work programme of the children and young people scrutiny committee has identified the issue of Child Exploitation as a topic to be undertaken by a task and finish group. The review into Child Exploitation will cover the issues of child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE).</p> <p>This topic has been identified by the scrutiny committee as a priority over concerns regarding county lines activity, as a form of child criminal exploitation, in the West Midlands. Furthermore it is felt to be a critical element of the work of the committee to scrutinise data relating to child sexual exploitation and examine initiatives/projects to address its incidence in Herefordshire.</p>
Links to the corporate plan	<p>The review contributes to the following objectives contained in the Herefordshire corporate plan and other key plans and strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep children and young people safe and give them a great start in life; and • Secure better services, quality of life and value for money.
Summary of the review and terms of reference	<p>Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To receive relevant data on the incidence of Child Exploitation in Herefordshire. • To learn from relevant agencies what projects and initiatives have been established to address Child Exploitation. • To assess partnership and joint working between agencies to address Child Exploitation. • To consider the introduction of the Child Exploitation disruption toolkit and examine its effectiveness. <p>The review will ensure that a focus is retained on the experience of children and young people to understand how work undertaken by stakeholders is focused on safeguarding and supporting them.</p>
	<p>Terms of Reference:</p> <p>The task and finish group will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an understanding of the range of child criminal exploitation and the latest data and statistics in Herefordshire and comparable data from other areas. (Meeting One) • Develop an understanding of the different forms of child sexual exploitation and the latest data and statistics in Herefordshire. (Meeting One)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about legislative responsibilities and statutory guidance around Child Exploitation including the child exploitation disruption toolkit (Meeting One) • Learn about the current CSE projects and initiatives at relevant local agencies in Herefordshire to combat Child Exploitation and receive performance measures detailing their effectiveness. (Meeting Two) • Learn about the current CCE projects and initiatives at relevant local agencies in Herefordshire to combat Child Exploitation and receive performance measures detailing their effectiveness. (Meeting Two) • Develop an understanding of the joint working between local agencies in Herefordshire and assess the effectiveness of partnership working. (Meeting Two) • To consider how the latest guidance from central government, <i>the child exploitation disruption toolkit</i>, is being applied by local agencies and assess its effectiveness. (Meeting Two) • To consider and agree recommendations to the children and young people scrutiny committee. (Meeting Three) <p>Membership (to be determined):</p> <p>Consideration could be given to the co-option of a representative of a children's charity e.g. Children's Society/NSPCC/Barnardos. Such a co-optee would provide specialist knowledge and expertise to the Group's consideration of Child Exploitation.</p> <p>Councillor Diana Toynbee (chairperson) Councillor Paul Andrews Councillor Peter Jinman Councillor Mike Jones Councillor David Summers Vacancy – member from the general scrutiny committee</p> <p>Two co-optees from voluntary/charitable organisations will be invited to join the task and finish group.</p>
What will NOT be included	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The examination of any individual cases concerning Child Exploitation. However anonymised case studies might assist the Group in completing the review.
Potential outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An understanding of the current statistics and data in respect of Child Exploitation; • Assurance that partnership working between local agencies is effective and there are no gaps in the provision of services; • Assurance that appropriate projects and initiatives are in place at local agencies to address Child Exploitation and they are effective; and • Assurance that the latest guidance from Government is being applied and is effective in combatting Child Exploitation.
Key Questions	<p>To consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Child Sexual Exploitation and what is the latest data of incidence in Herefordshire;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Child Criminal Exploitation and what is the latest data of incidence in Herefordshire; • Which local organisations and agencies have a role to play in combatting Child Exploitation and how do they work in partnership; • What projects/initiatives are currently in progress at local agencies focused on combatting Child Exploitation; • What preventative work is being undertaken to combat Child Exploitation; • How are agencies working with other local areas to understand patterns/trends and work on preventative measures; • How are local agencies seeking to implement the latest government guidance; and • Is the government's latest guidance an effective tool to combat Child Exploitation?
Cabinet Member(s)	<p>Cabinet member children and families</p> <p>Cabinet member housing, regulatory services and community safety</p>
Key stakeholders / Consultees	<p>Internal – Children's safeguarding</p> <p>– The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)</p> <p>External – West Mercia Police</p> <p>– Youth Offending Service</p> <p>– Community Safety Partnership</p> <p>– Local Safeguarding Children's Board (or its successor)</p> <p>– Children's Charities (E.g. Children's Society/NSPCC/Barnardos)</p>
Potential witnesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives from children's safeguarding, Herefordshire Council, to include the MASH. • West Mercia Police • The Youth Offending Service • Safeguarding Partners Board • Children's Charities (children's charities will be asked to present the voice of the child to the task and finish group) • Community safety partnership
Research Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trends and statistics relating to Child Exploitation in Herefordshire; • Responsibilities of local agencies in respect of Child Exploitation; • Latest reports concerning Child Exploitation e.g. <u>Counting Lives</u> – Children's Society Report – July 2019; and • Latest guidance from government including the Child Exploitation Disruption Toolkit.
Potential Visits	A site visit to the MASH would be a useful exercise for the Group.
Publicity Requirements	Following the conclusion of the task Report back to the children and young people scrutiny committee.

Outline Timetable (to be determined): (following decision by the children and young people scrutiny committee to commission the Review)	
<i>Activity</i>	<i>Timescale</i>
Confirm approach, Terms of Reference, programme of consultation/research/provisional witnesses/meeting dates	Committee meeting – 16 September 2019
Meeting One	8 November 2019
Meeting Two	2 December 2019
Meeting Three	6 December 2019
Present final report to Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee	January 2019

Group Members	
Chair	Cllr Diana Toynbee
Support Members	Cllr Paul Andrews Cllr Jennie Hewitt Cllr Peter Jinman Cllr Mike Jones Cllr David Summers
Co-optees	Representatives of The Children's Society Prevention Programme – please see appendix
Support Officers	J Coleman M Evans

