

# Contextual Safeguarding

Our interim response to identification, intervention and management of complex risk to children and young people in Barnsley

October 2023-March  
2024



Barnsley – the place  
of possibilities.



**BARNSLEY**  
Metropolitan Borough Council



## Contents

<b>1</b>	Introduction	
<b>2</b>	Context	
<b>3</b>	Our Commitment – Multi Agency Collaboration	
<b>4</b>	Practice Principles – Joining the Dots	
<b>5</b>	Identification, assessment and analysis of risk	
<b>6</b>	Our Graduated response	
<b>7</b>	Prevention and early intervention	
<b>8</b>	Managing complex risk and exploitation	
<b>9</b>	Engagement with Young People and Families	
<b>10</b>	Learning and Development	
<b>11</b>	Information intelligence and analysis	
<b>12</b>	Effective investigations and outcomes	
<b>13</b>	Communication	
<b>14</b>	Governance	
	Appendix	

## Introduction

This interim response to Contextual Safeguarding for Barnsley sets out the vision and priorities where we, our partners and communities will continue to work together to deliver the best outcomes for all children and young people within the borough, who may be at heightened risk of, or may already be subject to exploitation and harm from outside their families. This document outlines the response to children who are most vulnerable to these risks currently and provides the foundation of how we will strengthen the system wide response within the context of safeguarding and early help.

It is important that we work together and pool our resources to make sure children and families in our communities get the right support, at the right time, in the right place as early as possible.

Whilst we continue to identify children who are exposed to risks and support them and their families to recognise early signs and risks, we recognise that there are a number of children who are already being exploited (both sexually and criminally), who may be exposed to or be exhibiting harmful sexual behaviour and who are exposed to risks of serious violence and exploitation outside of the safety of their own homes due to them going missing from home or care.

The society that children and young people live within today is vastly different to the one that most adults working with children were exposed to, with extra-familial risk and harm now entering the heart of our families through technological advances and stealth. This means that gaming, smartphones and applications, social media and the internet all pose risks within the home. It is vital that the response we make to safeguarding children is fit for purpose and takes into account the shifting environment in which children and young people in Barnsley may be exposed to harm. This includes the ever-present pressure of poverty, along with the current cost of living crisis which is exposing an increasing number of children to exploitation and contextual harm due to the ability of criminals and abusers to identify and maximise motivators and fill the gap in some families' capacity to meet basic needs.

It is important that Barnsley's Contextual Safeguarding response is flexible to the changing context in which our children are exposed to risk and harm and development of specialist knowledge and skills will be paramount to support the wider workforce in confidently identifying and intervening at the earliest opportunity to support children and families. This cannot be achieved by a single team or agency and will be reliant on a whole system approach to provide a team around the child and family.

Barnsley's Contextual Safeguarding approach has been developed with support through sector-led improvement, based on what has been proven to work well in other areas and of what the evidence-base tells us will support harm reduction and an increase in resilience. We are committed to being brave and creative and to doing things differently, as those who seek to exploit or harm our children are constantly adapting and will continue to do so. We are therefore committed to a further phase of development in 2024.

We look forward to working with you to make sure that the most vulnerable children and families in Barnsley receive the help they need as soon as they need it and guarantee that everyone can reach their full potential.



Carly Speechley,  
Executive Director for Children's Services



Cllr Trevor Cave,  
Cabinet Spokesperson for Children's Services

## 1. Context

As children grow, they invariably become involved in social networks, relationships and environments outside of their family network. The majority of children do this in a safe and fulfilling way. However, all children can encounter individuals who seek to exploit their vulnerability or environments that expose them to risk of harm. This harm can take many different forms, with children often exposed and subject to multiple harm-types.

Abusers often use alcohol, drugs, actual or threatened violence, kindness (including provision of gifts and meeting basic needs) and affection to develop a connection with a child they intend to exploit. The manipulation at the core of exploitation is often a result of an imbalance of power, and children often do not recognise the fact that they are being exploited. Involvement in exploitative relationships is characterised by the child or young person's limited availability of choice (as a result of social/economic/emotional vulnerability).

These environments and relationships can often serve to undermine and disempower parents and carers in the lives of children. The child or young person does not recognise the coercive nature of the relationship – they do not see themselves as a victim of exploitation and this contributes to making such harm hidden from parents, carers and services.

Central to our Contextual Safeguarding response is the commitment that **safeguarding is everyone's responsibility**. Furthermore, it is vital that we have a clear understanding of how issues of exploitation, abuse and serious violence manifest in Barnsley, recognising the influence of culture, environment and community and that we tailor our response based on this, rather than adopting a model from another region that does not *fit*. This commitment demands creativity and the shared commitment of partners to working together to safeguard our children.

### What is Contextual Safeguarding?

Contextual safeguarding is an approach to child protection that recognises that young people are influenced and affected by a wide range of environments and contexts beyond just their immediate family. Traditional child protection strategies often focus on the home environment, but contextual safeguarding broadens the scope to consider *harm outside the home*, in settings such as schools and neighbourhoods and within peer groups, and online spaces.

Our goal for children is to identify and address potential risks and harms that may arise from these broader contexts. This approach acknowledges that young people can be exposed to dangers outside the home, and these dangers can include things like exploitation, peer violence, online abuse, and more.

We also acknowledge the links between harm outside the home through serious youth violence and that for children who are involved with exploitation, the complex nature of risk that exists in their lives is such that harm types often entwine as they, and others, seek to exert power and control. Similarly, harmful sexual behaviour occurs in many different forms, though the drivers to it are themselves often very similar to other complex risk areas. As a result, these and other, less prevalent contextual risk areas are addressed in our strategy. The relevant harm types are:

- Child criminal exploitation
- Child sexual exploitation
- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Missing (MISPER)
- Serious Youth Violence
- Modern slavery, radicalisation and FGM

### Our Commitments

- To deliver responses which are grounded in **Child First, trauma informed approaches**, building consistent and trusting **relationships** with children to improve our responsiveness to them and treating them as children.
- All children in Barnsley who are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse are **effectively identified and protected** by their family, school, community and other key services.
- That an effective response is delivered in a **co-ordinated, informed and timely** way that consistently responds to risk and improves outcomes for children, families and the community, taking into account their lived experience.
- That we will work in partnership to identify perpetrators and utilise all police and partner powers to **disrupt exploitation** and secure appropriate responses against those who seek to exploit children, in line with the 4 P's - **Prevent Pursue Protect Prepare**.
- Recognise that children are still vulnerable beyond the age of 18 years and ensure that they have opportunities to shape and influence services.

Our approach to Contextual Safeguarding is aligned to our Children's Early Help Strategy 2022-27, and mirrors the graduated response outlined in terms of early help. Therefore, our response to contextual safeguarding is integral in our early help systems and processes, our thresholds of risk and intervention and associated escalation processes.

Our success is dependent on all communities and partners working in collaboration to make the borough the best place that it can be in respect of early identification of risks, intervention and prevention through effective multi agency support and rigorous risk management for children and young people who are suffering or are at high risk of suffering harm as a result of contextual safeguarding risks.

It is an approach that is about making sure that through early identification, we can provide the **right support in the right place at the right time**. It's about ensuring that children, young people, adults, families and communities are aware of the signs and risks and are able to identify when they need support and access appropriate services to meet their needs. If we are to identify children at the earliest possible point when they are exposed to risk outside their family, then we also need to build a strong culture of **professional curiosity**, across a broad range of stakeholders to ensure that we are proactively picking up on risk factors and the changing indicators of exploitation.

### 3) Our commitment – Multi Agency Collaborative B-SAFE team

Barnsley benefits from successful and longstanding multi-agency working across the diverse and rich partnership in the town. The Barnsley Trust Executive Group (TEG) is committed to providing the support that children, young people and their families need, as soon as they need it, when and where they need it and by the people who are best placed to help. We are reconfiguring our services in response to this group of vulnerable children and young people through the formation of a 'hub' for vulnerable children.

We will deliver this through developing a dedicated multi agency team (B-SAFE) which we will co-locate within Children's Services. The team will include **Youth Justice, Children's Social Care, Early Help, Police, Education, Health and Psychology** to offer a broad range of evidence-based services across the continuum of need). Crucially, South Yorkshire Police have made a commitment to co-locating the Child Exploitation team (formed in August 2023) to create a fully functioning B-SAFE delivery model that can operate to deliver effectively across the **4 P's**.

The B-SAFE team structure is outlined in appendix C.

This core team would be supported by a wider team of partners who are managed by substantive services but work closely with the B-SAFE team and (dependent on role) spend time co-located. Each service will offer focused support, guidance, and intervention for child/family specific need:

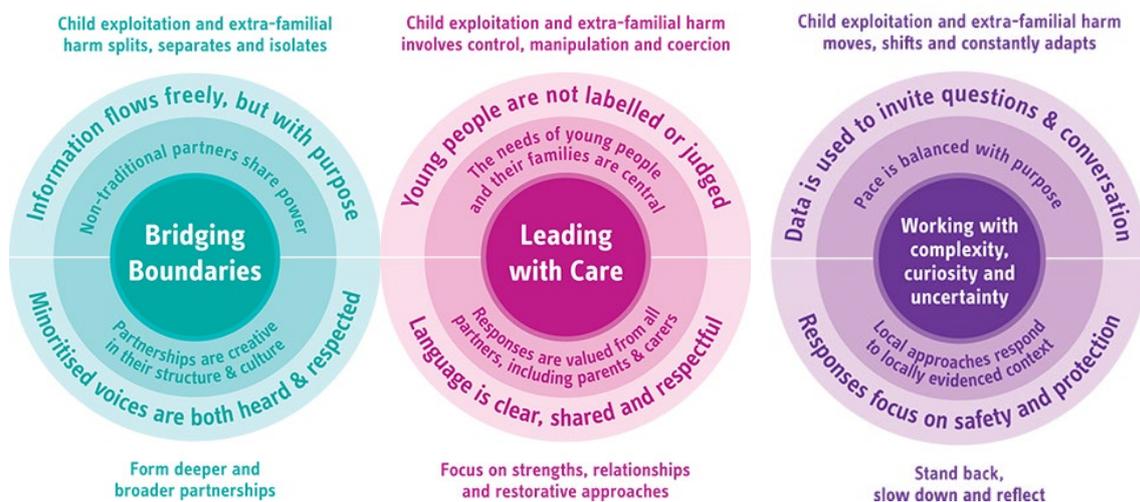
- 0-19 health
- FCAMHs
- Substance misuse

- Missing Return home interview (RHI) service
- Education
- Targeted Youth Support and voluntary sector services

This partnership response to Contextual Safeguarding risks is a collaboration between Children’s and Young People’s trust partners and the wide range of organisations who work with children and families. Services which intervene to support children already exposed to complex risk and exploitation and those who are vulnerable to future risk should be seen as a flexible continuum of support ranging from universal services through to statutory or specialist provision, all of which are focussed on improving the lives of children young people and families.

#### 4) The evidence base underpinning our response: Joining the Dots and Practice Principles

Research In Practice, The University of Bedford and The Children’s Society have developed a structured framework of evidence-based practice principles that we have adopted in Barnsley as part of our commitment to ensuring practice is underpinned by what works for this specific cohort and, at a strategic level, aligned to the *Joining the Dots (JtD) framework*.<sup>1</sup>



This framework provides the structure for our partnership response, ensuring that all stakeholders fully accept shared ownership of the duty to protect children from harm. We will be able to hold each other to account, and where elements of the system are proving to be less effective, it is expected that the *Joining the Dots* framework will provide the focus to support improvement.

This will be achieved by embedding into our response a series of *Practice Principles*, designed to support effective partnership working across different local contexts; providing a common language and framework to better respond to child exploitation and extra-familial harm.

In Barnsley, this provides a coherent model from which to direct our improvement and development activity, ensuring that our overall response to complex risk and harm outside the home aligns at a strategic and operational level:

<sup>1</sup> <https://tce.researchinpractice.org.uk/joining-the-dots/>



The work to embed these *practice principles* across every aspect of the delivery is ongoing and is in essence part of our commitment to continuous improvement. The table below provides an overview of progress made to date and associated impact:

Practice Principle	Rationale	Progress made	Impact
<b>Putting children and young people first</b>	Putting children and young people first is at the heart of a child-centred approach. It means 'keeping the child or young person in focus when making decisions about their lives and working in partnership with them and their families.' In practice this requires us to see beyond the presenting behaviours being displayed to the child or young person behind this.	<p>Our revised Integrated Front Door offer ensures children are accurately screened, using consistent screening tools.</p> <p>The development of the dedicated B-SAFE team is a clear commitment to this principle.</p> <p>By being placed as part of the wider Youth Justice structure, and with youth justice resource in the B-SAFE team, the ethos of 'Child First' (YJB) is at the</p>	Effective screening directs children to the most appropriate service, ensuring children are more likely to receive the service they require, and risks are managed more effectively.

		centre of the operational response.	
<b>Recognise and challenge inequalities, exclusion and discrimination</b>	Inequality and marginalisation can be both a driver for, and a consequence of, exploitation and extra-familial harm, and professional efforts can inadvertently reinforce inequity. An effective response therefore attends to both the interpersonal discrimination <i>and</i> inequalities facing children and young people, parents and carers, communities and many of the professionals supporting them.	Children's services is in the process of developing a diversity strategy that will align to wider corporate principles.  The B-SAFE team will have diversity and inclusion oversight under our existing Youth Justice Service (YJS) strategy.	The inequalities that are increasing risk and/or acting as a barrier to positive change will be more consistently identified and addressed.  Staff will be developed in their own understanding of diversity, discrimination and exclusion.
<b>Respect the voices, experiences and expertise of children and young people</b>	All children and young people have the right to have a say about matters that affect them and be heard in decisions made about them. Listening to, hearing and responding to what children and young people are communicating (remembering that communication does not have to be verbal) helps to build trusting relationships and helps professionals to better engage children and young people. This in turn can increase their safety; participation is a core part of protection.	All our screening and assessment activity is underpinned by the commitment to seeking and documenting the voice of the child and their family/care network.  All planning processes will ensure this voice is heard and there is a commitment to co-producing and sharing all plans.	Children (and families) are true partners in their own plans-this ensures increased engagement and impact.  The B-SAFE model is relational in approach and the success of this approach is driven by the work completed to give children a voice in direct engagement sessions.
<b>Recognise and respond to trauma</b>	An effective response to child exploitation and extra-familial harm requires a collective understanding of how trauma impacts on development and behaviour, and how individuals perceive and respond to threats and support. This means recognising the wide-ranging impacts of trauma and attending to non-verbal means of communicating an experience of trauma.	Our B-SAFE cohort of children has access to the YJS CAMHs team for direct intervention and/or signposting.  Professionals will gain clinical oversight from forensic CAMHS for relevant children.  Work is ongoing to commit the resource for a clinical psychologist to provide the B-SAFE model with capability for case formulation and clinical supervision; and to provide clinical intervention to the most complex children	Children who are being supported in respect of trauma and/or emotional well-being are able to begin to address the drivers to behaviours that may have contributed to risk and harm.  Increased professional understanding of trauma has led to improved quality of assessment, planning and direct engagement of children and families

<p><b>Be strengths-based and relationship-based</b></p>	<p>Being strengths-based and relationship-based means seeing a child or young person holistically and identifying their strengths and assets and the positive factors in their lives, rather than just seeing them as at risk, being harmed or causing harm to others.</p> <p>Working in this way, particularly in the context of child exploitation and extra-familial harm, requires professionals to exercise power with care, recognising that children, young people, parents, carers and wider family networks may feel worried, upset or angry with professionals.</p>	<p>We are committed to a <i>Child First</i> approach which recognises the importance of identifying strengths to build on as a method of reducing risk.</p> <p>Our commitment to a <i>relational approach</i> is evidenced in our delivery model-our CS social workers have protected caseloads and are co-allocated LAC children so to maximise the time they can spend gaining trust and providing evidence-based interventions that will reduce risk.</p> <p>Our <i>Hub</i> space will ensure children and their parents/carers are able to access a holistic environment for direct sessions.</p> <p>Our health partners can provide further advocacy and direct intervention that will build trust and increase resilience.</p>	<p>Supporting staff with managed caseloads enables them to build key relationships as the foundation for sound plans and evidence-based interventions that reduce risks.</p> <p>Our <i>Hub</i> delivery space significantly enhances the ability of professionals to positively engage with children and families in structured and semi-structured sessions, leveraging in a variety of tools i.e. cooking, games, well-being resources, to support rapport building.</p> <p>Children now have the <i>Hub</i> as ‘their’ safe space for use when they need it.</p>
<p><b>Be curious, evidence-informed and knowledgeable</b></p>	<p>This work requires curiosity, critical thinking and analysis skills, a commitment to reflection and learning, and the thoughtful use of evidence at all levels of the system.</p> <p>This approach means using data or research to ask questions, rather than expecting definitive answers.</p> <p>It means learning from children, young people, their parents / carers and other sources of knowledge and insight within their wider communities and paying attention to the potential for unintended consequences as a result of professional intervention(s).</p>	<p>We have strengthened our Integrated Front Door (IFD) and all enquiries and referrals are triaged upon receipt, enabling an integrated response to ensure that children and their families receive the appropriate interventions at the earliest opportunity, and that our partners are provided with quality advice, support, and consultation at the first point of contact.</p> <p>The IFD consists of co-located staff from children’s social care, early help, probation, education, health, and the police. supporting a conversational approach to ensure that</p>	<p>Contextual risks relating to children are now being more effectively screened and a timely and appropriate response.</p> <p>The screening tool demands referrers to fully consider information, intelligence and disclosure, and not make assumptions and judgements. This supports their professional development, ensures their curiosity is ‘tested out’ and reduces the pressure on the IFD.</p> <p>Staff are now using CBT and DBT approaches to increase self-awareness of well-being and impact of behaviours within families, thus</p>

screening of contacts is a collaborative process.

The introduction of the CE screening tool for completion with all cases has further formalised the process, thus ensuring referring professionals reflect on their position using a single, consistent tool, enhancing the effectiveness of initial screening

Investment in CBT and DBT practice and intervention techniques has been made. Phase one of training and practice support is currently taking place, with phase two scheduled for Autumn 2023, post launch of the team.

Recruitment of highly experienced and skilled 'risk professionals' at advanced practitioner and manager levels has further ensured the B-SAFE team is equipped with evidence-based specialism in the key areas of complex risk and serious youth violence; criminal and sexual exploitation and harmful sexual behaviour. This will also support the B-SAFE team to provide advice and guidance to the wider partnership on the effective management of less complex cases

supporting an increase in their resilience.

The local authority has invested in the recruitment of highly skilled specialists across contextual risk areas and this ensures a key capability to directly intervene to reduce risk using *evidence-based approaches* and provide training and guidance to the wider workforce, reducing the reliance on 3<sup>rd</sup> parties for 'expert' support.

**Approach  
parents and  
carers as  
partners  
wherever  
possible**

Recognising the expertise of parents and carers offers valuable potential gains for safeguarding partnerships, enhancing agencies' abilities to support and protect individual children, young people and whole communities.

They can hold invaluable information about their child and the contexts of their lives;

We are committed to placing parents and carers at the centre of our planning and intervention processes.

Our commitment to a 'whole family approach' is further supported by placing *Early Help* resource into the B-SAFE model. This will ensure a flexible delivery model in which children and parents/carers can both be

Parents themselves feel valued as partners and are more empowered to support their children and lead in the management of risks posed.

Parents are committed to addressing their own issues as part of the wider understanding and acceptance of what is driving risk

	about exploiters, unsafe places and community strengths and challenges.	directly supported in an aligned response	
<b>Create safe spaces and places for children and young people</b>	<p>To effectively tackle child exploitation and extra familial-harm, safeguarding partnerships and wider professionals need to pay attention to the context of children and young people's lives – the spaces and places they spend their time, the potential for harms that can exist there and the actions that can be taken to mediate and address these.</p> <p>This Principle also emphasises the importance of a holistic understanding of safety, i.e. the need to think beyond the physical safety of the child to also support and strengthen their relational and psychological sense of safety.</p>	<p>Our newly opened (August 2023) Hub in the town centre provides a uniquely bespoke and holistic resource for children and families.</p> <p>There is a wider network of family centres and IKIC centres across borough that provide further safe space.</p> <p>We have made links to youth voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations in the town centre and engage in signposting.</p>	<p>As outlined, the Hub provides children with a key place of safety in the town centre that is 'their space'.</p> <p>Linking in with VCS ensures a wider network of collaboration to support children in the community and increase their safety.</p>

## 5) Identification, Assessment and Analysis of risk

With the broad scope of complex risk managed by the model, it is vital there is a clear pathway for children from point of identification of referral risk/behaviour through the **screening-assessment-planning-intervention-review** cycle.

### Referral and allocation routes

The partnership model approach means that cases can be referred into the B-SAFE team via multiple routes and allocated based on case specific factors. These are determined by:

- The types(s) of harm the child is subject to/at risk of and the need to match this to professional expertise/experience *i.e. a high risk HSB perpetrator will most likely be allocated to the HSB advanced practitioner; a child subject to significant CSE harm to a social worker*
- Which, if any agency is currently involved with the child and family, if this is statutory or voluntary and at what 'level' the intervention *i.e. court order, Child in Need*
- Immanency of risk
- If the child has been referred into via the IFD.

### NB:

- The management of referrals will be led by the management team encompassing:

**Youth Justice Operational Manager-Contextual safeguarding social care team manager-Early help family support manager-Advanced practitioners.**

- Whilst the supporting operational guidance documents outline clear referral processes and suitability criteria, **The B-SAFE management team** will have final decision on:
  - Acceptance of children into the model
  - agreement made on which professional should be allocated the case and if this is FULL or JOINT allocation.

The below table provides a broad outline of referral and allocation routes. However, it is anticipated that most children will be referred in via screening by the IFD. Please refer to appendix A for referral pathways.

In addition, the lead practitioner *must* complete an initial version of the appropriate screening tool for ALL children who are being referred in for consideration.:

Integrated Front Door (IFD)	Existing Social Care escalation	Out of Area child	Youth justice
<p>All external referrals follow initial screening process</p> <p>Specialist screening tools used depending on referral behaviour risk-type</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Exploitation:</b> CE screening tool</li> <li>• <b>HSB:</b> Brook Traffic light tool/Hackett Continuum tool</li> </ul>	<p>Senior manager (DCS, service director) requests allocation to B-SAFE after escalation process</p> <p>Child open to CSC has emerging relevant risks and that require specialist intervention</p>	<p>Any child open to social care or youth justice placed in area from other Local Authority</p> <p>case managed in B-SAFE via co-allocation</p>	<p>Youth justice (court; OOC Planning process)</p> <p>Children subject to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• YRO ISS</li> <li>• DTO/Section 250 and violent/sexual/OCG linked offence</li> <li>• Assessed as high/VH ROSH/SWB linked to CE/SHB</li> <li>• Perpetrator of SHB</li> <li>• Transition to probation case (17y 3m at point of Order and order open past 18th birthday)</li> </ul>

## 6) Evidence based intervention at various levels of support – Our graduated response

The effective management of complex risk and exploitation is reliant of a graduated response approach. This ensures all stakeholders own the duty to protect children from harm and directs appropriate resource to meet need.

A graduated approach ensures services are primed in intervene to address exploitation and wider complex risk can be addressed before risks become acute and divert children from harm. As such, the graduated model provides operational structure to *working with complexity, curiosity and uncertainty* as it demands the partnership across universal and targeted services to have the knowledge and skill to intervene effectively.

### Spectrum of Need



- 1 **Thriving:** *those who may need support to maintain high levels of wellbeing through effective prevention and promotion strategies.* Around 80% of children at any one time are experiencing the normal ups and downs of life but do not need individualised advice or support. They are considered to be in the Thriving group. They may however benefit from prevention and promotion activities and strategies.
- 2 **Getting Advice:** *those who need advice and signposting.* Within this group are children, young people and families adjusting to life circumstances with mild or temporary difficulties. The best intervention is within the community with the possible addition of self-support.
- 3 **Getting Help:** *those who need focused goals-based input.* Within this group are children, young people and families who would benefit from focused, evidence-based help and support, with clear aims and criteria for assessing whether these aims have been achieved.
- 4 **Getting More Help:** *those who need more extensive, specialised goals-based input.* Within this group are children, young people and families who would benefit from extensive intervention. This group might include children with a range of overlapping needs which means they may require greater input.
- 5 **Getting Risk Support:** *those who have not benefitted from or are unable to use help but are of such risk that they are still in contact with services.* Within this group are children, young people and families who are currently unable to benefit from early help support but remain a significant concern and risk. This group might include children and young people who routinely go into crisis but are not able to make use of help offered, or where help offered has not been able to make a difference.

When complex risk is present and it is acute, children will sit under the highest tier of *getting risk support* and be in scope to be engaged by the B-SAFE offer (subject to screening process outlined above). Work will focus on reducing risk so children and families can be ultimately transitioned down towards *Thriving*.

### Commitment to evidence-based practice and common values

When acute, complex risk is difficult to manage. It can manifest in episodes of going missing, disengagement from education, distrust of (or hostility towards) professionals, poor mental health (including the impacts of trauma) and emotional wellbeing, the breakdown of family relationships, adolescent-to-parent violence, peer violence (including the infliction of serious injuries) and unsafe educational environments, as well as fractured and traumatised communities.<sup>12</sup>

Making an impact under these complex circumstances requires a delivery model underpinned by a combination of *patient, dedicated and skilled staff* who can establish and maintain *trust and rapport*; with a supporting *evidence-based toolkit of interventions and strategies proven to make an impact* in reducing risk and increasing resilience. This model, supported by the commitment to a managed caseload ensures the B-SAFE are equipped to achieve consistent outcomes. This will be achieved by:

<sup>2</sup> (Barter, 2009; Cockbain and Brayley, 2012; Firmin, 2017b; Hickle and Roe-Sepowitz, 2018; Hanson and Holmes, 2014; National Crime Agency, 2017) cited in Research in Practice: Safeguarding and exploitation - complex, contextual and holistic approaches.

- A coherent, *evidence-based delivery approach* that ensures defensible practice proven to lead to positive outcomes for children and families
- The ongoing development of professionals through ongoing training, skills-development and support through *clinical-style supervision and support*
- Adherence to the over-arching contextual safeguarding framework for the local authority and all stakeholders: *Joining the Dots*

A dedicated and skilled management team with experience of managing acute risk in both adult and children's systems, obtained from criminal justice, social care and 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations ensures that:

- A culture of creativity, challenge and high practice is achieved through peer support and challenge within the management team.
- The B-SAFE team is managed maintain efficacy in terms of the commitment to a shared belief in the model.
- The B-SAFE model is equipped to provide the wider system with specialist advice and guidance as part of the wider strategy of ensuring all professionals are able to intervene to address issues.

### Stepping Children and families down from the B-SAFE team

An obvious indicator of success is the need to manage children out of the B-SAFE model.

It is vital to have clear step-down processes included to ensure that cases do not bottleneck within the B-SAFE team.

Cases will be reviewed a minimum of every 3 months to ensure plans are leading to reduction in risks posed and good outcomes. *Signs of Safety* scaling questions will be utilised within review meetings to gain a multi-agency agreement at the level of risk (used alongside the assessments and risk assessments within each area). 0-3 standard risk, 4 – 7 Moderate risk, 8 – 10 High risk.

An agreed scale of **0-3** will mean that a child is **closed to the B-SAFE team** and stepped down to targeted or universal services (i.e. school, TYS, YPSMS); **3 – 6** would be considered for (non B-SAFE) **Early Help allocation/support** and **7 – 10** for **co/allocation to a social worker** in **CYPF**.

## 7) Prevention and early intervention

Partners, communities and families themselves have an important part to play in protecting children.

To do that effectively, we need to ensure that there is access to information, advice, guidance and resources to support others in recognising the signs of exploitation, what support services they can access and when they need to seek help in preventing harm.

The Joining the Dots (JtD) framework will involve working with partners and communities to take on this responsibility. This means having curiosity and understanding the factors in a child's life that means they are vulnerable, along with signs of exploitation, which may adapt over time, and flex to the context in which children are living. (e.g. food and other basic being utilised as an incentive rather than traditional means within the cost of living crisis). These factors may not be recognised as warning signs initially by others.

At a *Targeted level*, The **Youth Justice and Early Help** prevention team will work to divert children on the cusp of criminality through an evolved Ministry of Justice Turnaround approach<sup>3</sup>, and **Early Help** and **Targeted Youth Support** services will continue to provide both child-focused and whole-family interventions where concerns have been identified, but they are not assessed to be acute. These children and families will receive this support using the established referral route into the Integrated Front Door (IFD) and be allocated based on assessed need. The B-SAFE team will then provide support, guidance and consultation on a request basis.

<sup>3</sup> [Turnaround Programme](#)

## Advice, guidance and support

Led by the B-SAFE team (encompassing partners in South Yorkshire Police), the whole network as defined in the JtD will be engaged through a programme of support and awareness raising, skills development and training. This will require all partners to understand their own responsibility within the framework, however, a single consistent approach to the understanding and addressing contextual safeguarding is vital if children are to be protected.

### Duty support:

The B-SAFE team will provide a 'duty service' of support to professionals across the spectrum of complex risk as outlined in this document. This adds further resilience and drives good practice within the system.

## 8) Managing Complex Risk, Serious Youth Violence and Harmful Sexual Behaviour

### Youth Justice and serious youth violence

The B-SAFE model further manages complex risk through the direct management of the following cohort of children managed in the criminal justice system. This is achieved by placing Youth Justice Practitioners and the service seconded Probation officer in the B-SAFE model, supported and managed by a YJS Operational manager:

Children subject to:

- Youth Rehabilitation Order (YRO) ISS.
- Children sentenced to custody (DTO/Section 250) and violent/sexual/OCG linked offence.
- Assessed as high/VH ROSH/SWB linked to serious youth violence; exploitation or HSB.
- Perpetrator of SHB.
- All children sentenced in scope as a 'transition to probation' (17y 3m at point of Order and order open past 18<sup>th</sup> birthday).

NB: all children managed within the above criteria remain subject to all policies, procedures and evaluation as outlined in Barnsley YJS policy suite; and to national guidance as outlined by the Youth Justice Board and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP).

### Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Our Strategy also ensures that HSB is effectively managed across Barnsley. This commitment is reinforced by the new position of Advance Practitioner in Harmful Sexual Behaviour, a role that will ensure the most serious instances of HSB can be managed by local authority practitioners, *and* we are equipped to significantly increase the resilience and capability of the workforce to manage HSB within the graduated response model.

Developments in this area are outlined in the Barnsley Interim HSB Pathway document (September 2023-awaiting final sign off by BSCP).

### Managing risks and escalation

Complex risk will be managed using existing processes within key agencies (police, social care, youth justice).

For cases open to B-SAFE, two key planning processes will operationally manage risk: MACE and Complex Risk Planning Meeting (for youth justice and HSB cases). Each function will be focused on reviewing risk management and safety plans and be focused on challenging the partnership to be as rigorous and effective as possible in using resources to operate within the 4 P's model.

When the decision has been made to escalate a case due to concerns, this will be done in line with the Children's service escalation policy. In addition, the B-SAFE team will work from a culture of constructive challenge to partners

so to maximise the ability of operational partners to overcome barriers to progress and increases in risk and minimise instances of escalation so they occur as a last resort.

## 9) Engagement with Young people and Families

Our adopted *Practice principles* outline the importance of recognising that children and families are experts of their own lives, experiences and of ensuring they are true partners in all our work. At partnership level, work ongoing work will be undertaken to embed this culture in practice through the guidance and support and the development activity outlined in section 10.

Within the B-SAFE model, our commitment to a *relational approach* ensures that we are able to build the crucial rapport with children and families as the foundation to effective support and intervention. Plans will be co-developed and co-owned and risks will be collectively acknowledged and managed.

We are committed to ongoing evaluation of our work and will seek feedback from all children and families, so this can then influence our continuous improvement journey.

## 10) Learning and Development

Workforce development is a key route through which we will empower and enable partners and staff to identify risk factors and ensure appropriate intervention is put in place through multi-agency working. By equipping the workforce with the expertise to challenge practice and drive continuous improvements, and by promoting a culture of learning and development, we will ensure that all professionals are cited on vulnerability factors and exposure to risk within their day-to-day roles, ensuring that professional curiosity is actively engaged in any contact we have with children.

It is important that all practitioners, including those in wider council and partner services, delivering statutory or universal services and those providing services to adults with children, understand their role in identifying emerging problems, assessing need, and raising awareness and sharing information with other practitioners and families and children to support identification of risks and vulnerabilities in a multi-agency context.

Effective protection of children can only be delivered by motivated, well-trained staff. Staff recruited into this area need to have a professional curiosity and understanding of vulnerability, embedded from the point of recruitment and through training and continuous professional development.

Led by the B-SAFE management team, our approach to learning and development,

### We will:

- Be active partners with key sector development organisations across the breadth of *complex risk* i.e. The Children's Society, National working Group (NWG), NOTA.
- Track (and where possible, taking part in) learning from national and local reviews and ensure that learning is embedded into our practice.
- Provide a programme professional support, consultation and skills development for the wider workforce

We acknowledge that for staff, working in this area is challenging and staff are at risk of accumulating stress and trauma vicariously and this can lead to wellbeing issues and whilst the above provides a strong foundation for staff to develop the resilience to manage this work, we recognise the importance of good quality supervision and the access to occupational health services for all staff involved in working with this cohort.

### Training:

A programme of dynamic training and skills development will be co-managed by the B-SAFE team and the Barnsley Safeguarding Children's Partnership.

## 11) Information, Intelligence and analysis

### The importance of intelligence and data

The capacity of the partnership to work together to obtain, share and analyse Intelligence and data is key to success of our strategy. This has not been an area of strength and continues to be subject to significant improvement activity, however, we are able to now recognise a robust approach.

#### Intelligence:

We will ensure intelligence is obtained and used to drive activity across *'the 4 P's'* and drive our action-led approach to practice. This will be achieved through:

- Active pursuit of intelligence by the B-SAFE team, supported by clear routes for partners to share intelligence and information.
- The co-location of the CE police team will enhance the ability of the partnership to share soft intelligence, details obtain through police investigation with direct impact on ongoing risk and respond to it through effective tasking.
- Structured review of intelligence in formal processes (MACE and CETG)
- The use of partnership *Daily Briefings* and both pro-active and responsive *mapping* to further understand at risk individuals, groups, perpetrators, and 'hotspot' locations.
- Reviewing and sharing disclosure from children, families, the wider community and other stakeholders
- Routine analysis and evaluation of data by the B-SAFE management team (including SYP DS) and key partners.

### Data analysis and evaluation

The collation of data from across the framework is crucial if an informed evaluation of impact can be made. Data will be obtained through a variety of sources, though will include:

- South Yorkshire Police Child Exploitation Quarterly report (provided by the SYP force intelligence analysis unit).
- Youth Justice quarterly performance and cohort analysis report (including trends linked to offence-type; age; gender; ethnicity; local area)
- The capability to match and cross reference data recording across children's and education services.
- Qualitative data from quality assurance and audit activity of casework and also key processes i.e. MACE.
- Qualitative data from consultation with children and families.

We are committed to the continuous improvement of our capability to obtain, analyse and use data to drive better outcomes for children, and the CE Sub-Group provides the strategic oversight of this activity.

In respect of internal systems within the local authority, we have systems in place to actively flag children who are either at risk of exploitation or are being exploited on Mosaic and Synergy recording systems for children who are subject to EH Interventions and statutory intervention through Children's Social Care. We also record children who

are reported missing and share the outcomes of Return Home interviews with SY Police colleagues to support effective recording on Police systems in relation to outcomes.

As part of our ongoing development agenda, tracking systems will be established to ensure that any children who need to access support in relation to Harmful sexual behaviour are also recorded. Once data is then available for all vulnerable children (Missing, Child sexual exploitation, Child criminal exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour, and serious youth violence) this will then be further developed to allow a comprehensive overview of all children who are exposed to contextual risk within these categories. This will result in the partnership developing its capacity to share data and have sufficient analytical capacity and capability to understand the scale and prevalence of exploitation within Barnsley. At a strategic level, key threats should be identified, and activity planned and delivered to reduce the threat.

We will use local data to fully understand themes, emerging trends and current threats facing the community and our children. This should include an understanding of particularly vulnerable communities, cohorts of children or prevalent risk factors within our locality.

**We will:**

- Use national and regional data to understand emerging threats and themes.
- Use partnership data to understand what, where and who poses a risk to communities and children at both a strategic and operational level.
- Ensure we understand where communities of children are especially vulnerable and target interventions at an early stage.

## 12) Effective Investigations and outcomes

All partners have a part to play in supporting victims and the prosecution of offenders. Front line staff should have the skills to conduct early effective evidence gathering, with regard to an evidence-led prosecution if appropriate.

This includes ensuring staff are familiar with the rights and entitlements of victims and make best use of measures that support vulnerable people to give evidence. This also includes ensuring victims have access to appropriate support services, including therapy.

As a partnership, we will ensure the right resources are assigned to investigation of exploitation related crime and those staff are supported by effective supervision of cases.

**We will:**

- Ensure victims are supported to give their best evidence and when they cannot, seek evidence led prosecutions.
- Effectively use support services both inside and outside the criminal justice system, including therapeutic services.
- Ensure victims receive their rights and entitlements under the victim's code.
- Ensure that we have the capacity and capability to investigate effectively.

## 13) Communication

The partnership will design a communication strategy that ensures that children, families, communities and staff have access to information that enables them to protect children. This will be developed in conjunction with South Yorkshire Police and key partners across communities, health and education to ensure Barnsley has a single, effective vision for addressing complex risk and contextual safeguarding.

**The strategy will:**

- offer accessible information and appropriate toolkits to identify and manage risk for themselves or identify when they need support to do so.
- demonstrate to the community that we listen to their needs and concerns and are addressing them. This will foster confidence in accessing support and using services.

**We will:**

- Identify and promote number of communication channels for people and communities to raise concerns or share information.
- Develop a suite of resources for the community, partners and staff to identify, tackle and manage the risk associated with vulnerability to exploitation.
- Find ways to highlight case studies where intervention has led to improved outcomes for children.

## 14) Governance

The over-arching governance structure in relation to complex risk and contextual safeguarding is currently subject to review. The revised structure will ensure timely and decisive responses to acute risk is achieved and ensure our response to contextual safeguarding maintains efficacy to our stated delivery model.

Partner agencies should make sure that governance is in place at all levels to manage exploitation related risk effectively and ensure appropriate scrutiny and accountability is in place to ensure effective outcomes for children.

There are in place key functions that ensure effective governance of complex risk and contextual safeguarding:

### **Barnsley Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP)**

Barnsley Safeguarding Children Partnership is responsible for monitoring and challenging agencies to ensure that they meet the objectives within the strategy. They will hold the Child Exploitation (CE) strategic group and its members to account for delivery of this strategy through the work plan and will require updates on progress every partnership meeting.

### **Youth Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour Board (YCASBB)**

YCASBB is responsible for the governance of our youth justice service and the wider partnership response to youth crime and anti-social behaviour. Oversight includes resettlement, serious youth violence and is closely aligned to BSCP.

### **Barnsley Child Exploitation Sub-Group**

The Child Exploitation Sub-Group is responsible for:

- Maintaining an overview of interagency working in the area of child exploitation through a multi-agency group
- Implementation of this child exploitation strategy
- Management of the child exploitation work plan

### **MACE meeting**

The purpose of the MACE meeting is to provide operational management oversight of the risk management for individual children and groups of children identified as being vulnerable to child exploitation. We are aware that child exploitation takes places in the local community and therefore information known to statutory as well as voluntary sector agencies should be used to highlight the vulnerabilities, threats, to establish, and reduce risk.

The MACE meeting will provide the framework to allow regular information sharing and action planning to tackle child exploitation across Barnsley. The meeting will discuss concerns about children and young people who may be at risk from: CSE, CCE (including county lines), gang related crime and human trafficking that requires a multi-agency response.

The meeting will take place weekly and will be chaired by the team manager from the Contextual Safeguarding Team (or an appropriate alternate, where needed) a Safeguarding partners who will also attend the meeting will include, but not exhaustively, lead practitioners and managers from: Early Help, Children's Social Work Service, South Yorkshire Police, Youth Justice Service, Housing, Health Services and the Safer Neighbourhood Service.

The MACE meeting will facilitate effective action to prevent and disrupt exploitation by:

- Supporting the effective sharing of relevant information in accordance with the BSCP Information Sharing Agreement. (ISA)
- Enable agencies to identify those at risk of child exploitation as well as victims, perpetrators, and locations of concern; to aid disruption of perpetrators and provide support to victims and their families.
- Ensuring that all agencies are working together effectively to prevent, reduce, track and respond to children missing from home, care, or education, including those children in out of Barnsley placements.
- Providing advice and guidance, including the promoting of robust and proactive multiagency investigations where a risk of exploitation has been identified, especially where children and young people do not perceive themselves as victims.
- Seek assurance from all relevant agencies that the full range of disruption measures are being used to target perpetrators.
- Sharing information to understand the nature and extent of child exploitation in Barnsley, as well as enabling the identification of patterns and intelligence gaps.

MACE Meetings are not an alternative to safeguarding and child protection processes and where there is a concern about abuse or neglect within the family, including where parents/carers not acting protectively, the usual S.47 processes should be used and where necessary a Child Protection Plan will be made.

MACE meetings can be held alongside Child Protection Conferences and Core Group Meetings. MACE pathways are outlined in appendix A.

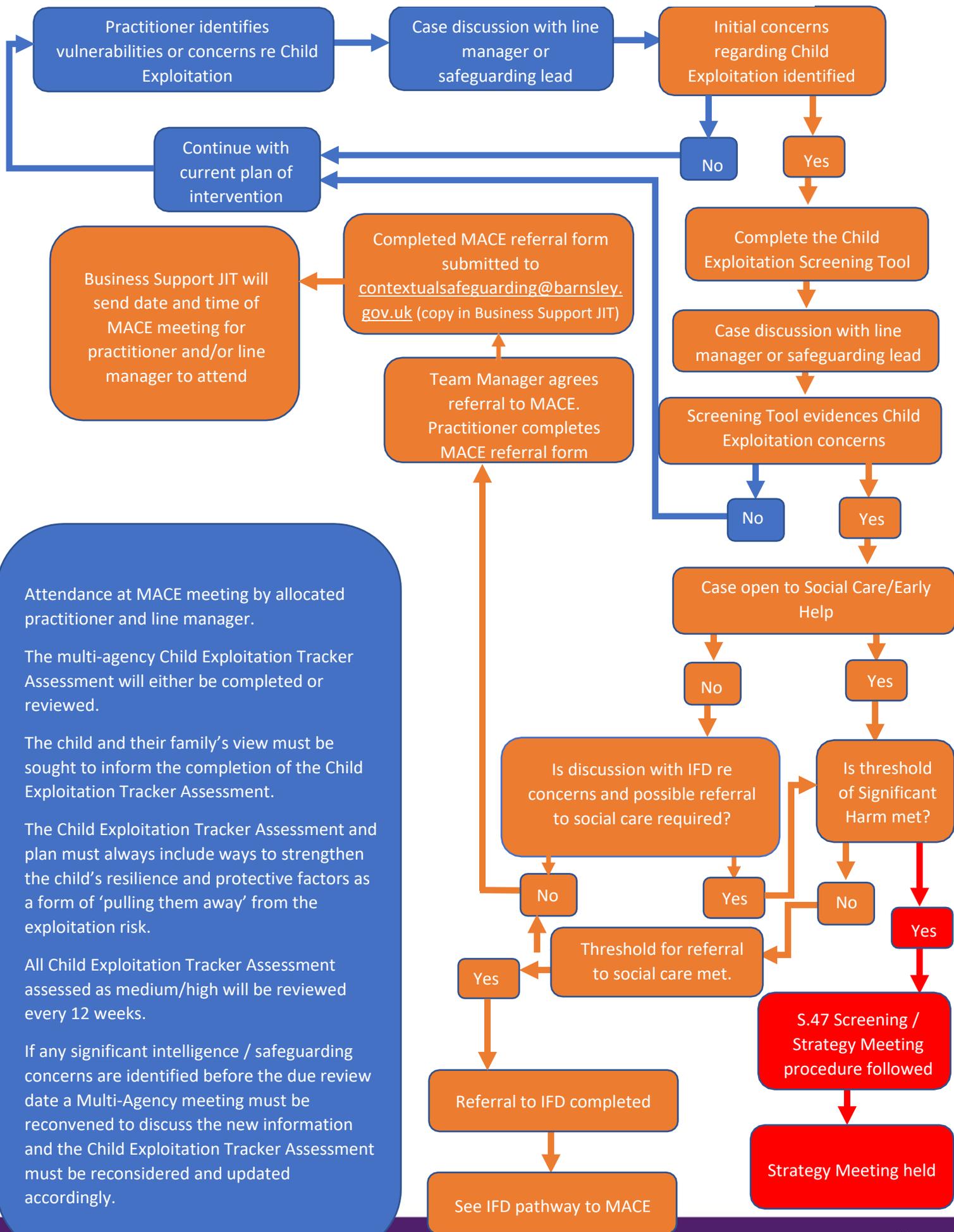
### **Daily briefing**

Daily briefing is a multi-agency meeting held every working day at 9.30am to share information to promote prevention, early identification, and a co-ordinated response to emerging concerns/threats. Intelligence and information taken from the daily briefing will be fed into relevant managers and acts as the trigger-point for further risk management activity.

### **Appendix A: MACE referral Pathways**



Referral to MACE – Open Cases (CSC/EH/YJS)



Attendance at MACE meeting by allocated practitioner and line manager.

The multi-agency Child Exploitation Tracker Assessment will either be completed or reviewed.

The child and their family’s view must be sought to inform the completion of the Child Exploitation Tracker Assessment.

The Child Exploitation Tracker Assessment and plan must always include ways to strengthen the child’s resilience and protective factors as a form of ‘pulling them away’ from the exploitation risk.

All Child Exploitation Tracker Assessment assessed as medium/high will be reviewed every 12 weeks.

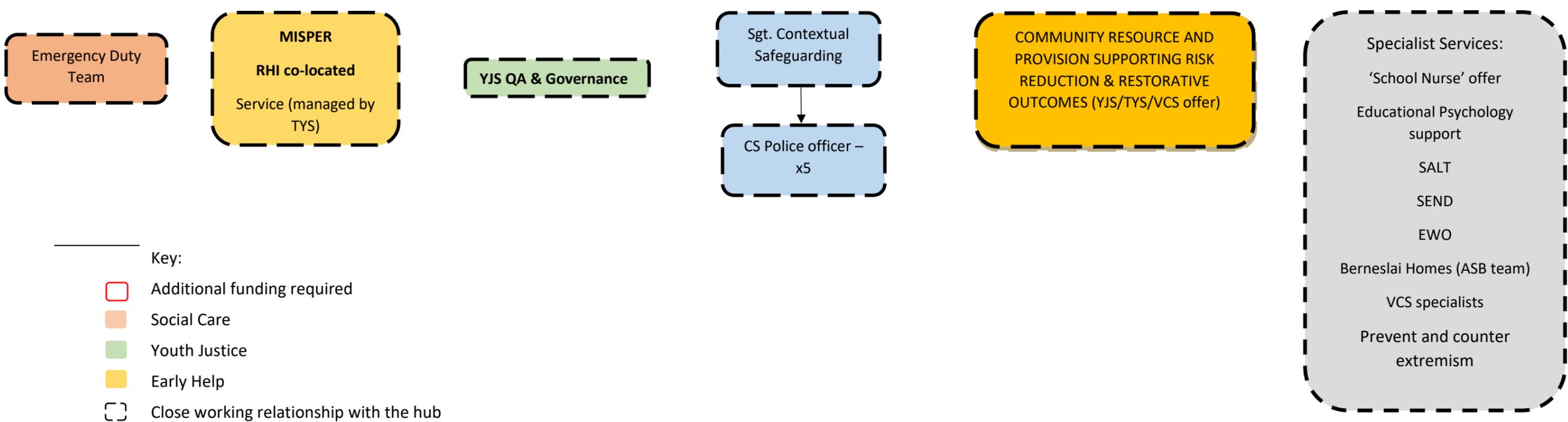
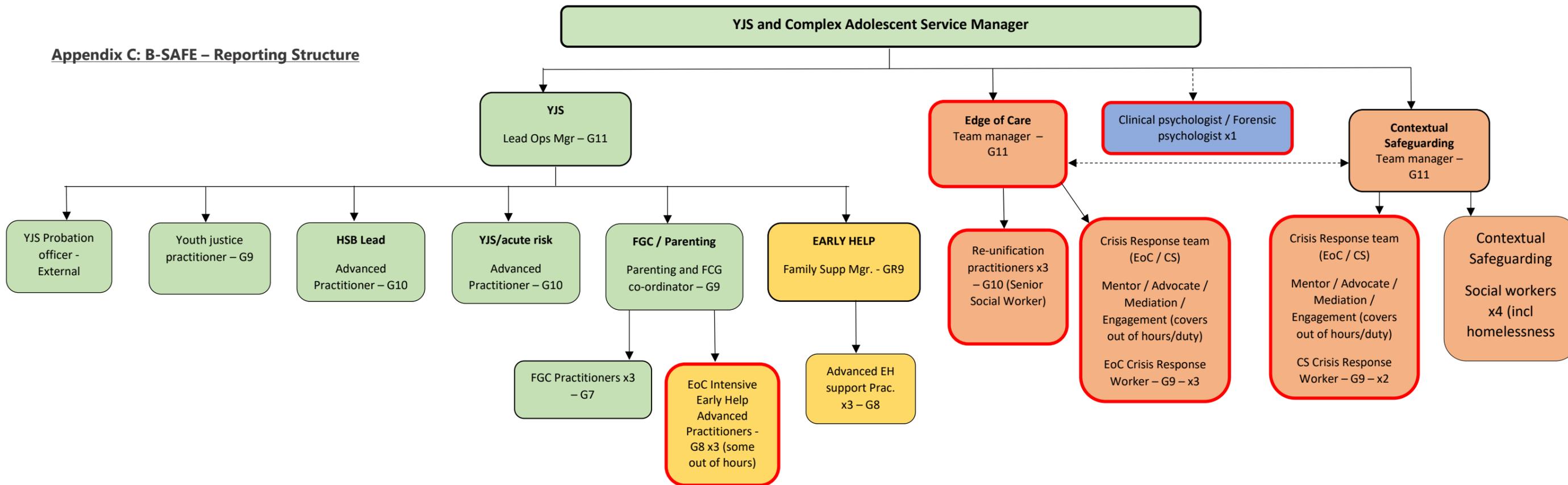
If any significant intelligence / safeguarding concerns are identified before the due review date a Multi-Agency meeting must be reconvened to discuss the new information and the Child Exploitation Tracker Assessment must be reconsidered and updated accordingly.



## Appendix B: Daily Briefing list of representatives

- DCI, South Yorkshire Police (Chair)
- Contextual Safeguarding Trainer
- Horizon Community College
- Strategic Safeguarding Partnership Manager
- Youth Justice Service Manager
- Head of Early Start, Prevention and Sufficiency, BMBC
- Service Manager, EIP Targeted Youth Support, BMBC
- Named Nurse Safeguarding Children, BHNFT
- Barnsley College
- Named Nurse for Safeguarding, Spectrum
- Contextual Safeguarding Team Manager, BMBC
- Cohesion and Prevent Officer
- Integrated Safeguarding Nurse Specialist, 0-19 Service
- Compass representative
- Head of Service, Children and Family, BMBC
- Safeguarding Advisor, SWYPFT
- Secondary School Head Teacher Representative (Horizon CC)
- Service Manager, Education Services, BMBC
- Head of Service, Children in Care, BMBC
- Licensing Officer, BMBC
- Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, BMBC
- Designated Nurse, Safeguarding Children/LAC, BCCG
- Regional Manager, IDAS
- Service Manager, Independent Review and Safeguarding, BMBC
- The Hill Primary Academy
- DI, South Yorkshire Police
- Service Manager, Assessment and Stronger Families, BMBC
- Serious Organised Crime Co-ordinator
- Acting Manager, Tenants First Service

Appendix C: B-SAFE – Reporting Structure



- Key:
- Additional funding required
  - Social Care
  - Youth Justice
  - Early Help
  - Close working relationship with the hub