Group Based CSE

Learning identified at multi agency, regional learning event

15th July 2025

The learning event was attended by Avon & Somerset Police, the ICB, and all five local authorities

What led to the learning event?

A group based CSE investigation began in November 2023 across the Avon & Somerset police area. This is a large scale investigation with over 20 identified victims and 19 suspects.

The learning event also included Operation Hydrant

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Alongside the local investigation the event considered the findings of the National Audit on group based CSE led by Baroness Casey

Click to read

Home Office Disruption Toolkit is available here

Education as a safeguarding partner

- Inclusion of all education settings including post 16 and further education providers is essential
- Ensure education settings are accessing training relating to exploitation and serious youth violence
- Healthy relationship education is important for all children but there are specific cohorts of children who have additional vulnerabilities, consider a training offer to education providers
- Work together to prevent exclusions from education settings, including from college, as education may be the child's only safe space

Theme: Information Sharing

- All practitioners need to know about the police portal for reporting intelligence so that information can be shared quickly and to the right place.
- Information sharing protocols need to be reviewed and updated including inclusion of cross border sharing of information.
- When there is concern a child is being moved (trafficked) for the purpose of exploitation there should be an NRM* completed, information must be shared with first responders in a timely way.
- Include data about both victims and perpetrators in data sets and ensure that there is demographic information included to help understand disproportionality. Data analysis should be used to inform practice.
- Ensure join up between strategic partnerships to support information sharing and strengthen joint working at a strategic level.
- Promote confidence of sharing information, as there was some reluctance to share in front of partners that were not known or from another area.

Access the Police Portal Intelligence Tool here

*National Referral Mechanism (NRM) information is here

Theme: Transition to adulthood

- Education provision for victims and perpetrators in Post 16 should be well informed to ensure risk and vulnerability are recognised and shared and a trauma informed approach is in place.
- Some cohorts of children are more vulnerable to child exploitation than others because of their experiences in childhood. This needs to be recognised and in particular as they approach adulthood, as their vulnerability will remain and could increase.
- Be cautious about adultification of children approaching adulthood, and ensure victim blaming language and terminology is not being used.
- Identification of gaps in services for children approaching adulthood need to be identified early.

Good Practice Identified

- Support from Operation Hydrant.
- Investigation approached as Serious Organised Crime, as per the recommendation in the National Audit.
- Strong multi-agency working at an operational and strategic level across Avon & Somerset with the use of tactical oversight meetings to promote effective working relationships across agencies including voluntary organisations to ensure children are safeguarded and supported.

Theme: Community and Youth Provision

- Ensure non traditional and voluntary partners are included at the earliest point, raise awareness and support this sector to identify exploitation.
- Continue to engage with taxi drivers and hotels to raise awareness of signs of exploitation – Find out more about Operation MakeSafe by clicking this box.

Theme: Cross Border Working

- Multi agency and also cross border work to effectively undertake mapping and identify risk is vital.
- Share information across borders more quickly, at the earliest stage.