



## Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Panel



### Terms of Reference and Operating Principles

#### Overarching Principles

1. This document should be read in conjunction with the following documents
  - St Helena Working Together to Safeguard Children 2020
  - St Helena Multi-agency Child Exploitation Protocol 2023
2. The Multi-Agency Child Exploitation panels here on in referred to as MACE will be the forum for safeguarding children at risk of exploitation within the partnership arena.
3. The following definition of Child Exploitation will be used.

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

4. The MACE panel recognise St Helena' s position in relation to 'context'. Children who require safeguarding from exploitation with be **Seen, Heard and Helped**
  - **Seen;** *in the context of their lives at home, friendship circles, health, education, and public spaces (including social media).*
  - **Heard;** *by professionals taking time to hear what children and young people are saying and put themselves in their shoes and think about what their life might truly be like.*
  - **Helped;** *by professionals remaining curious and by implementing effective and imaginative solutions that help children and young people and make them safer.*

#### (i) **The Child's best interests must be the top priority**

The best interests of children and young people and their rights to protection must drive all decision making. The welfare of children will remain the paramountcy principle, which must be adhered to where applicable and children's rights under UNCRC Article 3 fully honoured.

#### (ii) **Participation of children and young people**

Services need to involve children and young people when decisions are being made about their care, protection and on-going support and be kept informed on any issues that affect them throughout. Professionals must be mindful of children and young people's needs and equalities. Their UNCRC Article 12 rights must be honoured.

### **(iii) Enduring relationships and support**

Support must be tailored to meet the needs of child, according to their age, identity, ethnicity, belief, sexual orientation, disability, language, and stage of development. Children and young people have told us that a consistent person who sticks with them throughout the whole period of their protection and on-going care is crucial to their recovery.

### **(iv) Comprehensive problem profiling**

St Helena's Exploitation Strategy both highlight the need for comprehensive problem profiles. The MACE panel contribute towards this by providing detailed information in relation to local trends, locations and persons of concern.

Area intelligence is shared as appropriate with panel members to inform disruption activity and allow professionals to effectively safeguard children. This includes sharing of information with police to support local problem profiling and contribute towards wider regional profiles.

### **(v) Effective information-sharing within and between agencies**

It is expected that all areas will hold a cross sector information sharing protocol, based around the safe handling and sharing of information. Protocols should focus upon the best interests of the child and their welfare and should take guidance from all relevant safeguarding and information governance legislation; all relevant agencies and services should be signatories, with expectations of signatories made clear within the document. Supporting these protocols the MACE Panel operates under its own confidentiality agreement, all present are expected to adhere to the agreement both within and outside of panel.

### **(vi) Supervision, support, and training of staff**

Services should invest in the development and support of staff including providing regular supervision and the opportunities for them to reflect on practice. Those professionals who offer direct support to exploited children and young people might require further intensive training and must have regular opportunities to reflect on their practice with a skilled consultant or supervisor.

## **(vii) Evaluation and review**

Evaluations and regular reviews of the effectiveness of the Child Exploitation Protocol is necessary to ensure services and interventions are achieving their intended outcomes and meeting the child and young person's needs. Children and young people must be directly involved in this process in compliance with Article 12 of the UNCRC. This will ensure that performance is driven continuously by a cycle that leads to improvement.

### **MACE Purpose**

5. The MACE panels are not intended to replace or replicate existing statutory mechanisms for managing planned work with individual children or linked groups of children, which will be via a multi-agency Early Help Assessment (EHA), a Child in Need Plan (CIN Plan), a Child Protection Plan (CP Plan), a Youth Justice Service Plan or a looked after child Care Plan or Pathway Plan.

6. Where it is felt there is a clear escalation in Child Exploitation risk or concern for a young person, Child Protection procedures need to be followed or if threshold for Child Protection is not met, agencies can consider raising these at care plan meetings (such as CIN Meeting, Child in Care Reviews etc.) or alternatively, requesting these meetings are moved to an earlier date to address the concerns and support needs of the child/family by using a multi-agency meeting and completing a Child Exploitation Risk Assessment.

7. The primary purpose of the MACE will be to ensure strategic oversight is enabled at an Island and local area level to enable problem profiling and to ensure prevention and targeted interventions aimed at groups and communities can be planned for and routinely monitored. The panels will support actions to safeguard children and to disrupt and reduce the opportunity for them to become victims of abuse as a result of Child Exploitation. This will be achieved via review of all locally held individual cases. Additional actions to existing CIN, CP, YJS Plans or looked after children plans may be agreed as part of the panel's primary strategic objectives.

8 It is intended that professionals receive an oversight of the level of Child Exploitation activity through hearing submissions from allocated workers, key workers, or lead professionals in relation to all children identified as medium or high within their area of work.

9. The MACE will provide performance management oversight of practitioner responses to individual Child Exploitation cases and ensure that the exploitation risk assessment is routinely used.

10. The MACE will receive aggregated information about children who go missing from home or care to ensure any links between missing activity and Child Exploitation are made and acted upon.

11. The Panels will identify examples of best practice and disseminate learning from this across professionals.

12. The Panels will collect data to support the Children's Safeguarding Board to achieve the desired outcomes of the Child Exploitation Protocol.

13. Children and parents/carers will normally be informed by the professional/agency identifying the Child Exploitation concerns that their case is to be discussed at the Panels. Their views will be ascertained by the lead practitioner and shared with the Panel by the presenting professional.

### **Accountability**

14. Panels will be reviewed annually, and findings from this review will be presented by report to senior managers and fed into the safeguarding board governance arrangements as appropriate.

Alongside annual review, panel data is collated and analysed throughout the year in line with St Helena Governments' and Safeguarding Children Boards internal reporting timeframes. Practitioners are responsible for ensuring existing planning mechanisms for managing CIN, CP, YOS Plans and looked after children Care Plans/Pathway Plans are effectively in place in line with statutory requirements and the needs of the child. Each agency represented at the Child Exploitation Panel remains accountable to their internal structure and safeguarding policies/practices.

### **Outputs of the Vulnerable Adolescents Multi Agency Panels**

15. Review of individual Child Exploitation cases via the sharing of intelligence, wider agency information and case information. This will be used to aid multi-agency disruption activity.

16. Identification of any links between individual victims/offenders that have not been made apparent via individual case planning. This will be used to aid multi-agency disruption activity. Mapping will be a key output of the panels.

17. Make recommendations for enhancing actions identified within existing CIN, CP, YOS Plans and looked after children Care Plan/Pathway Plan.

18. Monitoring of information with regards to practitioner compliance in completing the Child Exploitation Risk Assessment.

19. Aggregating data from all collated Child Exploitation Risk Assessment.

20. Classifying all known Child Exploitation cases according to agreed local classification systems:

- High Risk
- Medium Risk
- Low Risk

21. Agree plans for global prevention activity, including enhancing public awareness of Child Exploitation.

22. Agree plans for awareness raising activity encouraging the outcome that children and young people are aware of the risks of Child Exploitation and able to make good choices and know where to go to report abuse.

23. Agree targeted prevention and disruption activity where the incidence of Child Exploitation is high (eg in relation to pupils attending a certain school or socialising in a certain geographical area).

24. Agree any multi-agency responses to disruption activity. This will include a clear focus on ensuring there are “safe space” for children across St Helena.

25. Hear the voice of the child and their parents/carers via the presenting professional.

27. Share information on locally available services for children discussed at the panel and identify any gaps in provision to Commissioners and the Safeguarding Board.

28. Promote available training across panel members and their wider organisations. Act where awareness training is identified as required by groups in a district area.

29. All professionals invited to the MACE will be required to sign a confidentiality protocol and comply with the information sharing protocol.

30. There is an expectation that MACE members and attendees, as representatives of their agency, will attend prepared to share information about children, their families, associations and any people, locations or trends of concern.

All information discussed, and documents shared at the Child Exploitation Panel are strictly confidential and matters discussed should only be disclosed to professional colleagues in accordance with existing arrangements for safeguarding children.

31. All partner agencies contributing to the Child Exploitation Panel process are required to ensure that their own procedures for information sharing and confidentiality support the ethos of Working Together and St Helena’s Safeguarding Board’s commitment to that.

32. All agencies in attendance at the Panels are responsible for securely filing documentation received.

### **Proposed Core Panel Membership and Virtual Panel Members**

33. Core Panel Members: Identified Senior Leader children’s and adults social care, Police, Health Representatives, education / schools representatives, District Portfolio Minister, representative from Youth Justice Service, housing representatives,

### **Locations of Panels**

35. ADD LOCATION HERE

## **Frequency of Panels**

36. MACE panels will be held monthly; frequency will be assessed as part of the annual panel review and additional panels held should there be a high-risk concern identified. Should changes be required they will be proposed within the recommendations of the annual review report and presented via senior leaders to the safeguarding board.

## **Referral Pathway**

38. All children to be discussed at panel must have a completed Child Exploitation Risk Assessment identifying their case as medium or high. The completed risk assessment must be submitted to the panel administrator.

39. The panel administrator will send a panel submission list and completed risk assessments to panel members in advance to enable agencies to prepare for and provide additional information as necessary to panel.

40. The criteria for attendance at a panel is that a child or young person is suffering or is at risk of suffering Child Exploitation, according to the definition provided earlier.

41. The panel administrator will use the matrix to create a mapping document prior to each panel and from this, will collate an agenda and invite presenting professionals to allocated time slots for case discussions.

42. **NB: Panels are not an avenue for professionals to make new referrals to St Helena Children's Social Care or partner agencies. Referrals should be made at the point of identification of need or harm**

## **43. Roles and Responsibilities of Panel Members**

### **a) Panel Chair:**

The Panels will be chaired by a suitably senior Leader / manager XXXXX. The Panel Chair will:

- Confirm the confidentiality statement and ensure that it is signed at each meeting by Panel members.
- Ensure that the discussion at the meeting remains focused, that the business of the meeting is achieved and that it is conducted within the time allocated.
- Ensure that members are offered equity about opportunities to contribute to the meeting.
- Agree the information collated from the meeting, the risk level of cases discussed; and the record of actions arising from the discussion, before distribution to Panel members.

**b) Panel Members:** Standing members of the Panel will:

- Attend the meetings regularly and on any occasion when they are unable to attend, they should identify an appropriate representative from their agency to attend in their place.
- Come prepared to share any new or additional information over and above that already shared at the case management meetings. Contribute to the information sharing which enables the meetings to fulfil their purpose.
- Contribute to the actions agreed during the meetings and provide timely reports on progress and outcomes. This includes considering how their agency can contribute to wider disruption activity.

**c) Panel Coordinator:** The Co-ordinator will:

- Review panel attendance and will liaise with practitioners as appropriate.
- Collate the agenda for the individual case discussions and invite the practitioners to allocated time slots for case discussion
- Distribute the agenda and any associated papers to Panel members one week in advance of the Panel meetings.
- Attend all the panel meetings both to contribute to the discussion and to collate information provided at the meetings.
- Obtain agreement from the panel chair prior to profile information and actions agreed at the meetings being distributed to panel members.

**d) Panel Attendees:** Professionals will:

- Attend Panel at time invited and ensure all involved agencies are aware of attendance.
- Come prepared to the panel to present information about current worries, protective factors, intelligence of locations, associations, or trends of concern.
- Follow up on any actions agreed prior to the next meeting.

\*\*\*These terms of reference and operating principles will be reviewed annually as part of the MACE Review Process.

Prepared For	St Helena Government: Health and Social Care Portfolio
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