

Hertfordshire's Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Model

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Introduction

Traditionally, arrangements have focused on missing children, encompassing child sexual exploitation (CSE) but, in recent years, the complexities of exploitation have increased. In response, the way in which we safeguard vulnerable children and young people from exploitation needs to take a more holistic view, recognising it can occur through different forums and often amongst other vulnerabilities that children and young people may be exposed to.

Arrangements need to now consider exploitation as a broader concept encompassing, but not limited to, sexual (CSE) and criminal (CCE) exploitation both of which intersect with risks and vulnerabilities such as missing, trafficking within and across borders, county lines, modern slavery, gangs and youth violence¹. These risks must be considered within a contextual safeguarding framework to effectively understand, and respond to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. Recognising that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Therefore, children's social care practitioners and wider safeguarding partnerships need to engage with individuals and sectors who have influence over/within extra-familial contexts, and recognise that assessment of, and intervention with, these spaces are a critical part of safeguarding practices.

Hertfordshire's MACE model is split into two parts to enable effective, timely and efficient multi-agency information sharing as well as learning and best practice. MACE 1 will be conducted via an East and West meeting in the county, focusing on operational case review and risk management. In particular where current safety plans have not been effective in reducing risk(s) and greater multi-agency input is required. MACE 2 will take a strategic view for the county. It is recognised representatives attending MACE 1 & 2 may differ (*see Membership and Roles and Responsibilities in relevant Terms of Reference*).

¹ Other exploitation types include: 1) labour exploitation, 2) domestic servitude, 3) organ harvesting, 4) illegal Adoption, 5) baby farming, 6) sham marriage and 7) forced marriage. See [HSCP Procedures – Chapter 6.28 Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking](#) for further information.

MACE 1

Identify and review cases of known exploitation, encompassing criminal and sexual, and those individuals identified as vulnerable to exploitation due to missing episode(s) or other behaviours/incidents which identify them as at high risk.

MACE 2

Consider strategic options necessary to tackle CE threats through analysing trends, patterns and identifying hot spots in order to inform partnership activity, commissioning decisions and delivery of interventions to reduce risk.

HSCP Definition: Child Exploitation

It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person into sexual or criminal activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

Child exploitation typically involves physical violence, threats of violence and intimidation. Involvement is usually characterised by the child or young person's limited availability of choice as result of their social, economic or emotional vulnerability.

The victim may have been exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Exploitation does not always involve physical contact, it can also occur through the use of technology.

Examples of child exploitation: Trafficking of children for sexual abuse and exploitation, 'county lines' – organised criminal networks involved in the distribution of illegal drugs, criminal exploitation, sexual slavery, child labour.²

Examples of associated vulnerabilities: gang involvement, homelessness, radicalisation, alcohol/substance abuse, spending time with others much older than them, missing from home or care, childhood trauma, missing from education.

² See [HSCP Procedures – Chapter 6.28 Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking](#) for further information.

Roles and Responsibilities

CE Coordinator

- Receive Initial Referral Forms and liaise with MACE 1 co-chairs to confirm agreement of panel criteria being met.
- Inform referring agency of outcome of criteria check. Where criteria is met to connect referrer and MACE Panel Administrator.
- MACE 1 - Update and manage MACE Tracker to ensure that review dates are set.
- MACE 1 - Identify any cases due for review each month and automatically add them to the draft agenda (final agenda responsibility of MACE 1 co-chairs).

Adolescent and Exploitation Manager

- Overall coordination of MACE model including attendance at all MACE 1 meetings, preparing bi-annual report (six monthly) (with Data Analyst involvement), addressing any blockages or issues and ensuring effective partnership engagement.
- Support co-chairs with structuring of MACE 1 meetings, setting the agenda and prioritising cases to ensure the best use of the time of attending agencies, if required.
- Line management of CE Coordinator and MACE Administrator.

Co-Chair/s

- For Initial Referrals to MACE 1 Panel the co-chairs must have agreed that the child or young person meets the panel criteria. Confirmation process to be managed via CE Coordinator.
- The co-chairs are to structure MACE 1 meetings, setting the agenda and prioritising cases to ensure the best use of the time of attending agencies, with support from the Adolescent and Exploitation Manager if required.
- The co-chairs will ensure that all MACE 1 attendees understand the risks, what actions are being agreed and how they relate to their agencies.
- The co-chairs will review actions from the previous meeting and make a record of any outstanding actions – MACE 1 & 2.

Panel Members *(including those by formal invitation)*

- Submit Initial Referral Form (external) or LCS Risk Assessment (internal) for consideration by MACE 1 co-chairs via CE Coordinator.

- MACE 1 referrals should be made electronically, in accordance with information sharing guidelines, to MACE@hertfordshire.gov.uk by the first Friday of each month, wherever possible.
- Members will take the responsibility for attending meetings, fully contributing by bringing expertise and updates on their contribution and information from their agency – MACE 1 & 2.
- Members should use the agenda items circulated in advance to fully prepare for the contributions prior to the meeting this may involve arranging formal methods of communication within your agency to ensure you are briefed appropriately and have relevant information to share and cascade post the meeting – MACE 1 & 2.
- The responsibility to take appropriate actions rests with individually assigned agencies. Each member will have the appropriate skill base/managerial responsibility required to effectively execute activity agreed by the group – MACE 1 & 2.

MACE Panel Administrator

- Undertake all secretariat tasks relating to the MACE 1 & 2 Panels, including invitations, room bookings/MS Teams, circulating agendas, capturing actions and minute taking.
- Panel agendas will be circulated five working days prior. These time periods will be strictly adhered to in order to allow agencies to have sufficient time to carry out the necessary checks – MACE 1 & 2.
- Minutes, including a summary of the actions, will be circulated within five working days of Panel – MACE 1 & 2.

The MACE protocol sets out the more detailed operating procedures around children and young people vulnerable to exploitation due to missing episode(s), at high risk of exploitation or other associated vulnerabilities.

MACE 1 - TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose and Aims

This guidance sets out the arrangements for MACE 1 which will consider children and young people who are:

- known to be being exploited
- considered most vulnerable to exploitation due to missing episode(s)
- where risk(s) cannot be resolved and managed at a local level
- assessed as high risk of exploitation.

It is expected that the majority of these children and young people will be known to Children's Services and supported by a Child in Need (CiN) Plan, Child Protection (CP) Plan, Child Looked After (CLA) Plan or open on a Youth Justice Order. However, in some cases a child or young person may be referred for discussion by other agencies, particularly Hertfordshire Constabulary. Where a child or young person is identified as at High Risk then Child Safeguarding Procedures should be adhered to and an immediate referral should be made to Children's Services.

It will afford professionals the opportunity to:

- Identify and review cases of known exploitation and also those children and young people identified as vulnerable to exploitation due to their missing episode(s) or other behaviours/incidents which identify them as high risk
- Share information on children and young people who are causing professionals concerns about their safety and wellbeing.
- Regular review of risks associated with individual children & young people, including the possibility of trafficking.
- Improve inter-agency accountability by agreeing actions required to safeguard the individual child or young person.
- Consider any additional support required.
- Improve support to professionals working with high risk cases.
- Work together to reduce repeat missing episodes.
- Promote and safeguard the welfare of children and young people.

Role of the Group

To ensure there is an effective, timely and efficient system for professionals to identify, share information and review cases of known exploitation and those individuals identified as vulnerable to exploitation due to their missing episode(s) or other behaviours/incidents which identify them as at high risk, and undertake partnership working to implement safety plans to reduce risk(s) and prevent further occurrences. The Group is also the final decision maker on submission of NRM forms where there is disagreement between local practitioners as to whether a child meets the criteria for being referred to the NRM according to the HSCP escalation procedure

Membership of the Group (to be reflected in both East and West)

MACE 1 - Core Membership	
Co-Chairs: SASH Service Manager / MASH Service Manager & DCI Herts Constabulary	
Agency:	Designation:
HCC Children's Services	MACE Panel Administrator
HCC Children's Services	Child Exploitation Coordinator
HCC Children's Services	Adolescent and Exploitation Hub Manager
HCC Children's Services	Brokerage and Commissioning Service Manager (HARP)
HCC Children's Services	ISL, Attendance Manager
HCC Children's Services	IRO Team Manager
HCC Children's Services	CL & CLA Service Manager
HCC Children's Services	Deputy Principal Educational Psychologist
Herts Constabulary	HALO
Herts Constabulary	Missing People Unit
Herts Community Trust	Named Nurse for Looked after Children and Care Leavers
Herts Partnership Foundation Trust	Professional Lead for Social Care in CAMHS
Central London Community Healthcare, Sexual Health Services	Named Nurse Safeguarding Children (CLCH)
CGL	Senior Social Worker
Missing People	Team Leader
Herts Young Homeless	
By formal invite only	
HCC Children's Services	Allocated Social Worker / IFST worker Team Manager
Probation Service	Allocated PSO/PO
Education	Virtual School School Rep
District/Borough Council	Operational level rep e.g. ASB
Youth Action Panel (YAP)	Chair – where escalation of case to MACE
Any other members as the Chair deems appropriate e.g. CAMHS, Voluntary Group Reps	

NB. Should the designated representative or allocated professional not be able to attend a meeting then a fully briefed deputy is expected to attend in their place. All members are expected to be proactively engaged in the panel, taking ownership and accountability of actions relevant to their individual organisation.

Review Case Selection and Preparation

All children and young people discussed will remain open to MACE 1 discussion until the risk is reduced or a multi-agency decision is made that it no longer requires MACE 1 discussion (e.g. family move out of area).

Further dates for case review (or closure to MACE discussion) will be decided by all MACE 1 members during the meeting. A MACE Tracker will be updated with relevant review dates. The tracker will identify any cases due for review each month and these will be automatically added to the agenda and previous minutes of discussion embedded into the agenda.

Information Sharing

Information will be shared at the MACE Panel under the Hertfordshire MACE Information Sharing Agreement and in line with any relevant agency policies. A signed version of this agreement will be held centrally in Children's Services within the MACE administration.

Alongside this a Privacy Impact Assessment has been completed and a Privacy Notice can be found on the external referral form.

A MACE Confidentiality Declaration will be included as standard with every meeting invitation and read out at the start of all MACE 1 meetings.

Frequency

MACE 1 Panel will be held monthly on the **last Friday in the month from 9.30am in the East** and **third Friday in the month from 9.30am in the West**. It is anticipated it will last for three hours, dependent on the cases discussed.

Meeting details for the calendar year can be obtained from the MACE Panel Administrator.

Governance

This is a multi-agency meeting with overall governance provided by HCC's Children's Services. However, as a multi-agency group it will require commitment by all its core members.

To enable scrutiny and oversight Hertfordshire's MACE will report into Hertfordshire's Strategic Safeguarding Adolescents Group (SSAG), a sub-group of Hertfordshire's Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP).