



North Tyneside Council



Missing, Slavery, Exploited, Trafficked (MSET) Strategy

2020-22



Introduction

Safeguarding children and young people is everyone's business in North Tyneside.

This is particularly the case with child exploitation, missing children and children who are at risk of, or who have been trafficked. Individuals be that professionals or members of the public, agencies, and partnerships can all play their part in safeguarding our children. It is vital that people know what to look for and what to do if they suspect exploitation. Child sexual exploitation and trafficking destroys lives and its effects damage our communities.

This strategy outlines the commitment of North Tyneside Children's Services and their Safeguarding Children Partnership to make sure professionals work together effectively to identify exploitation, protect those who are at risk, support victims and disrupt and prosecute criminals who exploit children.

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Our Passion

'Our Passion' is to make North Tyneside an even greater place for children and young people to thrive; where all, including those who are vulnerable, disadvantaged or disabled have the best possible life.

The Missing, Slavery, Exploitation and Trafficked (MSET) panel has been developed to provide an effective response to some of our most vulnerable children and young people who do go missing or become exploited. Children and young people, who are assessed as at medium or high risk of exploitation, will be provided with a coordinated response, formulated across the MSET partners to consider the worries and how best to disrupt and prevent exploitation and violence.

North Tyneside Safeguarding Children Partnership (NTSCP) believe that this is a key priority area and are committed to addressing the worries around children going missing from home, care or school, being abused through child sexual and criminal exploitation along with concerns of exposure to modern-day slavery and trafficking.

This strategy builds upon the significant work already taking place and sets out how all agencies will work together to provide the most effective and co-ordinated response over the next two years to prevent children and young people being exploited and being missing.

Our Purpose

'Our Purpose' is to ensure that children and young people in North Tyneside are safe, healthy, have a voice, have opportunities, and are happy.

The MSET partnership are invested in protecting the safety of children and young people in North Tyneside. The MSET panel works with children and young people

whose safety is a growing worry through being missing or exploited. Referral to MSET will provide a robust disruption plan for those at risk of exploitation allowing safeguarding to be as early and effective as possible.

North Tyneside Council and our partner agencies condemn any form of exploitation of children, young people and adults. The MSET panel has the joint aim of preventing all levels of harm and vulnerability whilst supporting victims of exploitation and working with the police to prevent and stop the cycle of harm.

Strategic planning and collaborative multi-agency working allows for effective leadership and progress in our understanding and practice regarding MSET, the impact of this is to improve the lives of children and young people at risk of harm and exploitation.

In order to achieve this we have strengthened the early identification and assessment of children at risk; we want to raise awareness across North Tyneside within agencies, communities, children and their families; continue to improve the victim experience to ensure intervention, protection and support is provided, including therapeutic support and access to specialist services into adulthood; and lead in disrupting perpetrator behaviour and bring offenders to justice through continually understanding the local profile and risk assessments which address criminal activity.

Whilst this strategy relates specifically to children it is important to recognise that there are some adults who are victims of non-recent sexual abuse and trafficking. The identification of an adult who has been exploited or is being exploited can lead to the identification of risk to children.

Agencies should also be prepared to work across borders with partners in other Local Authority areas in order to effectively respond to child who are missing or at risk / are being exploitation

Our Pledges

- 1. We will intervene early with evidence-based, family-focused services*
- 2. We will work in partnership to keep children in school*
- 3. We will keep children and young people safe at home, healthy and connected to their local communities*

To fulfil 'Our Pledges', MSET will prioritise the following actions:

- Develop an informed and supported workforce and partnership, including the offer of training and development in relation to exploitation;
- Aim to strengthen the existing multi-agency structures and information sharing arrangements in order to obtain a clearer picture of abuse and identify opportunities for earlier intervention;

- Raise awareness of exploitation within the local community via posters and leaflets;
- Empower children and young people as well as their family and network, to understand exploitation and the worries that can accompany missing episodes, to build strategies for managing this and confidence in the response they will gain from services;
- Prioritising supportive relationships between young people and key practitioners to promote trust.

Our Principles

We will:

- *Work to give the right help at the right time*
- *Work only for as long as necessary*
- *Work openly, honestly and respectfully*
- *Work to build strong relationships with those we work with*
- *Work with the whole family and network to bring about change*

These principles have been developed within North Tyneside Children's Services and provide a strong foundation for MSET in responding to children and young people who are at risk of going missing, being exploited or trafficked. As a partnership we have committed to the principles and have developed further our commitment in relation to MSET this includes:

- We seek to build resilience amongst children and young people to prevent vulnerabilities from escalating into exploitation through early intervention.
- We will aim to protect our young people and the wider community from the potential harms of exploitation, violence and abuse and provide individualised assessments.
- We seek to work to have the right people and agencies being involved at the right time to safeguard our young people.
- We will invest in and equip our workforce and partner agencies to understand and identify exploitation risks and respond in the safest most effective way possible and escalate appropriately so the right support is put in place and the right time.
- We will continue to refine the work we do around our young people who go missing, and our responses and support for them.

The Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) echo our commitment to safeguarding against exploitation. The MASA principles compliment and support those outlined above:

- Seeing things through the eyes of children and young people, practitioners and partners
- Listening to what people, practitioners and partners tell us
- Streamlining and integrating partnership arrangements, where appropriate
- Inclusive approach to scrutiny, assurance and learning
- Supporting and informing wider multi-agency and regional activity
- An approach based on better understanding of needs, vulnerabilities and risks
- A transparent, inclusive and accountable approach to partnership working

The principles outlined above reflect our mutual commitment to prevent and disrupt exploitation by working together to gather, share and understand information and intelligence to protect the child/young person and to discuss perpetrators, related locations, peer groups to identify potential risks of grooming and further exploitation

Our Practice Standards

Children will:

- *Be listened to and we will act on what they tell us*
- *Have people important to them involved in helping*
- *Have their needs clearly understood*
- *Have a plan that tells those who need to know how to keep them safe and meet their needs*
- *Only have help for as long as they need it*
- *Be able to understand all the things written about them*
- *Have help that follows the rules*
- *Have help from workers who get the advice and support they need to do a good job*

MSET is a multi-agency approach to the exploitation of children and young people, in line with 'Our Practice Standards' MSET is child-centred with all decisions being made based on the individual child/young person's safeguarding needs. We will include and

value our young people's voices throughout our work, our response, and in how we develop our services.

To allow MSET to work in accordance with our practice standards we have:

- Amended our MSET Policy, making this more accessible to the workforce, partner agencies and public alike;
- Reviewed our Risk Assessment Tool so this fits with our practice model (Signs of Safety);
- Researched good practice from other areas to enhance our responses;
- Delivered workforce development sessions relating to Contextual Safeguarding issues;
- Produced an awareness poster and leaflet to be distributed in our communities.

Governance and Partnership

NTSCP is the responsible body for the strategy and action plan which supports and influences work across North Tyneside to safeguard children who are victims or at risk of exploitation, children missing from home, school and care and child trafficking.

To support the strategy the board has a strategic group and an operational group as detailed below.

Progress of this strategy will be monitored by the **MSET Strategic Group**, by working in accordance with an agreed detailed action plan, considering local need and learning from national research and practice.

The roles within the governance structure are:

MSET Strategic Group: This is the strategic sub-group that drives the multi-agency strategy, develops and agrees the approach to commissioning multi-agency operating models and ensures the implementation and effectiveness of this strategy. It reports directly to NTSCP.

MSET Leads Group: The operational group ensures the service delivery and seeks to obtain intelligence to identify patterns and trends. The group consider those children at highest risk of repeat missing episodes and children at risk or who have experiences of child trafficking. The group reports to responsible senior officers in the Council and Police. The group also report to the **MSET Strategic Group**.