



Multiagency Risk, Vulnerability and Exploitation (MARVE) Protocol

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Introduction

There has been a strong focus on child sexual exploitation and this has ensured that this vulnerable group of children is safeguarded effectively. Merton like many other boroughs is facing the issues of children going missing, being criminally exploited and/or trafficked.

There are clear links between child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour, gangs, serious youth violence and those who are missing or being trafficked. By dealing with these matters in isolation there is a risk that gender bias - boys being criminalised whilst girls are treated as victims and criminalisation of these children will mean that safeguarding issues are missed. Combining all areas will ensure a robust multi agency response across the Local Authority and its multi agency partners ensuring all children who are exploited are safeguarded.

This paper sets out the multi-agency arrangements for identifying and responding to children, young people and families affected by exploitation in the London Borough of Merton. This paper builds on the significant work already taking place within Merton and sets out how all agencies will work together to ensure the most effective and coordinated response to exploitation of children. The paper will draw from a number of current protocols and strategies to combine and integrate these into one Exploitation Protocol. Throughout this paper the terms 'child', 'children' and 'young people' are used to refer to all those under the age of 18, including those subject to statutory services.

Child exploitation is the act of using a child for profit, labor, sexual gratification, or some other personal, criminal or financial advantage. Child exploitation often results in abusive or harmful treatment of the child, as the activities he or she may be forced to take part in can cause emotional, physical, and social harm.

Cases emerging from practice show that similar methods of grooming, coercion and threats are used by adults, peers and gang's to sexually exploit children, force children to run drugs (County Lines), traffic children and criminally exploit children. Limited support for and recognition of the exploitation is available to help children to escape these abusive situations or prevent adults, peers and gangs grooming children for involvement in crime. Instead these children are often seen and treated as criminals or problematic rather than as vulnerable children who have been exploited.

Practitioners should also take time to read:

- HM Government (2015) Working together to safeguard children (2018)
- Pan-London Child Protection Procedures (Section 7 and Part B, Chapter 12)
- The London Child Sexual Exploitation Operating Protocol, 3rd Edition, March 2017
- HM Government (2016) Ending Gang Violence and Exploitation
- Home Office (2017) Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: County Lines guidance
- London Safeguarding Children's Board (2009) "Safeguarding children affected by gang activity and / or serious youth violence" (Nov 2009)
- Firmin, C. and Curtis, G MsUnderstood Partnership (2015) Practitioner Briefing #1: What is peer-on-peer abuse?
- London Safeguarding Trafficked Children Toolkit (2011)
- 'Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation' Action Plan, 2015.1
- Children Missing from Home and Care Policy, Merton (2018)

Terminology

Missing

A child (i.e. a young person under the age of 18 years) is to be considered '*missing*' if their whereabouts cannot be established and where circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be subject of a crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another. They will be considered missing until they are located and their well-being or otherwise is established.

Absences that cause concern are those where:

- Staff or carers have no indication as to the child's whereabouts and/or
- There is no indication that the child is likely to return within a reasonable period of time and
- There is immediate concern for the child's safety.

There may be circumstances when a child who goes missing from home / care / education is experiencing harm or is at risk of harm. This includes children subjected to fabricated or induced illness, female genital mutilation, abuse by children, abduction by family or others, domestic violence, sexually exploited, trafficked and asylum seeking children.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual 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 sexual 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 sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. (Department for Education Child Sexual Exploitation Definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers February 2017)

Criminal Exploitation /County Lines

County lines is an emerging national issue involving the use of mobile phone lines by groups to extend their drug dealing business to new locations outside their home areas. A county lines enterprise almost always involves exploitation of vulnerable people for the purpose of couriering drugs, often "plugged" internally, and/or to sell drugs at the other end of the line in a "trap house", which is often acquired through a tactic, known as "cuckooing" (befriending/targeting vulnerable people that live alone then taking over their home to set up shop).

Once a young person has entered into the world of county lines they become trapped and it is very difficult for them to exit this criminal behaviour. The impact of county lines is that young people are drawn in under the promise of reward, whether via cash, clothes, phones, gifts or other means. The advertising of lines is also a challenge with many using online social networks such as Snapchat which makes tracing very difficult

Modern Slavery (Human Trafficking)

Trafficking is the movement of people by means such as force, fraud, coercion or deception with the aim of exploiting them. It is modern day slavery. Taking someone from one location to another to commit crimes, against their will, is a form of human trafficking (this includes taking them to another borough or county in England).

Please see the attached Home Office definitions and here is the link to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) documents: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-trafficking-victims-referral-and-assessment-forms>

Also see the Pan-London Safeguarding Procedures:

http://www.londoncp.co.uk/chapters/sg_trafficked_ch.html 6

Gangs

The Government adopted the definition set out in the Centre for Social Justice's (CSJ) 2009 report, 'Dying to Belong', as its definition of a gang. A gang is defined as: 'a relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of young people who:

1. see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group;
2. engage in criminal activity and violence;
3. lay claim over territory (not necessarily geographical but can include an illegal economy territory);
4. have some form of identifying structural feature; and
5. are in conflict with other, similar, gangs.

The Serious Crime Act 2015 widened the terminology where a "gang-related" act is when it occurs in the course of, or is otherwise related to, the activities of a group that—
(a) consists of at least three people, and (b) has one or more characteristics that enable its members to be identified by others as a group.

Serious Youth Violence

Serious youth violence is defined with reference to offences of the most serious in nature including murder, rape and GBH between children under-18 (London Safeguarding Children Board 2009)

Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Sexual behaviours expressed by children and young people under the age of 18 years old that are developmentally inappropriate, may be harmful towards self or others, or be abusive towards another child, young person or adult (derived from Hackett, 2014).

Peer-on-Peer Abuse

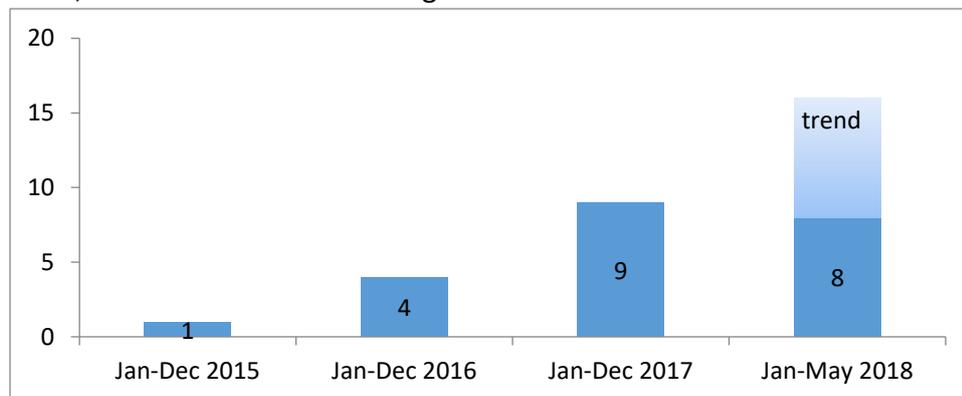
This is a term to define the violence, sexual harm and exploitation that occurs **between** children that are both under-18. This could include Domestic Abuse, Child Sexual Exploitation, Online bullying, Harmful sexual behaviour or Serious Youth Violence. Domestic abuse relates to young people aged 16 and 17 who experience physical, emotional, sexual and/or financial abuse, and coercive control, in their intimate relationships (Home Office 2013 – see VAWG Strategy). See other terms above for other forms of harm.

Workers need to be mindful that peer-on-peer abuse can involve female-to-female; male-to-male and between females and males. Therefore, victims can be a boy or a girl and 'perpetrators' can be a boy or a girl.

Context

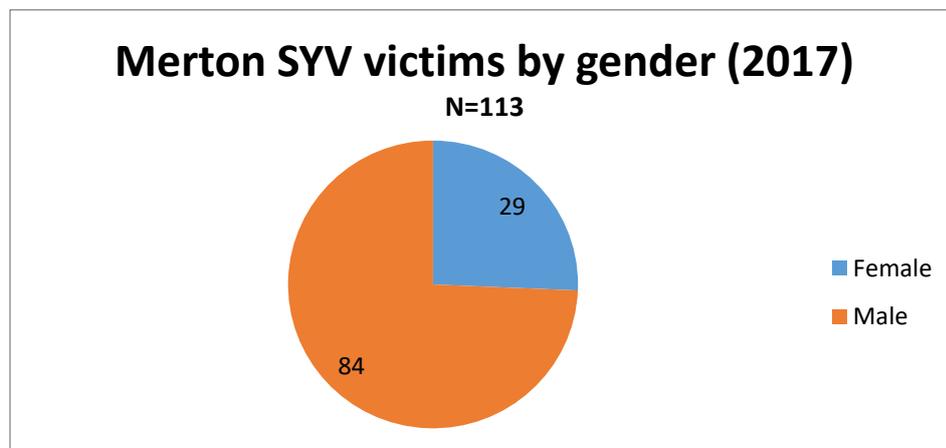
Rising numbers of young people involved in County Lines

In May 2018 the Youth Justice Team conducted a review of cases identified as involved in 'county lines' in the last three years, which was a total of 23. This included 8 new cases for 2018, which shows an increasing trend as there were 9 cases for all of the previous year.



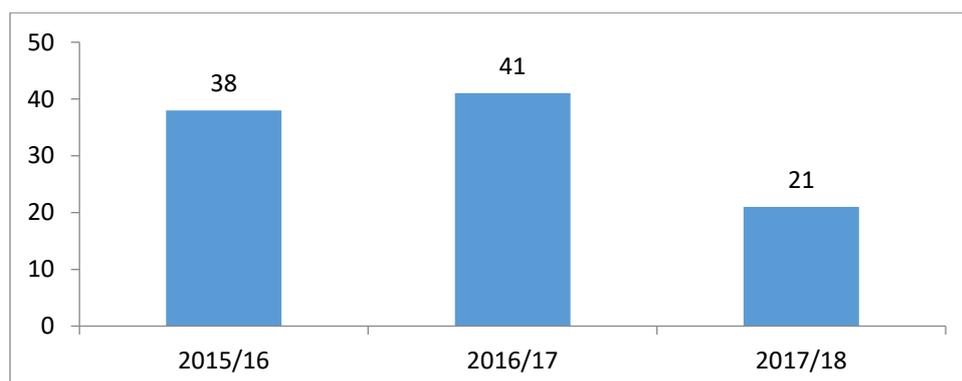
Serious youth violence profile

Victims of serious youth violence are aged 1-19, and have been subject to offences such as violence against the person, sexual offences, robbery, or gun or knife crime.



CSE Referrals trend

The CSE Self Assessment, March 2018, outlines the number of referrals in the last three years, showing a decline but still a significant number of children at risk of CSE.



Boys: Adolescent Risk and Exploitation

Promote and Protect young people (PPYP) Sub-group of Merton Safeguarding Children's Board (MSCB) commissioned the Board Manager and the CSE Lead to undertake a piece of work to help the Sub-Group to understand why there are so few boys identified as being at risk of CSE. This identified the fact that vulnerable boys experience multiple forms of exploitation that does not readily 'fit' into the CSE framework. This mapping has identified that groups of boys are exposed to multiple forms of harm and exploitation including:

- Missing from home/school/care
- Exploitation in places/spaces of concern
- Sexual offending
- Modern slavery/trafficking/County lines and/or criminal exploitation by gangs
- Sexual exploitation

This included 47 boys (aged 14 to 17 years) with the following:

- 23 have had accusations of harmful sexual behaviour (HSB)
- 7 have been referred for CSE as victims
- 8 involved in serious youth violence and criminal exploitation
- 9 gang affiliated county lines - holding weapons and/or possession of class A drugs

Our current responses look at these boys as perpetrators but not as victims.

In addition these young people are considered at a range of different panels which review part of the risk (normally around offending) but not the whole risk (especially not victimisation).

When this group of boys are considered as victims of multiple forms of exploitation, it is clear that their needs, as vulnerable boys, are not currently being fully assessed or met. There is a need for early intervention when these children are younger. There is strong evidence that targeting begins when children are of primary age.

Girls: harmful sexual behaviour and exploitation

Children's Social Care and the MSCB were asked to review a number of cases where there had been sexual assaults on girls, perpetrated by girls. It became clear that the current harmful sexual behaviour protocol was not understood by all professionals in contact with these cases. It is believed that as a result of gender-bias the oversight of the risks posed by the girls that caused the harm was potentially missed.

The other finding of this review was that strategy meetings were often not including the education, health and specialist workers (e.g. Youth Justice for those accused of harmful sexual behaviour or CSE Lead for the victims). This highlights the need for a holistic approach to strategy meetings when considering the safety of victims.

Previously the MASE panel has recognised that girls who have been identified as at risk of sexual exploitation have then become a risk to others (both boys and girls) in regard to 'recruiting' and 'grooming' them into harmful activities.

Adolescence is a time of growth and exploration. In a focus group with young people they have said that in relationships they are worried about:

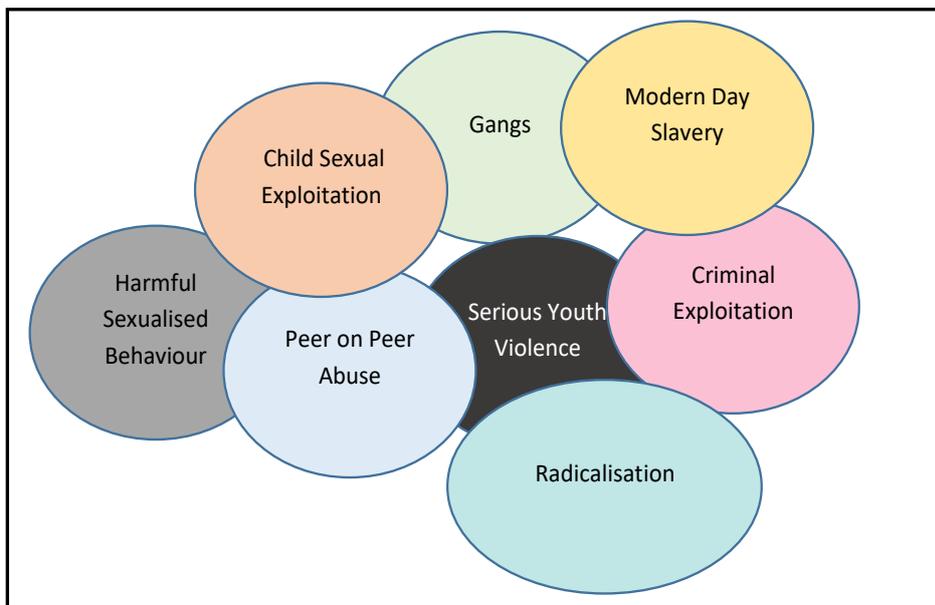
- Being hurt or abused
- Being touched without their consent
- Verbal and emotional abuse
- Being controlled, and being emotionally blackmailed (e.g. “if you were a good girlfriend/boyfriend you would do...”)
- Pressure to be more sexual than they want to
- Understanding consent

Contextual Safeguarding

There is a growing body of research (see Firmin 2013; Firmin et al 2016; Firmin 2017) which highlights the significance of contextual safeguarding, which promotes the idea that young people’s behaviours, levels of vulnerability and levels of resilience are all informed by the social/public, as well as private, contexts in which young people spend their time. Drawing upon research into adolescent development, it recognises that as children grow they spend increasing amounts of time socialising with peers, at school and in public environments independently of parental/carer supervision.

Merton is committed to implementing a Contextual Safeguarding Framework that will allow for a Child Protection system that recognises the weight of peer influence on the decisions that young people make; extends the notion of ‘capacity to safeguard’ to sectors that operate beyond families and provides a framework in which referrals can be made for contextual interventions that complement work with individuals and families.

Harm Overlap



The case studies on the next page give examples of the complex nature and over-lap of harm in regard to adolescent safeguarding and the need for streamlined responses, regardless of the indicating behaviour. This approach is also supported through research (“That Difficult Age” by Hanson and Holmes, 2014)

Case Studies

Case Study A

Young girl aged 13, when referred for Child Sexual Exploitation risks due to associating with an older female who was causing violence within a group / gang. There were reports of her going missing and sharing social media images. Following the separation from the older female she shared naked images of others in revenge (harmful sexual behaviour). Her older siblings were also under assessment for sexual exploitation. This girl started to take other young people to locations of concerns and became associated with young people in gangs and involved in criminal activity, including violence on others. She befriended younger females, one of whom became a close family friend of her father.

Case Study B

Young boy aged 15, when referred to Young Offender Management panel due to concerns of associating with young people involved in serious youth violence, going missing and at risk of exploitation by an older adult male. His mother was concerned that the exploitation could lead to radicalisation. This young boy was then missing on a regular basis, staying at a friend's address where there were concerns about the safety in the home. He was missing education and told workers he was working in a garage (without agreement of school or parent). There were also reports of him going missing to county locations and that he was carrying old Nokia phones (risk of County Lines).

Case Study C

Young girl aged 16, when referred to gang's workers due to criminal activity, which included the coercion of other young people (male and female) to cause serious harm. There was concern that she was dealing Class A drugs and travelling to deal. She was associated to a gang in a neighbouring borough. She had images of younger children on her phone and was referred to the Persons of Concern panel due to this and her relationship with highly vulnerable girls and boys, including sexual relationships with younger girls. Through direct work, disclosures were made in regard to familial abuse and shame in regard to sexuality.

Case Study D

Young boy aged 14, when referred to gang's workers due to concerns about him being affiliated with older gang nominals and returning home late or going missing frequently. Referrals to social care made in regard to his vulnerability. Later became more involved in criminal behaviour and causing serious harm to younger teenagers. He was as accused of rape and of exploiting boys into drug dealing. Through direct work, disclosures were made in regard to familial abuse and neglect.

Presenting needs / indicators

The following two tables outline the indicators and presenting needs that cross over all of the areas of harm or where there are several areas of cross-over.

Missing (home / care/ education)	Child Sexual Exploitation	Criminal exploitation / county lines	Modern Slavery (human trafficking)	Gangs and serious youth violence	Harmful sexual behaviour
Running away from home/care and going missing/sofa surfing/street homelessness					
Non attendance at school / poor attendance at school/ not enrolled in school					
Being in residential or foster care (especially out of area)					
Located or recovered from a place of exploitation (brothel, cannabis farm, 'trap / cuckooed address')					
Entering or leaving or found in vehicles driven by unknown adults					
Experience of physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect - Experience of bullying					
Inappropriate use of the internet and forming on-line relationships, particularly with adults					
Low self-esteem, low self-image, seeking a sense of belonging and acceptance					
Speech, language, social, emotional and communication difficulties					
Drug and alcohol misuse – particularly class A drugs					
Parents / carers with a high level of vulnerabilities (mental health / substance misuse)					
Sexual violence, including sexual assault, rape.					
Indecent images being taken and shared as part of revenge or punishment					
Teenage pregnancy and/or sexually transmitted infections and/or frequent clinic attendance					
Notable changes in behaviour or habits – signs of being exploited (sexual / physical)					
Long term history of sexual, physical and psychological harm					
Mental health issues including self harm and para-suicide, psychological trauma					
Learning disabilities (Diagnosed or undiagnosed) / intellectual vulnerability					
In "relationship" with older male or female					
Involved or associated in the gang activity / "culture" (e.g. YouTube videos)					
Family involved in sexual / criminal exploitation					
Experience of domestic violence and/or family breakdown					

Missing (home / care / education)	Child Sexual Exploitation	Criminal Exploitation /County Lines	Modern Slavery (Human Trafficking)	Gangs and Serious youth Violence	Harmful Sexual Behaviour
	Conflicting sexual identity			Conflicting sexual identity	
	Internally inserting drugs				
	Arrested in a 'county' or unfamiliar location for Possession with Intent to supply Class A drugs				
	Disclosures of exploitation through sexual, criminal (cannabis farms, petty street crimes, begging), labour / domestic servitude, drug dealing for others. Including withdrawals of disclosures.				
	Found in possession of hotel key / cards or keys to unknown premises.				
	Evidence of domestic servitude		Evidence of domestic servitude		
	Forced marriage		Forced marriage		
	Forced isolation from family, friends, community				
	In receipt of goods or money as "gifts" or for which there is no account Returning, looking well cared for despite no known base				
	Friendships/ peers involved or associated in Children Sexual Exploitation/ Criminal Exploitation/ and or gangs			Friendships/ peers involved or associated in Children Sexual Exploitation/ Criminal Exploitation/ and or gangs	
	Debt bondage - where young person is in debt and is used to control and punish young person				
	Is accompanied by an adult who may not be legal guardian and who insists on remaining with the child at all times (or "loiters" nearby)				
	Tiredness and sleep deprivation				
	Youth Justice interventions or any offences (whether convicted or arrested)			Youth Justice interventions or any offences (convicted or arrested)	
	Anxiety about attendance at college / education sites/ or particular areas				
	Excessive receipt of texts / phone calls / unidentified callers				
	Carrying weapons			Carrying weapons	
	Has a prepared story very similar to other children given – perhaps hinting they have been coached				
			Registered at number addresses		
			Entered country illegally / unable to confirm how arrived / no passport		

See Appendix 1 for the RAG ratings and risk categories to be used in meetings / panels that consider the level of exploitation or risk of harm.

Key Principles when responding to exploitation or harm

A child-centred approach - Action will be focussed on the child's needs, including consideration of children with particular vulnerabilities or sensitivities, and the fact that children do not always acknowledge what may be an exploitative or abusive situation.

A proactive approach - This should be focussed on prevention, early identification and intervention, as well as disruption activity and prosecuting perpetrators.

Parenting, family life, and services - Action will take account of family circumstances when deciding how best to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. We will also consider the risks posed to other members of the family as a result of exploitation.

The rights of children and young people - Children and young people are entitled to be safeguarded from exploitation just as agencies have duties in respect of safeguarding and promoting welfare.

Responsibility for criminal acts – sexually exploited or trafficked children should be treated as victims of abuse, not as offenders. The responsibility for the exploitation of children lies with the abuser and the focus of police investigations should be on those who coerce, exploit and abuse children and young people.

An integrated approach – Tackling exploitation requires a three-pronged approach; prevention, protection and prosecution.

A shared responsibility – Multi-agency responsibility is underpinned by a strong commitment from managers, a shared understanding of the problem of sexual and criminal exploitation and effective coordination by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Recognition - Exploitation includes sexual, physical and emotional abuse, in some cases, neglect. Children do not make informed choices to enter or remain in exploitative situations, but do so from coercion, enticement, manipulation or desperation. Section 5 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 makes it an offence for a person intentionally to sexually penetrate a child under the age of 13. Whether or not the child consented to this act is irrelevant.

Young people have told us the following about relationships:

- They want adults (including parents, carers, teachers, mentors etc.) to take them and their relationships seriously
- They want advice, guidance and support to help them to think clearly about relationships and to keep themselves safe. There is a difference between advice and control. Young people want to be advised and supported they do not want to be controlled and restricted.
- They do not want judgement or criticism.
- They need access to good quality, relevant information so that they are aware and informed about healthy relationships
- They want us to keep them safe whilst recognising their freedom to make their own choices.

Procedure to respond

When responding to exploitation and/or harmful behaviour there are two elements that often intertwine and overlap:

- **Safeguarding**
- **Enforcement**

Safeguarding

If you believe that urgent action is needed because, for example, a child is in immediate danger (upper Level 3 of the Merton Wellbeing Model), phone the MASH on **020 8545 4226** or **020 8545 4227** (Out of hours: **020 8770 5000**) and give as much information as you can.

If you have a Child Protection concern but urgent and immediate action is not needed (lower Level 3 of the Merton Wellbeing Model), you must complete a Child Protection Referral form in as much detail as possible (this should include a completed Screening Tool – Appendix 2) and send it to the MASH (mash@merton.gov.uk) and cse.referrals@merton.gov.uk

Safeguarding response to a Missing Child

Please refer to the Missing Protocol developed by Merton Children’s Social Care and Borough Police. Missing incidents will increase the risk of exploitation but each incident of missing, depending on the length and risks present will be dealt with in their own right.

Reporting Suspicions of exploitation - Multi Agency Responsibilities

Professionals in all agencies should be alert to the possibility that a child/young person they are working with may be exploited, whether sexually or criminally (forced labour or county lines). The professional may already have concerns about the child/young person e.g. missing school, missing from home, self-harming.

Exploitation is a form of abuse, whether sexually, physically or emotionally. **Child protection procedures should be followed** when there are concerns that a child is at risk of sexual or criminal exploitation or trafficking (or is already the victim of such).

If you are concerned about potential child sexual or criminal exploitation you will need to complete the screening tool (see Appendix 2) and the assessment within the Referral form (see Appendix 3). These tools will help you to clarify the nature of your concerns and provide an evidence-base to support your referral. The tools will be available through the Tackling Exploitation Team or by emailing CSE Referrals (CSE.Referrals@merton.gov.uk)

When you have completed the screening tool and referral form you should send them to mash@merton.gov.uk and copy to CSE.Referrals@merton.gov.uk (please ensure you follow secure processes if you are sending this from outside of the council).

If the child in question already has an allocated Social Worker, they are the point of contact for concerns and **upon notification of concerns** will become the person responsible for completing the screening tool and referral (the allocated Social Worker should send a copy of the completed forms to CSE.Referrals@merton.gov.uk so that all cases of exploitation have a single point of referral and can be tracked).

The screening and referral are to be completed by a professional. While it may be appropriate to complete the checklist with the child/family of the child, consideration should be made of whether engaging the child and family and alerting them to the risks may compound risk or further alienate the child. If appropriate the young person could be engaged in a process of self-assessment by using the SAFEGUARD form (Appendix 4).

Responding to a risk of serious youth violence

If a young person states they are under threat they should be encouraged to call the police. If immediate danger is identified call 999, otherwise call 101 for you or the young person to make a statement. These should trigger a Police Risk Assessment, which will also assist Safeguarding teams in their response. Social Care MASH should also seek a MOPAC gang worker's assessment when notified about a young person at threat of harm due to gang involvement, drug debt or drug dealing. Workers can use the Screening Tool to consider concerns for serious youth violence alongside vulnerabilities.

In order to ensure that open and safe information sharing can occur between partners there must be a firm commitment to not jump to conclusions and **do not disclose to young people where 'intelligence' has come from**. A picture can take time to unfold and if a professional or individual is perceived to be a "snitch" this can shut down working relationships but most importantly jeopardise the safety of individuals (including staff).

Responding to young people who cause harmful sexual behaviour

Anyone who has a concern that a child or young person under 18 has displayed or committed problematic or harmful sexual behaviour should have a Consultation with MASH. Any professional who is unsure of the need for such a consultation must seek advice from the Safeguarding Lead within their agency. Anyone who has a concern that a child or an adult might have been a victim of harmful sexual behaviour should refer their concerns to the Police.

Whenever a child may have harmed another child, all agencies must be aware of their responsibilities to both children and multi-agency management of both cases must reflect this.

The interests of the identified victim must always be the paramount consideration.

It is possible that the child with harmful behaviours may pose a significant risk of harm to their own siblings, other children and / or adults.

The child will have considerable needs themselves, and may also be or have been the victim of abuse. The following key principles should underpin all work with children who display problematic or harmful sexual behaviour:

- There should be a coordinated response between the agencies within the Merton Safeguarding Children Board;
- Incidents of harmful sexual behaviour should be dealt with under Child Protection procedures which recognise the Child Protection and potentially criminal element to the behaviour.

- Professionals should consider the needs of the children and young people who display harmful sexual behaviour separately from the needs of their victims;
- An assessment should be carried out in each case of problematic / harmful sexual behaviour, appreciating that children who display problematic / harmful sexual behaviour may have unmet developmental needs and may have suffered considerable disruption in their lives, been exposed to violence within the family, may have witnessed or been subject to Physical Abuse or Sexual Abuse, have problems in their educational development and may have committed other offences. Such children / young people are likely therefore to be Children in Need; some will / may have suffered Significant Harm and be in need of protection themselves.
- Children who display problematic / harmful sexual behaviour should be held responsible for their abusive behaviour while being identified and responded to in a way which meets their needs as well as protecting others;
- Early and effective, intervention with children and young people who display problematic or harmful sexual behaviour can play an important part in protecting children, by preventing the continuation or escalation of abusive behaviour.

Enforcement

This requires a targeted criminal justice system approach which delivers swift appropriate justice to deter and put a stop to the criminal behaviour of the most harmful individuals influencing or exploiting others into serious or organised crime. Through transparent partnership working between police, Safer Merton, the Youth Justice Team and Merton gangs workers the aim is to keep both gang affiliated young people and the community safe.

There are various legal measures that can deter and disrupt activity

- Child Abduction Warning Notices
- Antisocial behaviour legislation (Criminal Behaviour Orders)
- Civil and Gang injunctions
- Tenancy and Enforcement and Licencing Assessments
- Court Order requirements and enforcement of breach

These will involve various restrictions and requirements before being applied but should be considered whenever risk of significant harm to potential victims is evident.

Persons of Concern and Locations of interest

A separate referral form is available for professionals to refer a Person or Location of concern to the MARVE Panel (see Panel Terms of Reference, Appendix 3). The referral form for young people at risk of CSE / CCE / violence also asks you to provide information about concerns in regard to peers / adults / locations.

- A 'person of concern' is someone who 'appears to be developing a friendship or relationship based on power over a child by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources'.
- Locations of interest may be varied but could include fast food outlets, parks and taxi ranks.

Strategy meeting

All cases that meet the threshold will have a strategy discussion or meeting, following the London Child Protection Procedures. The first Strategy Discussion/Meeting should always be chaired by the London Borough of Merton's allocated Team Manager (or MASH manager if not yet allocated).

Attendees need to include Police, relevant lead (e.g. CSE Lead, Criminal Exploitation worker and/or Youth Justice lead for HSB), Education and health representatives.

Multi-agency information checks should be undertaken in advance of the meeting.

The Chair should always inform the lead professional that a meeting is taking place.

The purpose of the meeting is to decide if the child is at risk of significant harm and whether a section 47 enquiry should be carried out. If the child is not assessed as at risk of significant harm, the meeting should decide if the child meets the threshold for services as a child in need or whether the child should be referred to early help with an allocated lead professional developing and reviewing a support plan.

The meeting should have written minutes and the plan must specify who is responsible for undertaking the work, and a copy of the minutes should be retained and sent securely to all professionals in attendance.

Multi-professional specialist meetings (ongoing /review)

Where a risk of harm or exploitation is identified then the screening tool and referral form (and SAFEGUARD self-assessment completed by the young person where appropriate) will be utilised for the first meeting to assess (High/Medium/Low) the level of risk and ensure that ongoing reviews and planning can occur, lead by the allocated Team Manager (in the case of sexual exploitation by the CSE Lead).

Cases should be reviewed according to risk (e.g. monthly for High Risk and quarterly for Low Risk). If risk increases or a significant incident occurs then the meeting should be called earlier.

If the case is open to an allocated Police Officer / team then their attendance is required for all Medium to High and where possible for Low risk cases.

If the case is transferred to a new team then details of the allocated worker must be sent to the relevant lead specialist (e.g. CSE Lead, Criminal exploitation worker, Youth Justice).

Where the case is open to a Child Protection Plan then the allocated social worker is to ensure information and safety plans are shared across both meetings.

If the case is closed to social care prior to the review meeting date then attendance at that meeting should still occur and then arrangements made for an identified lead professional.

Parents and young people can attend / contribute to the multi-professional meeting.

When the child becomes an adult then a decision is required in regard to ongoing safeguarding referrals / signposting and support.

Oversight (MARVE Panel)

The MARVE is a Multi-Agency Operational Panel responsible for coordinating information sharing and multi-agency interventions to disrupt and respond to child sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour and serious youth violence. The MARVE Panel Meeting has been established to provide a comprehensive approach to tackling issues of exploitation and harm of or by children and young people across the Merton area. The MARVE Panel Meeting is the key mechanism for agreeing how relevant organisations will co-operate and work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in effectively tackling exploitation, vulnerability and risk. It is co-chaired by the Police and the Head of Adolescent and Family Service within Children's Social Care.

The Panel will be combining the previous adolescent panels operated in the borough:

- Multiagency Child Sexual Exploitation (MASE)
- Persons of Concern (POC)
- Young Offender Management (YOM)
- Gangs Multi-agency Panel (GMAP)
- Transforming Families

Referrals will be received for any child (under the age 18) and, where appropriate, Care Leavers or those on an Education, Health and Care Plan (up to age 25) where there are significant concerns or a strategy meeting has been held and risk concerns are identified in regard to:

- Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- Trafficking
- Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB)
- Exploitative behaviour
- Serious youth violence (SYV)
- Gangs

The panel will also discuss any adults who pose a risk of exploitation on children who have been sexually or criminally exploited (under agenda item 'Persons of Concern'). This can include young adult active gang nominals.

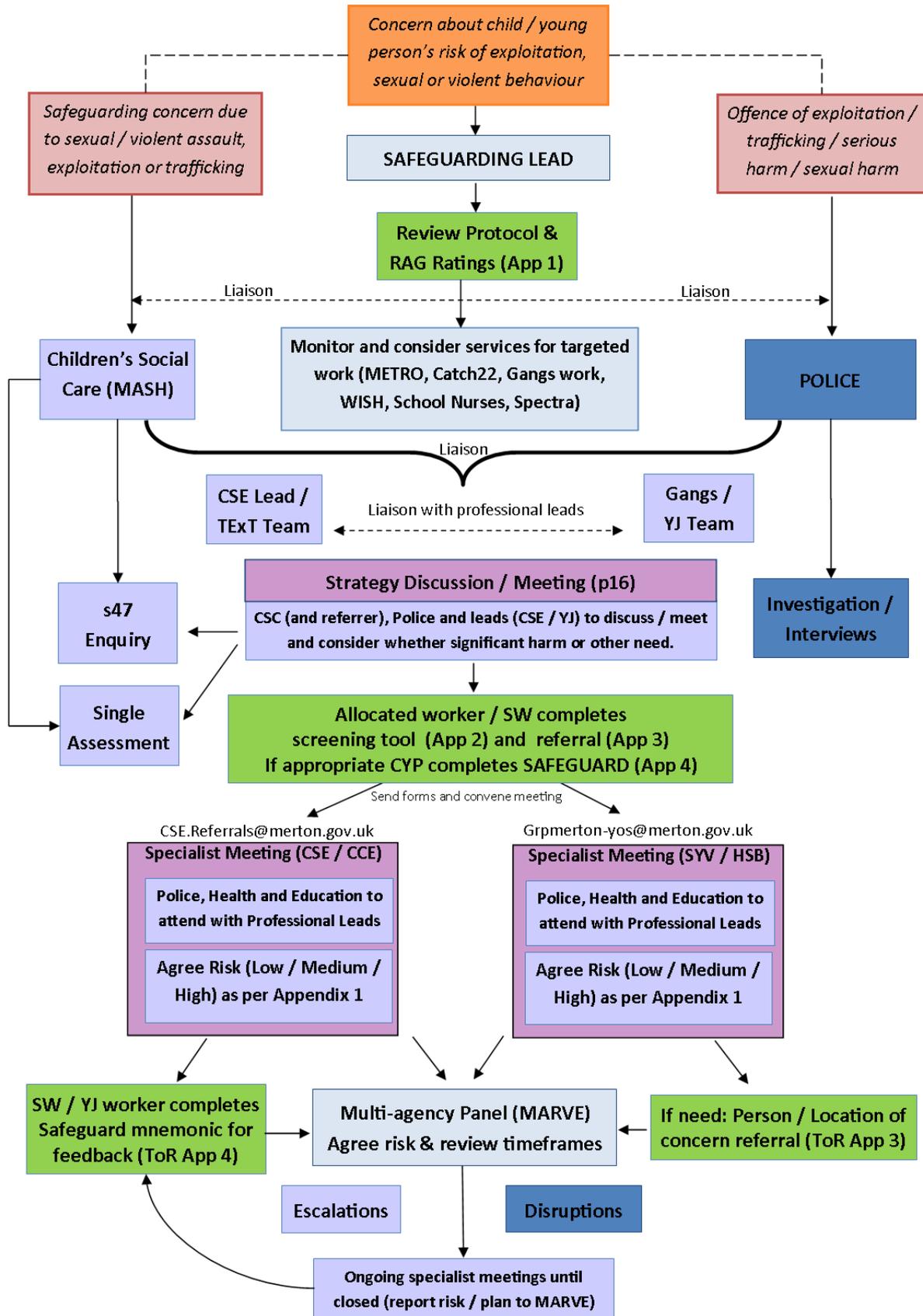
Cases accepted as appropriate to MARVE require the Lead Professional, Key Agency, Social Worker and/ or Team Manager to attend the Panel and provide information on the following:

- Summary – including significant incidents and facts of case
- SAFEGUARD mnemonic
- Child Protection Concerns
- The effectiveness of the multi-agency team around the child
- The types of interventions and their effectiveness

[See Appendix 5 for the full Terms of Reference of the panel](#)

Flowchart

Multiagency Risk, Vulnerability and Exploitation (MARVE) Flowchart



Appendix 1 - RAG Ratings for risk

Missing (home / care/ education)	Child Sexual Exploitation	Criminal exploitation / county lines	Modern Slavery (human trafficking)	Gangs and serious youth violence	Harmful sexual behaviour
<p>Low</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *One-off missing *Whereabouts known but not 'authorised' * Parents proactively reporting and making attempts to return 	<p>Low</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Regularly coming home late or going missing through the day or overnight *Overt sexualised risk taking including on internet *Unaccounted for monies or goods *Associating with unknown adults or other sexually exploited children *Reduced contact with family/friends *Sexually transmitted infection *Experimenting with drugs/alcohol *Poor self-image, eating disorder, some self-harm 	<p>Low</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Missing education – or leaving after registration. *Frequent use of phone / multiple phones / SIMs *Missing from home *Reports from home / school / peers that being coerced *Language of dealing 	<p>Low</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * history of missing links and unexplained moves *unable to give explanations for movements *fear of deportation *claims to have been in UK for years but hasn't learnt language 	<p>Low</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Reports from home / school / peers that involved in a named gang * Use of language in relation to drug dealing / violence / gangs * Identified in 'hot spot' areas *Substance misuse 	<p>Low</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Single instances of inappropriate sexual behaviour *Consent issues may be unclear *children of similar age *reflective of natural curiosity / experimentation
<p>Medium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Missing for more than 48hours *Indicators of exploitation (see over) 	<p>Medium (all above plus)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Getting into cars with unknown adults or known adults who pose a risk to children *Being groomed on internet *Clipping (offering sex then running on payment) *Receiving a "reward" for recruiting other peers to CSE *Disclosure of physical/ sexual assault followed by withdrawal of complaint *Reports of involvement in CSE, for example known to frequent or seen in 'hot spots' *Older boyfriend/Girlfriend *Non-school attendee or excluded due to behaviour *Staying out overnight with no explanation *Unaccounted monies/goods/mobiles, drugs, alcohol 	<p>Medium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Indicators that being coerced, dealing Class A and/or "going country" *Admits to carry a weapon for self protection <p>Recent concerns (last three months) about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Disclosures of 'running' drugs *Missing for more than 48hours *Found in car with unknown adult * States at threat of significant harm due to debt owed 	<p>Medium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Registered at number addresses * Indicators of domestic servitude * indicators that vulnerable to forced marriage 	<p>Medium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Admits to be affiliated to a named and 'active' gang *Appeared in 'gang video' *Involved in violent incidents / unexplained injuries *'Brag' about involvement in incidents *In receipt of goods / money without explanation *Tattoos / clothes to identify differently *Expressions of 'invincibility' or not caring what happens to them. 	<p>Medium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Problematic and concerning behaviours *May include levels of compulsivity *concern in regard to age or developmental differences *potential concern due to activity type / frequency / duration

Missing (home / care/ education)	Child Sexual Exploitation	Criminal exploitation / county lines	Modern Slavery (human trafficking)	Gangs and serious youth violence	Harmful sexual behaviour
<p>High</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Any child/ young person who presents an immediate risk to themselves or to others *Any child who is 12 years old or younger whose whereabouts are unknown *Any child deemed vulnerable due to learning &/ or physical disabilities, mental, emotional or physical health problems *Any child/ young person who is subject to a Child Protection or Sexual Exploitation Safety Plan *Any child/ young person who is abducted from care 	<p>High</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Child under 13 years * Pattern of street homelessness and staying with an adult believed to be sexually exploiting them *Meeting different adults where sex occurs *Multiple miscarriages and terminations *Removed from red light districts by professionals due to CSE *Being taken to clubs/hotels/B&B's for sex with adults and/or disclosure of serious physical/sexual assault and then withdrawal of allegation *Abduction and/or forced imprisonment *Missing without contact or support *Child known to have been bought/sold *Indicators of CSE in conjunction with chronic alcohol and drug use, mental health issues, self-harm 	<p>High</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Multiple and/or recent (last three months) arrests for County PWITS Class A. *Recently found in County traphouse / cuckooed house *Recently found with drugs in rectum or vagina. * Names individuals at threat of significant harm due to debt owed 	<p>High</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Entered country illegally / unable to confirm how arrived / no passport *Evidence of being exploited into forced labour, trafficked, forced marriage or other exploitation *Missing following placement due to exploitation *Identified as being at risk of significant harm 	<p>High</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Identified as being at risk of significant harm * Recent Incident (GBH kidnap, firearm related) *Hospitalised due to violent incident in last month. *Threat to life. *Identified as an 'elder' *Actively seeking to retaliate or continually returning to high risk areas. 	<p>High</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Physically violent, highly intrusive. *Violence arousing to perpetrator *Excessive, secretive, compulsive, coercive, degrading or threatening *involving significant age, developmental or power differences *of concern due to activity type, frequency, duration or the context in which they occur

Appendix 2 - Screening

Exploitation / Serious Youth Violence / Harmful Sexual Behaviour Screening Tool

Name of child/young person:

DOB:

Date of screening:

Age now:

Completed By:

Team:

Team manager:

Indicators	Please Tick	Last date if known
Running away from home/care and going missing/sofa surfing/street homelessness		
Non attendance at school / poor attendance at school/ not enrolled in school		
Being in residential or foster care (especially out of area)		
Located or recovered from a place of exploitation (brothel, cannabis farm, 'trap / cuckooed address')		
Entering or leaving or found in vehicles driven by unknown adults		
Experience of physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect - Experience of bullying		
Inappropriate use of the internet and forming on-line relationships, particularly with adults		
Low self-esteem, low self-image, seeking a sense of belonging and acceptance		
Speech, language, social, emotional and communication difficulties		
Drug and alcohol misuse – particularly class A drugs		
Parents / carers with a high level of vulnerabilities (mental health / substance misuse)		
Sexual violence, including sexual assault, rape. Indecent images being taken and shared as part of revenge or punishment		
Teenage pregnancy and/or sexually transmitted infections and/or frequent clinic attendance		
Notable changes in behaviour or habits – signs of being exploited (sexual / physical)		
Long term history of sexual, physical and psychological harm		
Mental health issues including self harm and para-suicide, psychological trauma		
Learning disabilities (Diagnosed or undiagnosed) / intellectual vulnerability		
In "relationship" with older male or female		
Involved or associated in the gang activity / "culture" (e.g. YouTube videos)		
Family involved in sexual / criminal exploitation		
Experience of domestic violence and/or family breakdown		

Indicators	Please Tick	Last date if known
Disclosures of exploitation through sexual, criminal (cannabis farms, petty street crimes, begging), labour / domestic servitude, drug dealing for others. Including withdrawals of disclosures.		
Conflicting sexual identity		
Internally inserting drugs		
Arrested in a 'county' or unfamiliar location for Possession with Intent to supply (PWITS) Class A drugs		
Found in possession of hotel key / cards or keys to unknown premises.		
Evidence of domestic servitude		
Forced marriage / Forced isolation from family, friends, community		
In receipt of goods or money as "gifts" or for which there is no account		
Returning, looking well cared for despite no known base		
Friendships/ peers involved or associated in Children Sexual Exploitation/ Criminal Exploitation/ and or gangs		
Debt bondage - where young person is in debt and is used to control and punish young person		
Is accompanied by an adult who may not be legal guardian and who insists on remaining with the child at all times (or "loiters" nearby)		
Tiredness and sleep deprivation		
Youth Justice interventions or any offences (whether convicted or arrested)		
Anxiety about attendance at college / education sites/ or particular areas		
Excessive receipt of texts / phone calls / unidentified callers		
Carrying weapons		
Has a prepared story very similar to other children given – perhaps hinting they have been coached		
Registered at number addresses		
Entered country illegally / unable to confirm how arrived / no passport		

Primary area of concern (sexual / criminal exploitation or violence)*:

According to RAG rating (see Appendix 1 of MARVE protocol) what is your view on the current level of risk:

*concerns about the young person being a victim should be prioritised

Appendix 3 – Referral Form (young person)



Exploitation / Serious Youth Violence / Harmful Sexual Behaviour referral

Child's Name:

DOB:

Ethnicity:

Address:

MOSAIC number:

Referrer:

Date of Referral:

Allocated Social Worker (if different):

Team name:

Team Manager:

Date screening form completed:

What are you worried about?

(Sexual assault, sexual behaviour, unhealthy relationships, disclosures made or withdrawn, grooming or exploitation from peers / adults / other, missing episodes, education concerns, neighbourhood concerns)

What's working well?

(Interventions / support, parental involvement and external controls, education, motivation by the young person, protective persons and places)

Danger statement – if nothing changes what is the worst that could happen?

What support / information / actions would you like?

Scaling (*highlight or circle the current scale*)

Safety

Rate the situation on a scale 0 – 10, 10 means: (YP) is not feeling intimidated or at threat from others, they haven't been a victim of grooming or sexual assault recently and they feel safe to travel between home and other locations. And 0 means: (YP) is at significant risk of harm, they have been recently seriously assaulted, they are currently in an exploitive relationship, they feel unsafe and/or others believe their life to be in danger.



Support

Rate the situation on a scale 0 – 10, 10 means: (YP) and the important people around him/her are co-operating with workers / teams providing support. (YP) feels respected and has faith that they are supported by their worker(s). And 0 means: (YP) and the important people around him/her do not trust the workers / teams providing support and there is no cooperation in the intervention.



Success

Rate the situation on a scale 0 – 10, 10 means: (YP) has his/her life in order and has the life he/she wants and is heading towards a great future. And 0 means: (YP)'s life is a mess and he/she is not getting the future he/she wants.



Serious harm to others

Rate the situation on a scale 0 – 10, 10 means: (YP) has not physically, sexually or emotionally harmed anyone else for more than 1 year and has no plans to harm another. The chance that he/she will harm another is very small. And 0 means: We know for sure that (YP) has plans to harm another person or is actively involved in behaviour that is or could be seriously harmful to others.



Overall scale of concern



Appendix 4 – Young Person self-assessment

This form is to be completed with a young person – only if and when it is appropriate.

YOUNG PERSON ‘SAFEGUARD’

This form is to help you think about warning signs of exploitation or harm and to help workers understand what you think about these and if these apply to you.

Name of child/young person

Age

Name of practitioner completing the form

Date completed



Sexual health and Sex
How do you keep yourself safe regarding sexual health and sex ?
Details:



Absent from school, running away, Missing and Late
How often are you absent or missing or running away, late to school etc? How do you keep safe when missing? What's school like for you?
Details:



Family Life, Home, Care
What life like at home, foster placement, or residential for you are there any worries you have? What would you change?
Details:



Emotional Wellbeing and Feelings
How do you feel about things at the moment? Are there any things you would change?
Details:



Gangs and friendships
Do you know anyone in a gang? Do you know anyone involved in crime or hurt by gangs and crime such as stabbings etc.? What are your friendships like ?
Details:



Use of technology and sexual bullying
Do you use apps on phones, what's your understanding of staying safe on line? Have you ever experienced bullying on line?
Details:



Alcohol and drug misuse
Have you or do you use any drugs or alcohol? What's your understanding of Substance use and the risks?
Details:



Receiving gifts and money
Does any one ever give you gifts money food etc for nothing or doing things for them ?
Details:



Distrust of workers and professionals
How do you feel about professionals? Is there any professionals you can trust or talk to ?
Details:

Appendix 5 – MARVE ToR

Multi Agency Risk, Vulnerability and Exploitation Panel (MARVE)

Terms of Reference and Procedure

The MARVE is a Multi-Agency Operational Panel responsible for coordinating information sharing and multi-agency interventions to disrupt and respond to child sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour and serious youth violence. The MARVE Panel Meeting has been established to provide a comprehensive approach to tackling issues of exploitation and harm of or by children and young people across the Merton area and to drive forward the MARVE Protocol. The Panel Meeting is the key mechanism for agreeing how relevant organisations will co-operate and work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in effectively tackling exploitation, vulnerability and risk. It is co-chaired by the Police and the Head of Adolescent and Family Service within Children's Social Care.

The Panel will be combining the previous adolescent panels operated in the borough:

- Multiagency Child Sexual Exploitation (MASE)
- Persons of Concern (POC)
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- Transforming Families

Referrals will be received for any child (under the age 18) and, where appropriate, Care Leavers or those on an Education, Health and Care Plan (up to age 25) where there are significant concerns or a strategy meeting held in regard to:

- Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- Trafficking
- Exploitative behaviour toward others (persons of concern)
- Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB)
- Serious youth violence (SYV)
- Gangs

The aim is that young people will be discussed once during the panel. Where an individual presents with concerns in more than one area (e.g. harmful behaviour and being exploited, criminally or sexually) they will be prioritised and discussed as a victim in the first instance.

The panel will also discuss any adults who pose a risk of exploitation on children who have been sexually or criminally exploited (under agenda item 'Persons of Concern').

This document will set out

- Definitions (p2)
- Membership (p6)
- Aims (p7)
- Process (p8)
- Governance and Accountabilities (p10)
- Appendices (Referral forms / Agenda / Information sharing agreement) (p11)

Definition of CSE

The Panel uses the London Child Sexual Exploitation Operating Protocol (2017) definition:

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual 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 sexual 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 sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. (Department for Education Child Sexual Exploitation Definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers February 2017). Please also refer to Merton's CSE Protocol for more guidance.

Child Sexual Exploitation can arise in a variety of different forms. These can be via:

- The Relationship Model
- Inappropriate relationships
- Opportunistic
- On-Line CSE
- Youth produced sexual imagery identified in schools
- Familial routes
- Organised/Networked sexual exploitation or trafficking
- Groups
- Gangs
- Peer on Peer Exploitation
- County-lines

Relationship Model – a child is befriended and groomed into a 'relationship' and then is coerced or forced to have sex with the exploiter's friends or associates. The abuser may be significantly older than the victim, but not always.

Inappropriate relationships – a lone offender having inappropriate power or control over a young person, perceived by the young person to be a 'loving relationship' however a significant age gap is an indicator

Opportunistic - This may occur quickly and without any form of grooming. Typically, older males identify vulnerable young people who may already have been groomed or sexually abused. The perpetrator will offer a young person a 'reward' or payment in exchange for sexual acts. The perpetrator is often linked with a network of abusive adults.

On-Line CSE – children and young people targeted via chat rooms, dating sites, online gaming and other social networking sites via the internet. Children and young people often do not see the dangers of sharing intimate images of themselves to strangers. Shared images can lead to risks of blackmail and coercion against the child. Exploitation continues through harassment and bullying via messaging, misusing 'friends' lists, the exchange of sexual images or pornography.

Youth Produced Sexual imagery identified in schools – If a young person has shared sexual imagery, particularly someone else's imagery, without consent and with malicious, exploitative or profit making intent.

Familial CSE– child or young person is individually exploited however other family members may be involved. Parents or family members control and facilitate the exploitation – the motivation being financial or can involve substance misuse.

Organised/Networked sexual exploitation or trafficking – children and young people are passed through and between networks possibly between towns or further where they are coerced or forced into sexual activity with multiple men in settings such as ‘parties’ and/or brothels.

Groups – involve people who come together in person or online for the purpose of setting up, co-ordinating and/or taking part in the sexual exploitation of children.

Peer on Peer Exploitation – children and young people sexually exploited by peers of a similar age and used to recruit other young people to be abused. Sexual bullying in schools and other social settings can result in the sexual exploitation of young people by their peers. In all cases of peer-on-peer exploitation, a power imbalance will still inform the relationship, but this inequality will not necessarily be the result of an age gap between the abuser and the abused.

Gangs – Young people associated with gangs are at a high risk of sexual exploitation. Sexual violence is used as a means of power and control over others. ‘Gangs’ mainly comprise men and boys aged 13 – 25 years of age who are involved in criminal activity, engage in violence against other gangs and have identifiable markers such as territory, clothing or a name. Sexual exploitation can be used to exert control, initiate into the gang, exchange for status or protection, entrap rival gang members and inflict as a weapon.

County-lines - involves a gang or organised crime network using a mobile phone line to extend their drug dealing business to new locations outside their home areas in a “trap house”, which is often acquired through a tactic, known as “cuckooing” (befriending/targeting vulnerable people that live alone then taking over their home to set up shop). A county line enterprise almost always involves exploitation of vulnerable people for the purpose of couriering drugs, often “plugged” internally, and/or to sell drugs at the other end of the line. Young people are drawn in under the promise of reward, whether via cash, clothes, phones, gifts or other means. Once a young person has entered into the world of county lines they become trapped and it is very difficult for them to exit this criminal behaviour. A key indication is when a young person is located after a missing episode outside of the London area for no apparent means to have travelled there.

Modern Slavery (Human Trafficking)

Trafficking is the movement of people by means such as force, fraud, coercion or deception with the aim of exploiting them. It is modern day slavery. Taking someone from one location to another to commit crimes, against their will, is a form of human trafficking (this includes taking them to another borough or county in England).

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) provides a dedicated process for referrals:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-trafficking-victims-referral-and-assessment-forms>

Also see the Pan-London Safeguarding Procedures:
http://www.londoncp.co.uk/chapters/sg_trafficked_ch.html#6

The Police will report at the start of the panel any new trafficking cases – and social care colleagues should also highlight any new cases known to them.

Persons of Concern (POC)

A 'person of concern' is someone who 'appears to be developing a friendship or relationship based on power over a child by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources'.

Where professionals or an agency have concerns or intelligence in relation to a possible perpetrator of sexual or criminal exploitation (or gang recruitment involving CSE / county lines), they can make a referral to MARVE, for the Persons of Concern agenda item. The referrer is expected to provide updates in writing and/or communicate the intelligence through the member of the panel who is linked to and/or representing to their service.

Excluded POC cases

Referrals can be made when there are concerns in relation to the aforementioned categories in relation to possible offenders. However, referrals to CSE / CCE Persons of concern **should not** be made in relation to **familial** child abuse. Familial CSE Persons of concern nominals should be tracked via the Child Protection route in conjunction with the Child Abuse Investigation team arm of the Metropolitan Police

Harmful sexual behaviour

Sexual behaviours expressed by children and young people under the age of 18 years old that are developmentally inappropriate, may be harmful towards self or others, or be abusive towards another child, young person or adult (derived from Hackett, 2014). Please also refer to Merton's Harmful Sexual Behaviour protocol for more detailed information / guidance.

This is the part of the panel where cases should be discussed where there is significant cause for concern in relation to the exhibiting of sexually harmful behaviour by a young person or groups of young people and where a multi-agency plan is required to curtail and reduce the risk that the young person poses to the wider community.

Some of these cases may overlap with the identified persons of concern but others may not be linked to CSE due to other forms of harmful sexual behaviour (e.g. towards adults or persistent sexual acts in public).

School exclusions for sexual misconduct (or behaviour potentially linked to exploitation)

This part of the discussion affords the opportunity for education colleagues to provide information in relation to young people who have been given fixed-term or permanent exclusions from school for matters which are sexual or violent in nature and which fulfil the aforementioned CSE criteria.

Serious Youth Violence

Serious youth violence is defined with reference to offences of the most serious in nature including murder, rape and GBH between children under-18 (London Safeguarding Children Board 2009). Referrals can be received where there is evidence of involvement in serious youth violence or other serious crime (e.g. Possession of Firearm or Corrosive Acid) but the child / young person is not yet subject to an order. Please also refer to Merton's Serious Youth Violence Protocol for more guidance.

“High risk of harm” youth offending

Due to the prevalence of peer-on-peer abuse among young people, whereby the victim and protagonist of violence can both be children, the panel will also receive referrals for young people causing serious harm to others (or those where they have been a victim of a serious assault and as a result they pose a risk of retaliation and/or weapon carrying). Each agency will have its own criteria about risk. For the Youth Justice Team this risk will focus upon those young people with a judgement of ‘High or Very High’ in their Risk of Serious Harm to others (RoSH) assessment, particularly when there is also a judgement of High Likelihood of Reoffending.

Gangs

The Government adopted the definition set out in the Centre for Social Justice's (CSJ) 2009 report, ‘Dying to Belong’, as its definition of a gang. A gang is defined as: 'a relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of young people who:

1. see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group;
2. engage in criminal activity and violence;
3. lay claim over territory (not necessarily geographical but can include an illegal economy territory);
4. have some form of identifying structural feature; and
5. are in conflict with other, similar, gangs.

The Serious Crime Act 2015 widened the terminology where a “gang-related” act is when it occurs in the course of, or is otherwise related to, the activities of a group that—

- (a) consists of at least three people, and
- (b) has one or more characteristics that enable its members to be identified by others as a group.

Excluded offender management cases

Referrals to the Offender management agenda items cannot be accepted if the offender is being monitored elsewhere. Examples of this monitoring could be in the form of:

- MAPPA
- Integrated Offender Management (IOM)
- Borough Command Unit cross-borough Gangs Panel
- PREVENT

Membership

Effective and respectful inter-professional communication and teamwork is imperative to promote well-being and ensure potential high risk and vulnerable cases are managed and problem solved across the partnership. This will be best achieved with a multidisciplinary forum comprising:

Core Members i.e. attending regularly

Metropolitan Police

DCI Safeguarding South West Borough Command Unit (chair)
CSE and Missing Persons (part 1)
Gangs/investigations (part 2)
YOT Seconded Officer (part 2)

Children's Social Care

Head of Adolescent and Family Service (co-chair)
Head of Safeguarding and Care Planning
Head of Looked After Children
CSE Lead
MASH Representative

Health

Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children
Designated Nurse for Looked after Children
CLCH Named Nurse Child Protection
CLCH Named Nurse LAC
Clinical Lead Merton School Nursing NHS Sutton & Merton
Forensic Psychologist (Seconded CAMHS worker in AFS)

Education

Head of Service Education Inclusion
Education Inclusion Officer
Head of Melbury College
My Futures manager

Commissioned Services and Voluntary Services in regard to MARVE

i.e – Catch22, Spectra, RedThread, METRO, Victim Support

Adult's Social Care

Safeguarding & DOLS Manager

Offender management (part 2)

Youth Justice Team manager
Safer Merton
National Probation Service and/or Community Rehabilitation Company

Where those identified above cannot attend they can send a representative with a similar level of management decision making and tasking.

The MARVE will be quorate if Health, Children Social Care, Police and Education are represented. Any concerns regarding attendance will be raised with the MSCB via the chair.

Aims of MARVE

- Be young person focused. Review the progress of cases and ensure action is taken by whichever agency is involved in individual cases including providing advice and guidance to practitioners so that effective plans are developed and risk is reduced.
- This panel is not, and should not be used as a substitute for the safeguarding processes that exist in Merton in relation to children and young people. Where a professional, person or agency has concerns in relation to the welfare of a child/ren, referrals must still be made to be the MASH as a matter of urgency (or to the Police in emergency situations). The responsibility for the oversight, monitoring and implementation of any plans remains with the professional network working with the young person.
- To meet within a multidisciplinary forum where professionals who have received intelligence or information about the SUSPECTED perpetration of the exploitation of children can share their information in order to prevent and minimise harm to children and vulnerable adults; disrupt any of the related activities and offences; increase the number of interventions to eradicate exploitation networks.
- Identify any trends in relation to persons/locations of concern and ensure they are managed effectively. This includes sharing intelligence or information relating to links/patterns with any cases/locations/venues of exploitation or criminal activity. This information should be used to inform mapping and analysing the profile of exploitation and serious youth violence in the borough and generate intelligence for investigations.
- Take a strategic approach to contextual safeguarding issues, including confronting exploitation in premises or businesses, transport hubs or other locations of concern, utilising preventative action (media) and enforcement (Police, Licensing etc.) where appropriate.
- Consider cross border issues and ensure that there is a co-coordinated approach with other boroughs. This includes ensuring that looked after children placed away from the borough and at risk of exploitation are being safeguarded by the agencies where they are located.
- Operate in accordance with established statutory procedures relating to protecting children under the *London Child Protection Procedures 2017*, *Working Together 2018* and *The London CSE Operating Protocol 2017*.
- Act as MAPPA Level 1 panel for young offenders on a Youth Court Order and meeting MAPPA criteria. The panel will escalate to MAPPA Level 2 or 3 as necessary.
- Interventions for young people identified as a risk to others are to have a balance of focus on “change and challenge” and where support to help the young person change their behaviour in order to reduce risk is unsuccessful then measures to challenge are required. These are likely to involve the use of ‘external controls’, including prohibitive requirements, surveillance and enforcement activities as well as non-negotiable support.
- Identify any training needs of professionals and inform the Merton Learning and Development Sub-Group.
- Adhere to the Data Protection laws and regulations (see Appendix 1 for the Information Sharing protocol of this panel)

Process - how it will work in Merton

Multiagency responsibilities

The panel has multi-agency involvement and delegates are responsible for ensuring that their agency is appropriately represented (see membership list above).

Names and details of new referrals need to be checked by all agencies in advance of the meeting so that any relevant contributions can be made at the panel.

Those representing teams responsible for offender management should attend from the agenda items relating to persons of concern onwards (after the break at approximately 11.45am)

All agencies are to:

- Record the relevant details of the case on their systems to ensure that the oversight and actions from the panel is recorded.
- Adhere to and comply with Data Protection laws and regulations, understanding that the purpose of information sharing is to safeguard vulnerable children and/or to detect and prevent crime.
- Review the information sharing agreement (see Appendix 1) and agree to this when signing into the panel.

Agenda

The panel sits from 9.30am – 1.30pm on a monthly basis (the first Thursday of the month).

CSE and CSE cases will be discussed first followed by Persons of Concern and Serious Youth Violence cases.

For cases where there are concerns in regard to being a victim of exploitation and a perpetrator of harm they will be treated as a victim in the first instance and placed in that section of the agenda (see Appendix 2 for the agenda format).

Referrals

- Agencies can complete a referral for a child/care leaver according to the above criteria (this can be found in the MARVE Protocol and should be sent with the screening tool to initiate a professionals meeting to agree level of risk and planning).
- Referrals can also be made for a Person of Concern or Location of Concern (see Appendix 3)
- All referrals to be sent to the administrator (CSE.Referrals@merton.gov.uk) no later than 1 week before the panel
- Cases which have had the meeting for CSE / CCE or HSB / SYV will be identified for the relevant agenda item by the CSE Lead or Youth Justice Managers.

Case presentation

Cases accepted as appropriate to MARVE require the allocated Social Worker, Youth Justice Practitioner and TF worker (if all allocated) to attend the Panel as per the allocated time for the case (schedule will be sent out in advance). For High Risk cases the team manager should attend.

The allocated worker(s) and/or team manager are to provide information on the following:

- Summary – significant incidents and facts to support referral / risk grading
- Completed professional feedback form - SAFEGUARD mnemonic (Appendix 4)
- Child Protection Concerns
- The effectiveness of the multi-agency team around the child
- The types of interventions and their effectiveness

The MARVE panel will:

- Be co-chaired by South West Borough Command Unit Deputy Safeguarding Lead (DCI Safeguarding Hub) and the Head of Service for Adolescent and Family Service.
- The meetings will be held monthly and minutes circulated with actions to be completed and reported back to the business administrator in a timely manner. Ensure, above all else, agencies are working together to make a positive difference.
- Receive an overview of the progress of work, not undertake a full case discussion – focusing to identify good practice and resolve barriers to effective harm reduction
- Ensure all possible options are being effectively and efficiently utilised to protect the victim and disrupt the offenders(s) (see checklist at end of this document).
- Provide strategic oversight to teams supporting young people identified as being at risk of exploitation or harm to others.
- Ensure excellent communication across all disciplines, working to agreed processes and specifically in regard to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.
- Confirm the level of risk in conjunction with the lead professional or allocated social worker.¹
- Links/patterns with any cases/locations/venues are identified and managed.
- Make a decision on whether to have the case return to panel or maintain on file as open but not for review on panel ('ICE') and the reason for this.
- Circulate the minutes securely within 2 weeks of the panel

¹ Where the panel disagrees with the assessed level of risk, the lead professional or allocated social work will re-assess the level of risk using the agreed risk assessment tools and established assessment frameworks

Governance and Accountabilities

The MARVE panel chairs will report to the Promote and Protect Young People (PPYP) Sub-Group of the Multi-agency Safeguarding Children Board. Strategic oversight of young people at risk of offending / causing harm to others will also come under the Youth Crime Prevention Executive board (YCPEB).

The MARVE meeting should provide the PPYP information on the following:

- Volume of cases.
- Communities effected, to allow awareness raising and targeted intervention.
- Patterns of exploitation and harm identified.
- Activity against perpetrators.
- Performance of individual agencies.
- Number and type of disruptions e.g. civil orders, charging of offenders, closure of premises etc.
- Attendance at panel meetings by partner agencies

Analysis of the following will also be provided on an annual basis:

- profiles of those who are perpetrating sexual or criminal exploitation;
- information about effective interventions;
- issues, themes and patterns emerging from analysis of current cases.

Date: 10th July 2018

Review date: July 2020

MARVE ToR Appendix 1 – information sharing agreement

The Multiagency Risk, Vulnerability and Exploitation (MARVE) panel is an Operational Panel responsible for coordinating information sharing and multi-agency interventions to disrupt and respond to child sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour and serious youth violence. The MARVE Panel Meeting has been established to provide a comprehensive approach to tackling issues of exploitation and harm of or by children and young people across the Merton area. The MARVE Panel Meeting is the key mechanism for agreeing how relevant organisations will co-operate and work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in effectively tackling exploitation, vulnerability and risk.

The purpose of sharing information is to:

- increase the safety, health and well being of vulnerable children
- determine whether any perpetrators pose a significant risk to any vulnerable child or other children and
- construct jointly and implement a risk management plan that provides professional support to all those at risk and that reduces the risk of harm
- improve agency accountability

Information presented should make a clear distinction between fact and opinion.

All individuals who are discussed at these meetings should be treated fairly, with respect and without improper discrimination. All work undertaken at the meetings will be informed by a commitment to equal opportunities and effective practice issues in relation to age, disability, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation, gender and gender identity.

Recording of information:

- Minutes will be taken throughout the panel and typed directly into a secure laptop
- These will be sent securely to panel members
- **All agencies must ensure that minutes are retained in a confidential and appropriately restricted manner.**

Sharing of information

- Information discussed by the agency representative, within the ambit of the panel meeting is strictly confidential and must not be disclosed to third parties without the agreement of the partners at the meeting.
- The individual discussed can be made aware of the discussion and actions – unless this increases the risk of significant harm to / from them. This should be a Team Manager decision and if there is any doubt then clarify the sharing of information with the chairs.

Agenda

Meeting: MARVE – Multi-agency Risk, Vulnerability and Exploitation Panel

Venue: Civic Centre

Date: First Thursday of the month 9.30am to 1.30pm

No	Subject	Lead
1.	Introductions and apologies <i>(reminder - Confidentially and information sharing protocol)</i>	Chair 5min
2.	Minutes and outstanding actions <i>(Please advise admin prior to panel of completed actions)</i>	Chair 5min
3.	Presentation of current Borough CSE Profile - to include:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Missing incidents / repeats – including current missing</i> • <i>Trafficking (International)</i> • <i>New CSE cases</i> • <i>New Persons of concern / perpetrators</i> • <i>Hot-spots</i> • <i>Cross-border / national issues</i> 	Chair/Police 5min
4.	<i>Multi-agency Discussion</i>	All 5min
9.55	'S A F E G U A R D' updates	
5.	Child Sexual Exploitation - open Med & High CSE <i>Cases returning to panel reviewed (complexity of cases and commissioning issues considered)</i>	All 20min
6.	Criminal Exploitation - open Med & High CCE <i>Cases returning to panel reviewed (complexity of cases and commissioning issues considered)</i>	All 20min
7.	New CSE cases post strategy meeting (RAG review) <i>Panel to review - risk assessment, complexity, case strategy, timeliness of strategic review and effect on CSE profile</i>	All 30min
8.	New Criminal Exploitation cases post strategy meeting (RAG review) <i>panel to review - risk assessment, complexity, case strategy, timeliness of strategic review</i>	All 20min
9.	DIP sample (+/- 2 cases) of open Low CSE cases <i>to review and maintain management oversight</i> CSE / CCE cases closed in last month - for panel record	Chair 15min
10.	Out of borough young people placed in Merton at risk of CCE or CSE	Chair 5min

11.40	BREAK	5min
11:45	Persons of Concern	
11.	Identified exploiters of CSE and CCE <i>Identified from casework or new police referrals</i>	All 10min
12.	POC Case discussion – school exclusions <i>Cases possibly linked to sexual and criminal exploitation.</i>	FT 10min
13.	POC Case discussion – Youth Justice referrals <i>Cases in need of harmful sexual behaviour strategy meeting.</i>	LK 10min
12:15	Serious Youth Violence	
14.	Introductions (offender management police / partners) <i>(reminder - Confidentially and information sharing protocol)</i>	Chair 5min
15.	Young people who pose a high risk of harm to others <i>Including cases where victim of SYV and risk of retaliation</i>	ALL 40min
16.	Any other young people / adults posing a risk to others <i>Including identified gang nominals or new referrals</i>	Chair 10min
17.	Police / Partner updates – (e.g. incidents in last month)	Chair 5min
18.	Locations of concern – from casework / new referrals	Chair 5min
19.	Identification of emerging themes / learning points to inform the Exploitation and Serious Youth Violence action plans - Appropriate action thereafter	Chair 5min
20.	Any other business	All 5min

Next Meeting: 1st Thursday of the month

Civic Centre: (usually Committee Rooms B/C)

MARVE ToR Appendix 3 – Referral Form (Persons / Locations of Concern)

MARVE Panel

Person / Location of Concern Referral Form

Date of referral:	Name of Person / Location of Concern:	
Name of Referrer:	Date of Birth:	
Organisation:	Ethnicity:	Language Spoken:
Agencies Involved:	Home / Location Address:	
Summary of Concerns (include dates and how you know this information):		
Actions to Date:		

MARVE ToR Appendix 4 – Safeguard Mnemonic to feedback to panel

Professional feedback in regard to ‘SAFEGUARD’ warning signs

Name of child/young person	
Age	
Name of practitioner completing the form	
Date completed	

The purpose of this form is help you reflect and prepare for the MARVE panel, considering if there are any current risks and warning signs.

Since the last panel, have there been any concerns in regard to the following?

S exual health and Sex
A bsent from school, running away, Missing and late
F amily Life, Home, Care
E moional wellbeing and feelings
G angs and friendships
U se of technology and sexual bullying
A lcohol and drug misuse
R eceiving gifts and money
D istrust of workers and professionals