Background: Questions for the Panel

- Do adolescents in need of state protection from criminal exploitation get the help they need, when they need it?
- How can the services designed to keep adolescents safe from criminal exploitation, and the way those services work together, be improved to prevent further harm?

Review based on 21 adolescents

Key findings 1

➢ **Ethnicity and gender appear to be factors**
In the cohort of 21 children, 15 were from a black or minority ethnic background and all of them were male. This is a serious concern.
➢ **Known risk factors around vulnerability don't always act as predictors**
All but 2 were living with parents or extended family. Most of the children (and their families) were not known to children's social care before the problems associated with their potential exploitation surfaced.

Key findings 2:

➢ **Exclusion from mainstream school is seen as a trigger point for risk of serious harm.** Seventeen of the children who died or experienced serious harm had been permanently excluded from mainstream education.
➢ **Effective practice is not widely known about or used.** Practitioners' lack of confidence. Different approaches but no evaluation about what helps
➢ **Trusted relationships with children are important.** This takes time and skills

Key learning points for local agencies:

- understanding the nature and scale of the problem and identifying children engaged with and at risk from criminal exploitation
- tailored support for front line staff
- service design and practice development
- quality assurance

7 minutes briefing: It was hard to escape Safeguarding children at risk from criminal exploitation

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/870035/Safeguarding_children_at_risk_from_criminal_exploitation_review.pdf

Carla Thomas

National recommendations

- a review of Working Together 2018 to reflect the specific circumstances of this group of children who are at risk of criminal exploitation
- a review of the use of the National Referral Mechanism
- data collection to improve local and national understanding of prevalence, characteristics and service response.

Key Findings 4:

➢ **More priority should be given to disrupting perpetrator activity**
The National Referral Mechanism (NRM)4 is not well understood and is inconsistently used.
Evidence from the cases reviewed suggested that an intensive risk management plan which includes control measures such as electronic tags, within the context of a good relationship with the child and with parental support, can be effective in reducing risk.

Key Findings 3:

➢ **Responding to the 'critical moment'.**
- the point at which they are excluded from school
- when they are physically injured
- when they are arrested
➢ **Parental engagement is nearly always a protective factor**
➢ **Moving children and families works for a short period but is not effective as a long-term strategy**