

Merton Multi Agency Child Exploitation Panels (MACE)

Terms of Reference and Procedure

MACE is a Multi-Agency meeting responsible for coordinating information sharing and multi-agency interventions to disrupt and protect against contextual harm, specifically child sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour and serious youth violence.

Pre-MACE operational panel will review and provide multi-agency oversight of risk assessments and plans. While this is a specialist area of practice, it is important that all practitioners, supervisors, and senior leaders are diligent in ensuring that young people are kept safe, with early identification of needs, up to date risk assessments and robust plans that are continuously reviewed to demonstrate impact.

This document was updated in November 2021 to reflect Merton's adoption of the [pan-London Child Exploitation Protocol 2021](#), alongside continued implementation of contextual safeguarding approaches and assessment processes. The pan-London protocol sets out the key definitions and operating principles. Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership (MSCP) has adopted the London Multi-Agency Safeguarding Data Sharing Agreement for Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children, and the Merton MACE panel arrangements follow the same principles included in this agreement. Any escalation relating to the panels will follow the [MSCP Multi-agency Escalation Policy](#).

Pre-MACE Operational Panel

The decision to attend the Pre-MACE operational panel will be made following a strategy discussion, where there are clear concerns regarding contextual safeguarding matters. When a decision has been made that a child or young people should be discussed the allocated social worker and supervisor will be invited to attend a ten-minute slot, key partners and other professionals will provide any information they hold about the young person or family. In advance of the meeting, the social worker will complete or update a risk assessment and have a clear safety plan, which should be collaboratively undertaken with a young person and family. When the social worker and manager attend the operational panel, they will clearly set out the risks and safety plan as well as sharing any concerns or barriers faced. Multi-agency partners will contribute with intelligence and solutions to enhance safety and protective measures and unblock identified barriers. All professionals will consider the following:

- V – Children at risk of being exploited
- O - Offender(s)/perpetrators/persons of concern
- L – Location(s)
- T – Theme(s)

Strategic MACE panel

The strategic MACE panel is a multi-agency partnership that considers strategic matters that are fed through from the Pre-MACE operational panel, as well as local, national learning and good practice. The objective of this panel is a strategic oversight, accountability and ensuring the tracking of impact. Where there are blockages to plans, themes, locations, and persons of interest; these will be discussed here with a view to early identification, planning, and disruption.

Pre-MACE Operational Action Tracking

Decisions made at the Pre-MACE operational panel, must be actioned within two weeks. An action tracker will be used to monitor progress, with action owners or managers expected to report back on any outstanding actions to the minute taker.

Frequency:

- The Pre-MACE operational panel sits from 9.30am – 1.30pm on a monthly basis (the first Thursday of the month).
- The strategic MACE panel sits for 2 hours on a monthly basis (the third Thursday of the month).

Multiagency responsibilities: All agencies will:

- Ensure their agency is represented
- Check names and details of new referrals in advance of the meeting so that any relevant contributions can be made at the panel.
- 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 and agree to this when signing into the panel.

Statutory safeguarding processes

Both MACE panels operate in accordance with established statutory procedures relating to protecting children under the *London Child Protection Procedures 2017*, *Working Together 2018* and *The Pan-London CE Operating Protocol 2021*.

The decision to attend the Operational Pre-MACE Panel should be made following a strategy discussion, where there are clear concerns regarding contextual harm.

Neither panel will 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/children, referrals must still be made to be the Children and Families Hub (formerly 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.

Strategy discussion

Whenever there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, there should be a strategy discussion involving Children's Social Care (CSC) (including the residential or fostering service if the child is looked-after), the police, health, and other bodies such as the referring agency. It is within these forums a decision is made whether to pursue the matter as a joint or single agency. There must be a clear summary of risk and plan following this meeting and a decision made whether to refer to the Pre-MACE operational panel.

Referrals

Statutory agencies can complete a referral for a child/care leaver using the contextual harm screening tool after a strategy meeting (scoring 50 or more or scoring 10 or more in one presenting need or area of harm). The Contextual Harm protocol can be found on [Children's Social Care Procedures](#). Referrals can also be made for a Person of Concern or Location of Concern (see Appendix 4). All referrals to be sent to the administrator (MACEReferrals@merton.gov.uk) **no later than 1 week before the panel**. Risk assessment and plans, must be updated for all young people presented or where exploitation is a concern (new and open children and young people). The updated risk assessment must be sent to the MACE inbox for review by the Pre-MACE operational chairs. Following this review the social worker and team manager for the children and young people may be invited to attend the Pre-MACE operational panel.

Organised and complex meetings

When exploitation has been identified and there are concerns that the abuse involves one or more abuser, multiple victims, a group, or location where additional focus is required to monitor peer networks and activity; consideration should be given as to whether this falls within the Organised and Complex Abuse procedures as outlined in [chapter 8 of the London Child Protection procedures](#). There will be an expectation that intelligence from complex meetings will be shared at the strategic MACE panel, for oversight and to ascertain what resources can be galvanised from the partnership to assist with safety.

Case presentation

Young people presented within Pre-MACE require the allocated Social Worker, Youth Justice Practitioner, Family Wellbeing Service worker and/or other relevant professionals to attend the Panel as per the allocated time for the young person's case (schedule will be sent out in advance). The team manager should attend if the social worker is not available. For overall Significant Risk young people with multiple areas of significant risk, the team manager should also attend.

- 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) they will be prioritised and discussed as a victim in the first instance.
- The panel can also recommend the requirement for, to commission the completion of, context assessments (whether in regard to a peer group, location or education setting)

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, including voice the child/young person and/or parents/carers
- Pre-MACE referral with screening (if first presentation to panel)
- Highlights from Contextual Harm Risk Matrix and Planning tool (all subsequent presentations to panel)
- The effectiveness of the multi-agency team around the child, and support required from the Pre-MACE panel to increase impact.

Appendix 1 – Membership of MACE Panels

Pre-MACE Operational panel

- The panel will be quorate if Health, Children Social Care, Police and Education are represented.
- Where members cannot attend they should send a representative with a similar level of management decision making. Concerns regarding attendance will be raised via the chair(s).
- Professionals and/or team managers will be invited to attend for the slot allocated for the child or young person they are working with.

Core members, attending regularly, will be as follows:

Police

DS Public Protection South West Borough Command Unit (co-chair)
CSE and Missing Persons
Gangs/investigations/IOM
YOT Seconded Police

Children's Social Care

YJ & CH Service Manager (co-chair)
Service Manager - Family Support & Safeguarding
Service Manager - Children in Care and Permanence
Contextual Harm Lead
Service Manager from Help & Family Assessment (one representative)

Health

CLCH Named Nurse Safeguarding Children (core member)
CLCH Named Nurse LAC (core member)
Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children
Designated Nurse for Looked after Children
Epsom and St. Helier Hospitals – Named Nurse
St. Georges Hospital – Named Nurse
Clinical Lead Merton School Nursing NHS Sutton & Merton

Education & Early Help

Head of Service Education Inclusion
Head of Melbury College
My Futures manager
School Inclusion Coordinator
Virtual School representative
SEND Team Manager
Family & Wellbeing Service Manager

Commissioned Services and Voluntary Services in regard to MACE

- i.e – Catch22, RedThread, METRO, Victim Support, Clarion (Housing)

Offender management

Youth Justice Team manager(s)
Forensic Psychologist (Seconded CAMHS worker in Youth Justice)
Gangs and Serious Youth Violence worker(s)

Strategic MACE Panel

- The panel will be quorate if Health, Children Social Care, Police and Education are represented.
- Attendees must be in a position of managerial responsibility or have strategic oversight of their area of business.
- Attendees will be expected to provide relevant information from their organisation.
- Where members cannot attend they should send a representative with a similar level of management decision making. Concerns regarding attendance will be raised via the chair(s).

Core members:

Police

Police – Detective Inspector SW BCU Public Protection Hub (co-Chair).
DS Public Protection South West Borough Command Unit (pre-MACE co-Chair)
Local borough child exploitation SPOC
British Transport Police

Children's Social Care

Head of Adolescent & Safeguarding (co-Chair).
Service Manager for Youth Justice & Contextual Harm (pre-MACE co-Chair)
Contextual Harm lead

Education

Head of Education Inclusion
Head of Virtual School
Head of Melbury College

Health

Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children (Merton) NHS SW London CCG
Designated Nurse Looked After Children (Merton) - NHS SW London CCG
Named Nurse Safeguarding Children – CLCH

Performance & Analysis

Children, School & Families Multi-Agency Data Lead
Safer Merton Team Manager

Additional members, to attend when requested by Chair:

Police

Complex & Serious Crime team SPOC.

Children's Social Care

Head of Service for Corporate Parenting
Head of Service for Family Support & Safeguarding
Head of Service for Help & Family Assessment

Education & Early Help

Head of SENDIS
Head of Early Years, Family Wellbeing and Early Help

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TOTAL POLICING

Territorial Policing



South West London
Clinical Commissioning Group



Health

CAMHS Manager

Named GP for Child Safeguarding (Merton)

Designated Doctor Safeguarding Children) (Merton)

Specialist / commissioned services

i.e. Catch 22, Redthread, Rescue & Response

National Probation Service

Housing

Head of Housing Needs (Local Authority)

Housing Manager (Clarion)

Appendix 2 – Agenda formats

Pre-MACE Agenda

Information discussed by agency representatives 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.

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 agenda format below).

Meeting: Pre-MACE

Venue: Civic Centre or virtual if required

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

No	Subject	Lead
10:00	Pre-MACE Panel	
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.	<i>Multi-agency Discussion</i>	All 5min
10:20	Contextual Harm – individual children	
4.	New Contextual Harm cases post strategy meeting (screening scoring 50+ contextual harm) <i>Panel to review - risk assessment, complexity, case strategy, timeliness of strategic review and effect on contextual safeguarding profile</i>	All 30min
5.	Coercion and Control – panel returns (Significant) <i>Cases returning to panel after Contextual Harm Risk Matrix and Plan completed (multiagency response considered)</i>	All 40min
6.	Missing (with no other sig risk) – panel returns (Significant) <i>Cases returning to panel reviewed after Contextual Harm Risk Matrix and Plan completed (multiagency response considered)</i>	All 20min
11.50	BREAK	10min
12:00	Contextual Harm continued – individual children	
1.	Serious Youth Violence / Offending – returns (Significant) <i>Cases returning to panel reviewed after Contextual Harm Risk Matrix and Plan completed (multiagency response considered)</i>	All 40min

2.	Sexual Health / Harmful Behaviour –returns (Significant) <i>Cases returning to panel reviewed after Contextual Harm Risk Matrix and Plan completed (multiagency response considered)</i>	All 10min
3.	Out of borough young people placed in Merton at risk of CCE or CSE	Chair 10min
Review of themes & AOB		
1.	Identification of emerging themes / learning points to inform the strategic MACE including peer groups & locations of concern- <i>Appropriate action thereafter</i>	Chair 5min
2.	Any other business	All
Persons of Concern – Police, Social Care, Education and YJ		
1.	Identified exploiters of CSE and CCE <i>Identified from casework or new police referrals</i>	All 15min
2.	POC Case discussion – school exclusions <i>Cases possibly linked to sexual and criminal exploitation.</i>	Education Inclusion 5min
3.	POC Case discussion – Youth Justice referrals <i>Cases in need of harmful sexual behaviour strategy meeting.</i>	Youth Justice 5min
1.30pm	FINISH	

Next Meeting: 1st Thursday of the month

Civic Centre: (usually Committee Rooms B/C) or Skype virtual call

Strategic MACE agenda

Agenda

Meeting: Strategic MACE

Venue: Civic Centre or virtual if required

Date: Third Thursday of the month (2 hours)

Information discussed by agency representatives 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.

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
Part 1 (Strategic overview / Identify case blockages / Setting actions to mitigate risk)		
3.	Update from Pre-MACE <i>Including:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children at risk of being exploited - Child criminal exploitation/Child sexual exploitation/ National Referral Mechanism and confirmed or potential cases of trafficking. • People of concern - Repeat offenders, known links to children, cross-border, owning BCU and who has responsibility. • Location– Repeat locations/Crime generators • Themes – Emerging themes from pre-MACE case discussions • Cross-border – Issues that impact multiple BCU/boroughs including overview of children placed in/outside of the borough. 	Pre-MACE Co-Chairs 20 min
Part 2 (Forward thinking)		
4.	Intelligence sharing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TA Police report • MSCP Promote & Protect Young People Dashboard extract 	30 min Police LA – Children’s Social Care

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safer Merton update • Education update • Health update 	LA - Safer Merton LA - Education Health - CCG
5.	Information Sharing – Information and best practice to be shared from other forums, such as MARAC, Gangs, Missing, Locations Board and Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA).	All 15 min
6.	Thematic discussion – theme to be agreed.	TBC dependent on theme agreed 15 min
7.	Contextual Safeguarding Action Plan – Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership – review progress and unblock delays to delivery of multi-agency action plan.	TBC dependent on section reviewed 15 min
8.	Forward plan (see below) – agree thematic discussions/any reports required for next meeting	Chairs 5 min
9.	AOB	10min

Meeting date & time	Thematic discussion/s	Lead	Report requested?
Dec-21			
Jan-22			
Feb-22			
Mar-22			



Territorial Policing

TOTAL POLICING



South West London
Clinical Commissioning Group



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

MACE 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:			