



# *Complex Safeguarding Strategy 2022-2024*

<b>1. <i>Statement of Intent</i></b>	Page 3
Message from the Chair	
<b>2. <i>Context</i></b>	Page 4
<b>3. <i>Vision and Principles of Our Strategy</i></b>	Page 5
<b>4. Scope and Governance of the Strategy</b>	Page 8
<i>Governance</i>	
<b>5. Our Priorities</b>	Page 10
<i>What is your role?</i>	
<b>6. Measuring Results – Our Impact and Sustainable Change</b>	Page 11
<i>How will we measure our effectiveness?</i>	
<b>7. Resources and Guidance</b>	Page 12
<b>8. Appendix</b>	Page 13
<i>Definitions</i>	
<i>References</i>	

## **1. Statement of Intent**

The Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children’s Partnership and The Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Adult Board (RBSCP/RBSAB) are multi-agency partnerships which are made up of a wide range of statutory, independent, voluntary agencies and organisations who are committed to protecting and supporting children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in, or at risk of, exploitation.

Through a coordinated, holistic, multi-agency response, we are committed to playing a key role within the partnership in tackling all age Criminal/Sexual Exploitation, Modern Slavery/Trafficking/OCG and Missing. Thus ensuring there is a consistent inclusive approach of young people transitioning into adults that raises public and professional awareness, prevents/reduces harm and ultimately brings offenders to justice.

Message from the Chair .....

## **2. Context**

Complex safeguarding refers to criminal activity (often organised), or harmful behaviour associated with criminality, involving children, young people and adults with multiple vulnerabilities where there is exploitation, a risk of exploitation and / or a clear or implied safeguarding concern which is likely to lead to a serious and sustained negative impact on children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Exploitation is the deliberate maltreatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over another person. It is taking advantage of another person or situation usually, but not always, for personal gain. Exploitation comes in many forms, including being controlled by a person or a group, this is when someone is deceived, coerced or forced to take part in for example, sexual activity, labour exploitation, domestic servitude, forced marriage, forced criminality and debt bondage.

In recent years, the complexities of safeguarding children, young people and adults have been challenging practice with an increased focus on violent crime, gang culture, domestic abuse, modern slavery, trafficking and sexual exploitation requiring local areas to adapt and innovate in how they safeguard children, young people and adults. We know that the experience of adversity in childhood can make some adolescents particularly vulnerable to harm and that the effects of such harm can persist into adulthood (1). This means that there will likely be a proportion of adolescents who either need to transition directly into receiving support from Adults' Services, (2) or who are more likely to require them later in life.

Missing needs to be a factor in Complex safeguarding as anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be subject of exploitation and/or at risk of harm to themselves or another (3)

### **3. Vision and Principles of Our Strategy**

- ❖ Exploitation is a safeguarding issue and everyone has a responsibility to protect and support victims and those at risk
- ❖ Exploitation a multi-causal issue that needs to be addressed within a multi-agency approach.
- ❖ Exploited children, young people and adults with care and support needs should be treated as victims of modern day slavery under the category of forced labour and potentially trafficking and this should be used in mitigation during any criminal proceedings.
- ❖ The safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults that go missing is paramount.
- ❖ Getting the right information to frontline practitioners is essential to ensure that they are able to identify and protect children, young people and vulnerable adults that go missing
- ❖ All practitioners working with children, young people and vulnerable adults are aware of the resources available to support complex safeguarding

These risk often manifest in extra-familial environments including schools, public spaces and online. Platforms are informed by peer norms and relationships involve young people perpetrating as well as experiencing harm can present as the result of perceived 'choices' a young person has made and/or continues to make despite professional/parental intervention. Often feature grooming, coercion, criminality and serious risks of significant sexual and physical harm, which create climates of fear and reduce engagement with services, are beyond the control of parents and rarely instigated by parent can lead to large numbers of relocations including children over-12 coming into care for the first time. Following a rapid escalation in risk and/or managed-moves across schools, continue into adulthood and particularly for young people during the 18-25 transitional period. (4)

In response, practitioners, researchers and policy advisors have been developing and testing ways to advance child protection and multi-agency safeguarding practices to better engage with these dynamics of the adolescent experience. This briefing details how Complex Safeguarding, Contextual Safeguarding and Transitional Safeguarding engage with the challenges outlined above.

It is important to understand that these three terms are not mutually exclusive nor conflicting. Indeed they complement and overlap in a number of ways, and arguably adopting one approach requires attention to be paid to the others.

Put very simply, Complex Safeguarding is a different way of working with children and families to address non-traditional safeguarding issues, whilst Contextual Safeguarding offers an approach for working with contexts and communities. Recognising the importance of working to safeguard young people across transitions is a feature of both Complex Safeguarding and Contextual Safeguarding.

Finally, these concepts are not blueprints / practice models / manualised programmes. Nor should they be understood as a list from which local areas select their approach. In fact, embracing any one of these concepts arguably requires us to engage with the other two.

The Rochdale Safeguarding Children Partnership and Rochdale Safeguarding Adult Board context for Complex Safeguarding is that children and adults are targeted and subjected to serious harm, which is primarily, although not exclusively extra-familial. This might include individuals planning, coordinating and committing serious offences such as sexual exploitation and abuse; illegal drugs; illegal firearms; modern slavery and human trafficking, (9) individually, in groups and/or as part of transnational networks. Radicalisation and serious youth violence, including knife crime, are also strongly linked to organised crime and criminality. Geographical borders are increasingly eroded, with individuals and networks operating across regions, countries and in cyberspace. (1)

Much of this activity remains hidden or under reported, the true scale and complexity is likely to be greater than we currently know. Evidence and intelligence is continually emerging from a local, national and international context.

Complex Safeguarding is one of the key priorities for The Rochdale Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Rochdale Adult Safeguarding Board and evidences our continuing commitment to leading the way in tackling and preventing the exploitation of children and adults, whilst ensuring that services are also joined up across the region. Services will be delivered in a co-ordinated, trauma informed/strength based approach and consistent way, working with children, families and vulnerable adults. This will be supported by the RBSCP and RBSAB [training offer](#).

Transitional Safeguarding is a term used by Research in Practice (1) to highlight the need to improve the safeguarding response to older teenagers and young adults in a way that recognises their developmental needs. In Rochdale, we support and work with this approach.

We want Rochdale to be a safe borough for children, young people and adults, whilst recognising the challenge that exploitation brings.

We want everyone to work together, communities, families and professionals – safeguarding is everyone’s business: building better lives for everyone.

### **This Strategy will:**

- Define what Complex Safeguarding is.
- Identify what the dynamic picture of Complex Safeguarding is in Rochdale.
- Set out Rochdale's ambition for how we will work together to reduce the impact of exploitation and associated harm with children, young people and adults to enhance their resilience and create safer environments.
- Outline how we will know we are making a difference.

### **Our Priorities:**

- Increase our awareness and understanding of Complex Safeguarding.
- Joint training and development opportunities, practice tools, guidance and resources.
- Our interventions will support and protect children, young people and vulnerable adults at risk of exploitation
- Greater success in detection, disruption and prosecution.
- Work alongside and within our communities to tackle exploitation.

### **Our Principles:**

- The RBSCP/RBSAB will build trust and confidence with our children, adults and communities
- We will recognise and respond to trauma and exploitative behaviours
- We will be professionally curious in order to identify and share information to enable us to respond to Complex Safeguarding issues
- We will work collaboratively to ensure the best outcomes for children, young people and adults
- We will educate and support our children, families and adults in order to prevent and protect them from exploitation

#### **4. Scope and Governance of the Strategy**

The strategy is designed to encompass the activities of a wide range of agencies operating across Rochdale, including local authority services, children and adult social care, health commissioners and providers, policing, schools, colleges and higher education, the voluntary, community, private and business sector.

The strategy recognises that there are sectors of our communities who are seldom seen or heard and who are exposed to the harm from exploitation. This includes but is not limited to male survivors, disabled people, people from diverse ethnic minority groups and people identifying with the LGBT community. We seek to address unconscious bias to enable improved access and better outcomes.

#### ***Governance***

The Complex Safeguarding Sub-Group will be accountable for this strategy. The Sub-Group will enable conversations at a strategic level with relevant multi-agency partnerships

The sub-group is a multi-agency, which meets on a quarterly basis. This strategy is subject to regular review by the sub-group and its effectiveness is monitored through an established set of measures and indicators based on evidencing results.



## **5. Our Priorities**

### **Priority 1 – Increase Our Awareness and Understanding of Complex Safeguarding**

- We will promote awareness across our Borough through a variety of resource inclusive of raised awareness on social media platforms
- We will reach out to our communities via voice groups for input, consultation and feedback (via current developed networks).
- We will strive to ensure everyone knows how to identify and respond to Complex Safeguarding issues, we endeavour to do this via training.

### **Priority 2 – All Age Joint training and development opportunities, practice tools, guidance and resources**

- We will deliver training on how to identify and support survivors of exploitation
- We will engage in regional and national working groups to learn from others and share and promote good practice
- We will undertake reflection and learning activities involving key stakeholders, via conferences, events and resources groups for input, consultation and feedback.
- We will strive to ensure everyone knows how to identify and respond to Complex Safeguarding issues, we endeavour to do this via training.

### **Priority 3 – Our interventions will support and protect children, young people and vulnerable adults at risk of exploitation and/or results in missing**

- The lived experience of children and adults who are at risk of or who have been exploited supports us to develop our knowledge and shape our future practice.
- We will be responsive to the needs of children, young people and adults at risk.
- We will be responsive to how exploitation is changing in our Borough.

### **Priority 4 - Greater success in detection, disruption and prosecution**

- We will take robust and early action to challenge the operations of perpetrators of exploitation ensuring we maximise the use of all agencies and the legal powers available to us to disrupt the behaviours.
- We will ensure our workforce is informed and empowered to identify and respond to criminality.
- We will develop training for stakeholders engaged in the gathering of intelligence and evidence required to identify, challenge and ensure successful prosecution where possible.

### **Priority 5 - Work alongside and within our communities to tackle exploitation**

- We will develop a communication and engagement strategy for communities linked to the wider complex safeguarding agenda.
- We will engage community groups and organisations directly in order to raise awareness of issues and know how to respond to them.
- We will support our workforce to recognise their role as members of their own community in responding to and tackling issues.

### **What is your role?**

Whether you are a strategic leader, a frontline worker, a volunteer or an active member of our community, protecting those at risk of exploitation and safeguarding people from harm is the responsibility of us all. Ask yourselves these questions:

Organisations	Individuals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Is your Senior Leadership team well informed of the issues and are they quick in their responses to improvement suggestions?</li><li>✓ Do you actively raise awareness of complex safeguarding issues amongst the workforce and those children, young people and adults they engage with?</li><li>✓ Do your employees and/or volunteers know how to recognise the signs of exploitation and do they know what actions to take?</li><li>✓ Are your services providing the right support and intervention for survivors, at the right time?</li><li>✓ Do your services positively contribute to prevention and disruption joining partners shared solutions where appropriate?</li><li>✓ Are you supporting connectivity across services, to promote understanding, knowledge and sharing best practice?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Do you know what sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and modern slavery and transitional safeguarding is?</li><li>✓ Do you know the signs of such exploitation?</li><li>✓ Do you know how to refer people at risk to services to safeguard them – for example the National Referral Mechanism or the Independent Child Trafficking Guardianship Service (for Modern Slavery and trafficking)?</li><li>✓ Do you share your knowledge and expertise with your colleagues and partners?</li><li>✓ Are you doing everything you can to safeguard survivors and prevent future harm?</li><li>✓ Do you know the range and role of services working to support and safeguard those at risk of exploitation and survivors?</li><li>✓ Are you taking responsibility to keep yourself up to date on policy and practice?</li><li>✓ Do you act upon issues or concerns in your communities?</li><li>✓ Are you encouraged to access training and support?</li></ul>

## **6 .Measuring Results**

### **We will bring together partners from key agencies to develop a strategic action plan.**

We will record our progress and improvements against the outcome measures and we will evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy in safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults at risk of exploitation.

### **We will use partner agencies monitoring data to improve the quality of decision-making, learning, accountability and continual improvement.**

The strategy will be underpinned by a detailed outcomes framework which will measure the effectiveness of all actions under the core principles and priorities of the strategy.

### **We will support performance-based accountability**

We will evaluate the impact of our action plan by developing performance and quality measures that will be reported into the RBSCP/RBSAB Complex Safeguarding Subgroup.

### **We will design systems to deliver 'value work', e.g. services being delivered 'right first time'.**

It is important that we do not see success as just data and numbers, but that all of our work is rooted in having a visible and tangible impact on people's lives and evidences that we are making a difference for them and their long term outcome.

## **7. Resources and Guidance**

We are determined to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults at risk of exploitation and to help them get the help they need.

If you have any concerns about these issues or you know someone who is being exploited in this way, please contact Greater Manchester Police on 999 if there is an immediate threat to a person or people.

For up to date information and resources please see the RBSCP and RBSAB [website](#). The RBSCP and RBSAB also offers a variety of [training offers](#).

## **8. Appendix**

### ***Definitions***

#### ***Sexual Exploitation***

Defining sexual exploitation and abuse. Sexual exploitation refers to any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another

#### ***Child Sexual Exploitation***

The definition of child sexual exploitation is as follows: 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, 2017)

#### ***Adult Sexual Exploitation***

This is in exchange for basic necessities, such as food, shelter or protection;

- it is in exchange for something that is needed or wanted;
- an individual has felt frightened of the consequences if they refuse (coercion);
- the person who is exploiting stands to gain financially or socially.

It is important to remember that there are a number of scenarios that fall under this definition and sometimes sexual exploitation can be hard to identify. Both men and women can be sexually exploited. It can take place in a domestic, commercial (workplace) or public settings. Crucially, the individual that is, or has been, subject to sexual exploitation may not realise it, which makes it all the more important that practitioners are able to offer clear concise explanations and advice.

It is also worth being mindful of identified factors that increase the risk of sexual exploitation in adulthood including:

- homelessness
- use of drugs or alcohol
- lack of mental capacity to consent to sexual activity
- human trafficking
- sexual abuse during childhood.

The Care Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to make enquiries if there are concerns that an adult with care and support needs is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect, and, as a result of those needs, is unable to protect themselves. This applies, for example, where an adult discloses sexual exploitation / organised abuse or if a member of the public or parent expresses concerns about an adult

### ***Criminal Exploitation***

“Criminal Exploitation occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child, young or adult with care and support needs . The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

### ***County Lines***

The Home Office defines county lines as: ‘The police term for urban gangs supplying drugs to suburban areas and market and coastal towns using dedicated mobile phone lines or “deal lines”. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons. Gangs establish a base in the market location, typically by taking over the homes of local vulnerable adults by force or coercion in a practice referred to as “cuckooing. County lines activity and the associated violence, drug dealing and exploitation has a devastating impact on young people, vulnerable adults and local communities. Many victims do not recognise that they are being exploited or that they are at risk.

### ***Modern Slavery and Trafficking***

The National Crime Agency (NCA) assesses that the threat from serious and organised crime is increasing and serious and organised criminals are continually looking for ways to exploit new victims and novel methods to make money, particularly online.

A large amount of serious and organised crime remains hidden or underreported, meaning the true scale is likely to be greater than we currently know. Although the impact may often be difficult to see, the threat is real and occurs every day all around us. Serious and organised criminals prey on the most vulnerable in society, including young children, and their abuse can have a devastating, life-long effect on their victims.

Serious and organised crime knows no borders, and many offenders operate as part of large networks spanning multiple countries. Technological change allows criminals to share indecent images of children, sell drugs and hack into national infrastructure more easily from all around the world, while communicating more quickly and securely through encrypted phones.

Modern slavery is defined within the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The Act categorises offences of Slavery, Servitude and Forced or Compulsory Labour and Human Trafficking. Modern slavery involves the recruitment, movement, harbouring or receiving of children, women or men through the use of force, coercion, abuse of vulnerability, deception or other means for the purpose of exploitation. Individuals may be trafficked into, out of or within the UK.

There are several broad categories of exploitation linked to human trafficking, including:

- Sexual exploitation
- Forced labour
- Domestic servitude
- Organ harvesting
- Child related crimes such as child sexual exploitation, forced begging, illegal drug cultivation, organised theft, related benefit frauds etc
- Forced marriage and illegal adoption (if other constituent elements are present)

The Home Office estimates there are 13,000 victims and survivors of modern slavery in the UK; 55% of these are female and 35% of all victims are trafficked for sexual exploitation.

### *Missing*

Research has shown that children are more likely than adults to go missing, placing them in risky situations and increasing their vulnerability to a whole range of issues. They may experience physical and /or emotional abuse and are particularly vulnerable to trafficking, violent crime, drug and alcohol misuse, sexual and criminal exploitation. Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until located and their well-being or otherwise confirmed. Going missing should be treated as an indicator that the individual may be at risk of harm. The safeguarding of vulnerable people is paramount and a missing person report should be recognised as an opportunity to identify and address risks. The reasons for a person deciding to go missing may be complex and linked to a variety of social or family issues.

### *Transitional Safeguarding*

Transitional safeguarding refers to the safeguarding response required to address the specific developmental, social and contextual needs of adolescents and young adults aged between 15-25



**References:**

- (1) [www.researchinpractice.org.uk/all/news-views/2018/august/transitional-safeguarding-from-adolescence-to-adulthood](http://www.researchinpractice.org.uk/all/news-views/2018/august/transitional-safeguarding-from-adolescence-to-adulthood)
- (2) [Bridging the gap: Transitional Safeguarding and the role of social work with adults \(researchinpractice.org.uk\)](http://researchinpractice.org.uk)
- (3) [Missing Children and Adults - A cross government strategy \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)
- (4) <https://tce.researchinpractice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Safeguarding-and-exploitation-complex-contextual-and-holistic-approaches.pdf>
- (5) [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/863323/HOCountyLinesGuidance\\_-\\_Sept2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/863323/HOCountyLinesGuidance_-_Sept2018.pdf)
- (6) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines>
- (7) <https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/who-we-are/publications/241-guidance-for-councils-on-how-to-identify-and-support-victims-of-criminal-exploitation/file>
- (8) [https://www.antislaverycommissioner.co.uk/media/1446/1196\\_criminal\\_exploitation\\_report\\_2020\\_v0\\_13w.pdf](https://www.antislaverycommissioner.co.uk/media/1446/1196_criminal_exploitation_report_2020_v0_13w.pdf)
- (9) [Modern Slavery Act 2015 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)