

MACE STRATEGY

Multi-Agency Child Exploitation and Extra-Familial Harm

2026-2028

**Speak up. Stand up.
Stop Exploitation**

Wakefield
Safeguarding Children
Partnership

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FOREWORD

from the statutory leads

We are pleased to present our Wakefield Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSCP) Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) and Extra-Familial Harm Strategy for 2026-28.

Child Exploitation is a form of child abuse that impacts on the lives of children, their families and the communities of the Wakefield district. We know from the work we do with children and families that the impact of this form of abuse can be long lasting and destructive to children achieving a happy, healthy and safe childhood.

It is important that the work we do has a strong focus on preventing harm and we ensure we listen to children, families and communities about how we can equip them with the knowledge of the early signs of all forms of child exploitation; how to seek help, what support is available and what we can and do to keep children safe.

It is equally important that those who perpetrate abuse are quickly identified and dealt with and that those who seek to abuse and cause harm to children understand the impact their actions cause and the consequences of persisting or engaging in this form of child abuse.

This strategy outlines our continued commitment to a co-ordinated partnership approach to tackle all forms of child exploitation across Wakefield, disrupt those who seek to perpetrate abuse and exploitation and ensure that the right resources are well trained, skilled and in place to drive the activity outlined within the document.

OVERVIEW

**Speak up. Stand up.
Stop Exploitation**

The MACE and Extra-Familial Harm Strategy recognises that children can be at risk of or subjected to harm through exploitation and abuse from adults and/or other peers in a range of contexts outside of the home including online, this is often referred to as extra-familial harm. When a child moves through early childhood into adolescence, they invariably become involved in social networks, relationships and environments outside of their school and home setting. The majority of children in Wakefield make this transition in a safe and fulfilling way. However, all children can encounter individuals who exploit vulnerability and environments which place them at risk of exploitation.

Often parents and carers are disempowered by the perpetrators of this form of abuse, who will try to undermine the relationship between the parent or carer and their child to further the control they have over that child. For this reason, in terms of the identification, response and coordination of risks, parents and carers should be approached and recognised as partners with the expertise to enhance agencies abilities to support and protect children. This strategy outlines the need for full engagement with parents and/or carers by practitioners.

Throughout all the work of the WSCP, the voice, experiences and needs of children should be effectively represented in accordance with the guidance set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) as outlined below:

“Where there are concerns that a child is experiencing extra-familial harm, practitioners should consider all the needs and vulnerabilities of the child. Some children will have vulnerabilities that can be exploited by others and will require support appropriate to their needs to minimise the potential for exploitation. All children, including those who may be causing harm to others, should receive a safeguarding response first and practitioners should work with them to understand their experiences and what will reduce the likelihood of harm to themselves and others”.

Extra-familial exploitation and abuse does not discriminate and impacts across culture, age, gender or geography (both offline or online) and as such incorporates a number of areas of criminality. Exploitation also often occurs without the child’s immediate recognition and/or with the child believing that they are in control of the situation and can therefore be difficult to identify. Online and offlinedomains are no longer two distinct and separate areas. The relationship between the two is now fluid and interchangeable and as such we need to be able to recognise and respond to this effectively.

AIMS

This MACE and Extra-Familial Harm Strategy aims to strengthen existing structures in place across Wakefield to bring together expertise, knowledge and skills to deliver services in a co-ordinated way across the following strands of exploitation:

- **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**
- **Online Child Exploitation**
- **Children Missing from Home**
- **Modern Day Slavery and Human Trafficking (MSHT)**
- **Approaches in mitigating extra familial harm such as Serious Youth Violence**
- **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)** including county lines, financial exploitation and organised crime groups

The WSCP recognise that the dynamics of exploitation are ever changing and evolving with new risks and harms frequently emerging. This strategy aims to be adaptive and reflect and respond to emerging risks.

OUR VISION

WSCP's vision for our MACE and Extra-Familial Harm arrangements is that:

"All children in the Wakefield district who are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse are effectively identified at the earliest stage and protected by services which are delivered in a co-ordinated and informed way that consistently responds to the risks and improves the outcomes for our children, their families and the wider community".

In order to achieve this, we have set out four clear priorities over the next three years. It involves looking at Child Exploitation and Extra-Familial Harm from a 'whole system' approach and focuses on early identification and coordination, ensuring a child centred approach and creating strong partnerships that can deliver creative responses and action to create safe spaces for the children of the Wakefield district both online and in the real world.



PRINCIPLES

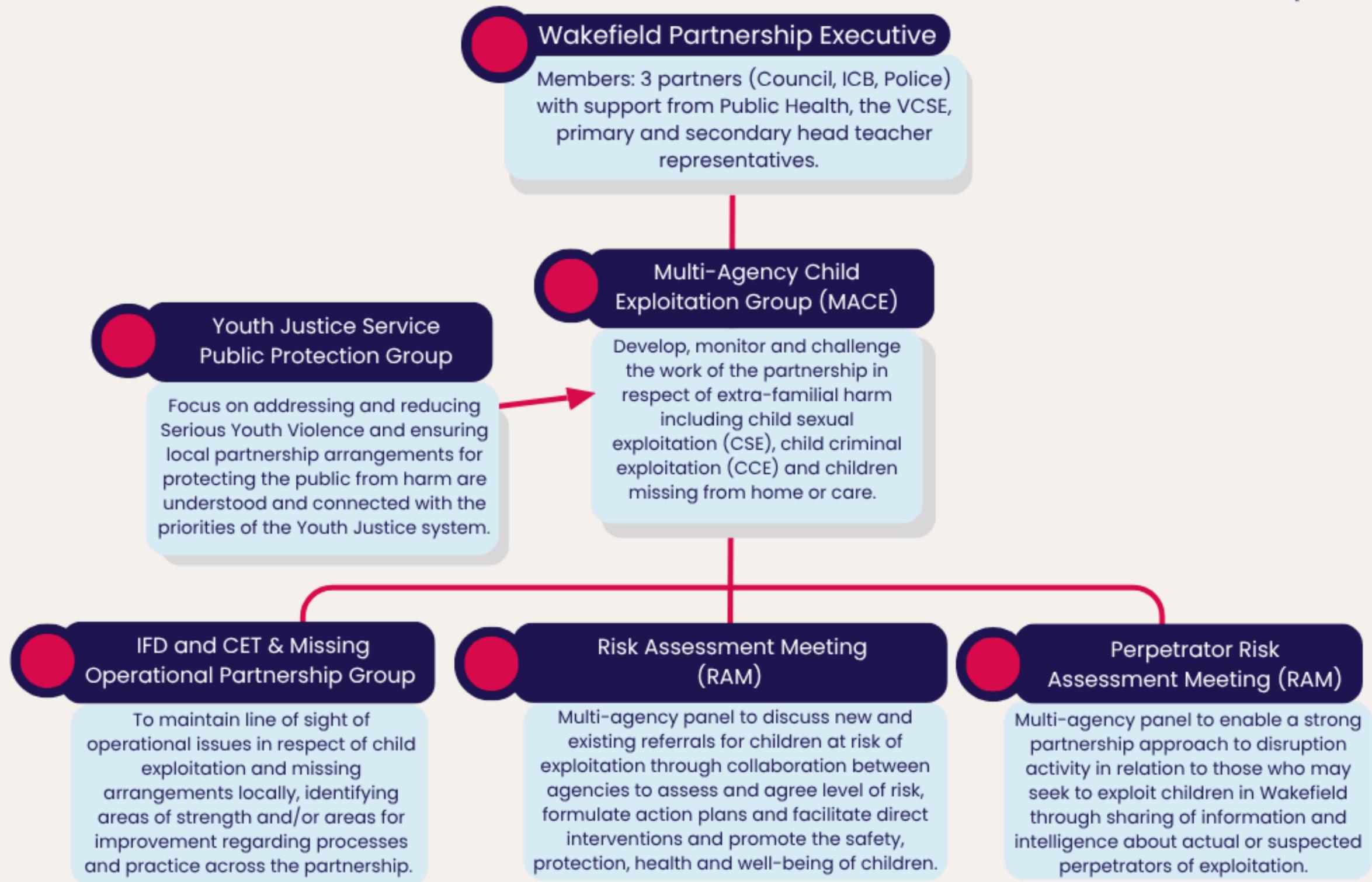
Multi-agency Practice Principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm:



The strategy is underpinned by the **Multi-agency Practice Principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm** published by Research in Practice in 2023. The Principles are non-statutory guidance and provide local ways of working with a focus on behaviours that can support an effective multi-agency response to tackling child exploitation and extra-familial harm.

MACE STRUCTURE

ARRANGEMENTS





OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The Multi-Agency Child Exploitation and Extra-Familial Harm strategy identifies four strategic priorities across the partnership.

These will be underpinned by a detailed action plan which will assign individual partner organisations to oversee and fulfil their obligations across each priority area.

Preparation, early identification and coordination:

Support

the workforce by providing a high-quality learning and development offer to ensure those supporting children and families in the Wakefield district are equipped with the knowledge and skills to enable them to recognise and respond effectively to exploitation and extra-familial harm.

Continue

to develop and fully embed the Speak Up. Stand Up. Stop Exploitation! section of the WSCP Knowledge Hub across the partnership.

Undertake

a programme of Knowledge Exchanges which reflect the evolving context of child exploitation and extra-familial harm and allow for opportunities to share learning and expertise.

Use Data

profiling, research and evidence and quality assurance activity to identify opportunities to strengthen practice and identify local emerging trends.

Prevention and awareness of child exploitation and extra-familial harm:

Support

communities to become resilient and knowledgeable to the risks of harm outside the home and empower them to have a role in making spaces and places safer.

Promote

and embed the Speak Up. Stand Up. Stop Exploitation! Businesses and Communities section of the WSCP Knowledge Hub across the district.

Increase

awareness of online contextual spaces and where young people are spending their time online and the associated risks with exploitation.

Protecting and Supporting children and families at risk of exploitation:

Ensure

that children at risk of exploitation are identified at the earliest stage, and we will take a child centred and relationship-based approach.

We will listen to the voices of children and parents and recognise their expertise to enhance agencies abilities to support and protect.

Understand

Partners will understand the nature of peer networks (on and offline) around victims and the roles that they can play in children and young people experiencing harm outside the home

Continue

to develop an understanding of transitional safeguarding and develop a coherent approach to supporting young people affected by exploitation as they move into adulthood

Continue

to strengthen and embed the multi-agency Child Exploitation Team and Missing Service offer to children identified at risk of exploitation and extra-familial harm.

Disrupt through a partnership response and pursue through investigation and prosecution:

Partnership

The partnership and communities understand their role and contribution to the prevention, identification and disruption of child exploitation and are suitably resourced to understand the proactive and reactive action that can be taken. Embed a culture of 'Disruption is Everyone's Business'.

Drive

collaborative activity through the strategic and operational partnership structure to maximise disruption opportunities whilst then seeking to address identified strategic and educational requirements.

Consider

underutilised sources of information in respect of exploitation locally and seek to build positive relationships to enhance intelligence gathering and understanding.

Perpetrators

seeking to exploit children both online and offline, are identified at the earliest stage and effective enforcement activity is taken across the partnership.