



Terms of Reference and Operating Protocol Missing Children / Children at Risk of Sexual Exploitation and Trafficked Children Operational Group (MCSETO Group)

Introduction

The Group is the mechanism employed by Warrington Safeguarding Children's Board **Missing Children / Children at Risk of Sexual Exploitation and Trafficked Children Sub-Group** to improve outcomes for children in cases of known or suspected trafficking, running away and sexual exploitation.

The MCSETO Group has three primary functions:

- To ensure that all children at risk of sexual exploitation and/or trafficking and children who regularly run away or are at high risk when they run away:
 - Are identified and acknowledged
 - Have a lead professional supporting them
 - Have an effective safeguarding plan in place.
- To ensure that all cases are considered by a single multi agency group who are then able to identify any links between individual cases.
- To ensure that intelligence relating to patterns of abuse and risk in Warrington can be identified and action taken where necessary. This will include the sharing of intelligence relating to:
 - Victims
 - Perpetrators
 - Locations

NB The MCSETO Group is not an emergency response and does not replace existing safeguarding procedures for the investigation of child protection concerns or individual case planning.

MCSETO Group Operating Protocols (to be read in conjunction with the Framework for Confidentiality and Information Sharing Agreement)

Which cases will be discussed at the MCSETO Group?

When any professional has reason to believe that child sexual exploitation and/or trafficking for exploitation is taking place or are concerned about a child who has been reported missing they may refer the information for discussion.

Cases referred to MCSETO will either be in relation to a **Child, Adult** or **Location**. It should be noted that both adults and children can be possible perpetrators of sexual exploitation and/or trafficking.

How are cases referred to the MCSETO Group?

When any professional has reason to believe that a child is at risk of child sexual exploitation and/or trafficking for exploitation, they should complete the **Pan-Cheshire CSE Screening Tool**.

If the assessed risk is **low** the **MCSETO Referral Form** should be completed and emailed to Targeted Services Duty and Assessment Team, including the **Pan-Cheshire CSE Screening Tool**.

If the risk is **medium** or **high** a referral under usual Child in Need or LSCB Safeguarding Procedures should be made to Targeted Services Duty and Assessment Team. The CSE screening Tool should still be included in the referral.

The Duty and Assessment Team will consider all referrals and may decide, based on the information provided, that the level of risk should be amended, either higher or lower. All **low** risk cases will be recorded as a contact in CareFirst and forwarded to the Conference & Review Unit for inclusion on the MCSETO Agenda. All **Medium** and **High** risk cases will be allocated to a social worker for assessment. The case will also be referred to the MCSETO for intelligence purposes.

Medium risk cases will be assessed as a child in need. **High** risk cases will be discussed at a Strategy Discussion. If a section 47 enquiry is required a Request for a Risk Management Meeting will be made to the Conference & Review Unit, via Care First.

Children who are considered to be at risk as a result of running away or going missing may also be referred for MCSETO for discussion. Children who are regularly reported as Missing to the Police will be included on the Agenda as standard. (This information is collated and shared by Cheshire Police Missing Co-ordinator)

A request for a Risk Management Meeting or 1st stage or 2nd Stage intervention meeting under the **Pan Cheshire Joint Protocol for Children and Young People Who Run Away or go Missing from Home or Care** can be made under the following circumstances:

For all Children: following the 1st missing episode if there are concerns in relation to Sexual Exploitation.

For Children in Care: After 9 missing episodes within a 90-day rolling period and where the 1st stage intervention meeting has been held and Action Plan implemented.

Any professional who has information or concern about a **possible perpetrator** or **location** can refer, using the Perpetrator / Location section of the MCSETO Referral form.

(See Flowchart – Appendix 1)

Who does the MCSETO Group consist of?

The MCSETO Group is chaired jointly by Warrington Families and Wellbeing Quality Assurance Division and Cheshire Police. Standing members of the Group include:

- Cheshire Police
- Conference & Review Unit
- Children's Targeted Services Social Work
- Catch 22
- Youth Service
- Education Safeguarding Team
- Health Services
- Residential Service (Independent and WBC)
- Intensive Family Support Services
- Youth Offending Service
- Voluntary Sector

The primary role of MCSETO Group members is to be the **Single Point of Contact (SPOC)** for their agency. They will seek information from their agency for each person being discussed and share this with the meeting. In addition each member will contribute to the discussion for each individual.

Who else is invited to attend the Group?

The lead professional for the child will be invited to attend the MCSETO Group to update the group on the case.

In addition, if there is an active police investigation, the allocated Police Officer will also be invited to attend the Group.

Where identified by the Chair, other relevant partner agencies and professionals may be invited to attend the Group.

How does the MCSETO Group work?

The MCSETO Group will sit for one full day per month. Dates will be set 12 months in advance.

The length of the Group meeting will be dictated by the number of cases to be discussed. Sometimes a full day may not be needed.

The Chairs will prepare the agenda for each meeting in advance and will ensure that this is distributed to the MCSETO Group prior to the meeting. The agenda will also be distributed to additional professionals who have been invited to attend for any individual discussion.

Each individual case will be given a time slot and all invited professionals will be asked to attend at the appropriate time. A written report will be required from any

professional unable to attend. Professionals attending the Group will also be required to produce a brief report and a template will be provided for this.

Notes will be recorded at the meeting and will include Action Points with a named responsible person. These will be distributed to all attendees and Group members. Discussions and actions points in relation to individual children will be recorded on the original referral form and saved into the child's CIVICA file by the Conference and Review Unit administrator.

Action Points from the Group will be updated and distributed to all SPOCs on a weekly basis.

All SPOCs will take responsibility for sharing and gathering information within their own agency and for providing updates to the Chairs.

Where intelligence about suspected perpetrators or locations is known these can be referred into the MCSETO Group using the Perpetrator and/or Location section of the Referral form. These issues can be discussed and actions agreed, including 'Risk Alerts'.

Each Group meeting will identify '**Risk Alerts**' in relation to **Potential Victims, Potential Perpetrators and Locations of Concern**. These alerts will be sent to relevant professionals, as agreed by the chair(s), on a 'need to know' basis.

Practice Example 1

The MCSETO Group identifies that a particular block of flats in Warrington may be a location for suspected child sexual exploitation. Following discussions and intelligence being shared at the Group; a 'Risk Alert' is agreed and sent to relevant SPOCs. A number of SPOCs alert the Group of children they know to be visiting the flats. Details of the risks are shared with lead professionals for these children and safeguarding action is taken.

Practice Example 2

Information is referred to the MCSETO Group that an adult is suspected of exploiting a number of children in his off-license. As a result, the MCSETO Group hosts a multi-agency discussion focussed on the perpetrator and invites individual representation from Neighbourhood Policing, Probation and Licensing Enforcement who all know the adult concerned. The discussion leads to clear plans for investigation and disruption of the suspected offender.

Interface with other systems and processes

The primary role of the MCSETO Group is to make effective use of intelligence and provide oversight of cases where there are issues of missing, trafficking and/or sexual exploitation. Children referred to the MCSETO Group for discussion do not need to be open to social work services but should have a lead professional who has identified the risks.

Any concerns of suspected child abuse must be referred through the normal child protection processes for assessment, investigation and intervention. These cases should still be referred, by the assessing social worker, to the MCSETO Group for intelligence gathering purposes. Any social worker working with a child under Child in Need, Child Protection and/or child in care processes may request to attend the Group for advice and support. These children will continue to have their own individual case planning and review meetings but will be included in the intelligence gathering.

Children who have been subject to a strategy discussion and section 47 enquiry as a result of sexual exploitation should be referred to the Conference and Review Unit for a **CSE Risk Management Meeting**. (See Pan-Cheshire Child Sexual Exploitation Protocol)

Where the MCSETO Group identifies suspected victims who are not currently open to social work the Group will ensure appropriate referrals are made via the Duty and Assessment Team. Similarly, where the Group identifies perpetrators the Group will ensure a referral is made to the Police for investigation.

Where information gathering and discussions results in clear themes and patterns of suspected criminal activity that may require further investigation, the chairs will escalate this to senior police officers with a view to initiating focussed operations, investigations and actions.

MCSETO Group Terms of Reference

The Warrington MCSETO Group will report to the **Missing Children / Children at Risk of Sexual Exploitation and Trafficked Children** sub-group of the Warrington Safeguarding Children's Board.

The Purpose of the Group is:

- To ensure that all children at risk of sexual exploitation and/or trafficking and children who regularly runaway or are at high risk when they run away:
 - Are identified and acknowledged
 - Have a lead professional supporting them
 - Have an effective safeguarding plan in place.
- To ensure that all cases are considered by a single group who are then able to identify any links between individual cases.
- To ensure that intelligence relating to patterns of abuse and risk in Warrington can be identified and action taken where necessary. This will include the sharing of intelligence relating to:
 - Victims
 - Perpetrators
 - Locations

The Group will be victim focused and it will not duplicate or replace the functions of statutory child protection processes in relation to individual children.

It will achieve its objectives by:

- Identifying children in Warrington who are victims and/or at risk of sexual exploitation and/or trafficking and ensuring that they are referred into the appropriate agency and managed at the appropriate level.
- Identifying children in Warrington who regularly run away or who are at high risk when they run away and ensuring that they are referred into the appropriate agency and managed at the appropriate level.
- Identifying individuals responsible for perpetrating child sexual exploitation and trafficking and links and networks between individuals and those who harbour children.
- Identifying locations where CSE is taking place.
- Tasking group members with actions to achieve the overall aims of the groups in relation children, perpetrators and locations identified.
- Having identified those most at risk, monitoring the multi-agency response to that risk, ensuring that existing child protection processes are being used to protect them.

Family and Victim Participation:

- The MCSETO Group is a professionals meeting held to discuss strategies to achieve the objectives of the group.
- Victims and their carers will not be invited to attend and will not routinely be informed of discussions.
- The meetings share sensitive and confidential information about suspected perpetrators and potentially a number of children who they may be involved with.
- Information may only be shared by members with other professionals within their own organisation.
- Any sharing of information with victims or their families may only take place with the agreement of the Chair(s) of the Group and to ensure the protection of a child from further harm.

Information may be shared via the chair(s) with the chairs of counterpart meetings in other Local Authorities areas to ensure that links between potential abusers across the North West and beyond are recognised and actioned.

Agency representatives (SPOCs) will undertake to:

- Attend meetings or provide a deputy
- Be prepared with up to date information collated from their own agency
- Accept and complete agreed actions within agreed timescales
- Report to the meeting or the Chair, via the dedicated email address, on the outcome
- Share Risk Alerts to relevant professionals within their own agency as agreed by the chair(s).

The MCSETO Group will:

- Meet on a monthly basis
- Consider all children living in Warrington who are at risk or suspected to be at risk (including Warrington children in care living out of area)
- Record and circulate minutes and actions via secure dedicated email address which will be confidential to Group members.
- Circulate weekly updates to the Action Points via secure dedicated email address which will be confidential to Group members
- Provide Risk Alerts to relevant professionals on a 'need to know' basis.
- Escalate information in relation to suspected criminal activity requiring further investigation to relevant senior police officers and senior managers with Families and Wellbeing.

**APPENDIX 1
Warrington CSE Referral Pathway**

