



Dorset Protocol for Managing Child Exploitation Risks for Children and Young People who are visiting/trafficked into Dorset

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Children and young people who are trafficked into Dorset for the purposes of moving/dealing drugs usually initially come to the attention of Dorset Police. This is often outside of usual working hours. A clear protocol for responding to immediate risks, recording the concerns and understanding the prevalence of the issues across the agencies is required. There are frequently delays in agreeing plans for the young person when they are released from Police custody and significant time can be spent by the Police and Social Care Teams both out of hours and the following day in contacting the responsible Local Authorities.
- 1.2. This protocol is intended to ensure there is a shared understanding of the individual agency responsibilities, provide a process for information sharing and recording to ensure that risks are known and managed whilst the young person is in Dorset and that the responsible Local Authority is aware of the potential risks to the young person following the Police actions when the young person is returned home. The safe and timely return of the young person to their home is primarily the responsibility of the parents or if a child is looked after then home Local Authority. However, all agencies are required to work together to arrange the safe repatriation and escalate any concerns when repatriation is delayed.
- 1.3. The Local Authority responsible for children and young people in custody is the Local Authority where the young person is 'ordinarily resident' – where they usually live, or if looked after, the Local Authority who placed the young person in care. The responsible Local Authority should work closely with the Police throughout the period the young person is in custody to ensure appropriate and safe plans are in place for the return home of the young person on release. The Local Authority where the young person is in custody is responsible for immediate protective actions where there is a 'risk to the life of a child or a likelihood of serious immediate harm'. In these circumstances, local authority social workers, the police or NSPCC should use their statutory child protection powers to act immediately to secure the safety of the child. The local authority in whose area a child is found in circumstances that require emergency action (the first authority) is responsible for taking emergency action. If the

child is looked-after by, or the subject of a child protection plan in another authority, the first authority must consult the authority responsible for the child. Only when the second local authority explicitly accepts responsibility (to be followed up in writing) is the first authority relieved of its responsibility to take emergency action.

2. Process

2.1 Police Custody should notify the responsible Local Authority Social Care Team or responsible Local Authority Out of Hours Service immediately a young person whose home address is outside of Dorset is arrested. They should be informed of how long it is expected that the young person will remain in custody and an approximate time of release provided. Dorset Children's Services, for young people in custody in Weymouth should also be notified at the time of arrest.

2.2 Parents, or other responsible adult nominated by the parents are usually the best people to act as the Appropriate Adult. There should be an expectation that the parent or Local Authority carer undertake the role unless:

- There is a suspicion that an offence was committed against the parent/carers.
- The home address of the young person is at a distance that makes this impractical in a reasonable timeframe.
- The young person has provided information that suggests this would not be in their best interest or would put them at additional risk.

2.3 Where there is not a parent/carers or responsible person nominated by the family able to act as the Appropriate Adult, a request will be made to the Youth Offending Service if the young person is arrested before 5pm during the weekdays or the out of hours services after 5pm and at weekends. All interviews of young people should be completed before 10pm at night unless in exceptional circumstances.

2.4 Children and young people should not spend more time in custody than is necessary and alternative arrangements for their care on release from custody should be agreed with the responsible Local Authority as soon as possible after the notification. The Children's Services Social Care/Out of Hours Team will support Dorset Police in any negotiations with the home Local Authority and ensure that appropriate information is shared about any potential risks to the young person on their return home.

2.5 The Prisoner Escort Record (PER) should be provided to the responsible Local Authority and Dorset/BCP Children's Services Team as soon as it is available. The home Local Authority is responsible for providing information to inform all risk assessments while the young person is in Dorset and for making the appropriate arrangements to ensure these risks are managed. This might include the home Local Authority agreeing alternative care arrangements with the family and young person and how the young person will be transported home.

2.6 In all cases where there is concern that a young person found in Dorset is being criminally exploited, a PPN will be completed and sent to:

- The responsible Local Authority

- Dorset Children's Services
- Safeguarding Health
- The Dorset Youth Offending Service

2.7 A 'Contact' will be recorded on the Dorset Children's Services Mosaic system, detailing the reason for the arrest, the PER and PPN, and actions taken to ensure the safe repatriation of the young person.

2.8 When the young person is ready for release, all agencies should work together to ensure they are released to a safe place. The primary responsibility to determining the safe place is with the home Local Authority. However, where there is an avoidable delay, a temporary place of safety should be identified. The Local Authority in the area where the young person was arrested will work with the Police to identify such a place of safety.

3. Immediate Protection and Dispute Resolution

3.1 The Local Authority responsible for children and young people is the Local Authority where the young person is 'ordinarily resident' – where they live. However, where there is a risk to the life of a child or a likelihood of serious immediate harm, local authority social workers, the police or NSPCC should use their statutory child protection powers to act immediately to secure the safety of the child. The local authority in whose area a child is found in circumstances that require emergency action (the first authority) is responsible for taking emergency action. Emergency action is unlikely to be required when the young person is in police custody and the home Local Authority is expected to make the arrangements for the return of the young person home.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779401/Working_Together_to_Safeguard-Children.pdf

3.2 If there is concern that a responsible Local Authority is not acting to secure the return and ongoing safety of the young person, the CHAD/Out of Hours Manager will escalate this to an equivalent manager in the home Local Authority on behalf of Dorset Police and Social Care. If there continues to be delay in arrangements being made, the matter should be escalated to the Force Incident Manager (Tel 101) and appropriate Senior Social Care Manager.