

## EPIC South Yorkshire Sub Region Charter

# ‘Protecting children from criminal exploitation, human trafficking and modern slavery’

The South Yorkshire Sub Regional Charter is a set of general actions and aims which act as a foundation for a wide range of people to work together to tackle Child Criminal Exploitation across Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham. By signing this charter, the participant is not necessarily stating that they will be involved in everything but are agreeing to play their part where it is appropriate.

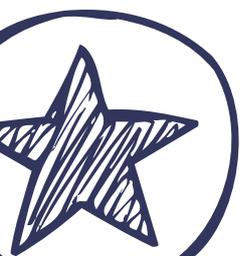
Participants include those with lived experience of child criminal exploitation grass roots groups, Local Authorities, Schools, South Yorkshire Police Commissioned Services and Charities, as well as Churches, Mosques, Synagogues and those from other faith communities. It is not an in-depth strategy but is part of a process by which Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham are becoming more and more interconnected in order to tackle Criminal Child Exploitation more effectively.

The charter will be reviewed annually and can be used to hold different participants who sign up to it to account. The aim is to protect children and young people from criminal exploitation, human trafficking and modern slavery thus enable them fulfil their aspirations.

This charter has been put together by the sub-regional working group which will continue to meet.

When it comes to tackling child criminal exploitation across Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham, all those who sign up to the charter recognise that they are not the only group or organisation to exist and that there are many other participants involved in tackling Criminal Child Exploitation and supporting children, young people and families.

This Charter has been developed following the November 2018, (No. 180032) report Protecting children from criminal exploitation, human trafficking and modern slavery: an addendum to the 2016 report: ‘Time to listen’ – a joined up response to child sexual exploitation and missing children’.



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## This Charter recognises that there are eight key activities vital in tackling Criminal Child Exploitation across the South Yorkshire Sub Region.

These are:

### 1. Raising Awareness - All children are vulnerable to exploitation

All children are vulnerable to criminal and sexual exploitation, not just specific groups. The scale and nature of child exploitation in England in the 21st century are shocking. The impact is devastating for the children, their families and their communities. Professionals and parents should not assume that the most vulnerable children are the only vulnerable children. A whole-system approach is required to address the perpetrators and to protect and support victims. It requires engagement across:

- Local Authorities
- Children's and adults' social care
- South Yorkshire Police
- Probation services
- Youth offending teams
- Health
- Education
- Housing
- Transport
- Community safety
- Local safeguarding partners
- Local businesses

A whole-system approach needs to not only protect and support children but to try to prevent exploitation through raising awareness in the community and disrupting criminal activity.

This requires agencies and professionals to work together with parents and children to alert them to the signs of grooming, exploitation and county lines. When children begin to go missing, have mood swings, become secretive or quiet or display other unusual behaviours, parents who do not know that county lines exists, or the effects it has on children, are not able to protect them.

There needs to be a multi-agency coordinated approach to awareness-raising with children, parents and the wider local community, as well as disruption and prevention of those perpetrating exploitation.



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## 2. Staying with children who do not want to engage

Children's needs and safety must come first. This means that professionals need to work flexibly and continue to 'stay with the child', even when they are unwilling to engage.

## 3. Seeing and 'Staying with' the child

We need to change how we see and understand vulnerable older children. Some areas and agencies need to do more to recognise the complexity of some children's lives. The behaviours that children present with, such as offending or violence, may result from exploitation outside the home and/or from abuse at home. Any interventions need to take into account all risks and needs. We must all understand that children who have been criminally exploited are the victims of crime.

## 4. Working together in Local Partnerships

First, all agencies need to get the basics right. Ensuring that there are clear systems in place at the 'front door' of services is essential, so that children at risk of exploitation are identified and receive a prompt and appropriate response.



## 5. Using and sharing intelligence and information well to understand Local Risk

Sharing intelligence and information is crucial when developing multi-agency approaches to preventing criminal exploitation. Patterns of criminal exploitation in a local area will vary and the impact of county lines may be different from one region to another. In developing a response, it is crucial that partners understand the risks in their area.

## 6. Working together strategically across regions

Large urban areas need to link strategically and operationally with regions into which children are trafficked to sell drugs. This will support planning to protect the child, help to identify any other children in need of protection and support any criminal investigation.

## 7. Training and information for professionals

Working with children at high risk of exploitation and who are reluctant to engage can be challenging. Children need professionals who are well trained, skilled and persistent and who recognise the risks. Understanding the links across child exploitation, modern slavery and trafficking will help all agencies to respond more effectively to support children but also to work together to identify perpetrators.





## 8. Learning the lessons from the past

Agencies will apply the lessons they have learned from the response to child sexual exploitation. All organisations that work with children need to ensure that frontline staff recognise the signs of criminal exploitation and understand that a child may be being criminally exploited, even if the activity appears consensual.

South Yorkshire Sub Regional Charter (Signature):

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Organisation / Group (If Applicable):

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Name of Person signing:

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Signature:

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