

Children and Young People's Scrutiny Board

Child Exploitation Update

January 2025

Child Exploitation Team Manager
– Children's Services

Achievements in 2024

- ▶ Child Exploitation Toolkit practice guidance – August 2024 – improving accessibility and quality of completion by all professionals
- ▶ Child Exploitation and Missing Children performance surgeries in place – monthly – ensuring SLT oversight and challenge to practitioner/each other where required
- ▶ Cross-border working continues with good practice being shared – peer group mapping and intelligence sharing with Devon
- ▶ Increase of exploitation toolkits from primary schools
- ▶ MACA (from Spring 2023) Action Plan completed
- ▶ Recognition of good practice from National Working Group (NWG)
- ▶ Continuation of Triage, CEMOG and MACE Panels
- ▶ Renewed Local Child Exploitation Training to support Project M Commissioned training
- ▶ Transition planning enhanced, better practice for those reaching 18 identified as Modern Slaves

Heading into 2025....

- ▶ Review and renew Implementation of Philomena Protocol (for missing children) jointly with Devon and Cornwall Police and Devon Children's Services
- ▶ Contextual Safeguarding Working Party – locations/adults of concern and peer group contextual processes being proposed
- ▶ Renewal of Barnardo's EXCEED service for children vulnerable to Sexual Exploitation
- ▶ Continued funding for prevention pathway via YJS (offending behaviour and criminal exploitation)
- ▶ Implementing national learning regarding Child Financial Exploitation/Extortion (CFE) – understanding, data capture and response
- ▶ TSCP Safeguarding Conference – focused on Online Safety
- ▶ Predictability of children and adults re: new behaviours or networks – achieved through intelligence sharing
- ▶ Building relationships with new partner colleagues

Brief overview of local profile

12th January 2025

138 children (177 in July 2024)

35 children with HIGH/BEING EXPLOITED toolkits (47 in July 2024)

103 children with MEDIUM vulnerability toolkits (130 in July 2024)

Child Criminal Exploitation – 110 children (141 in July 2024)

Child Sexual Exploitation – 69 (89 in July 2024)

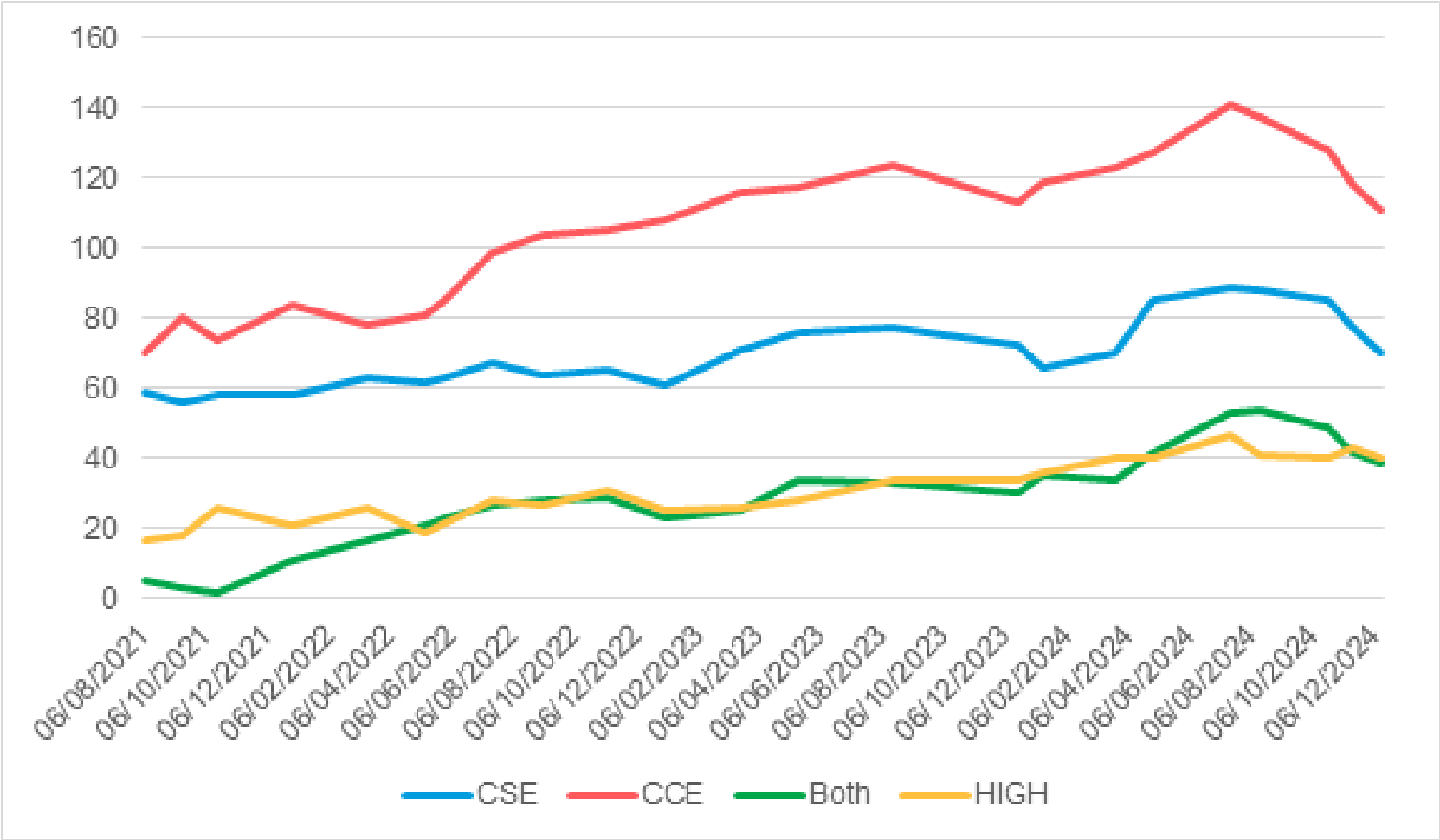
Both CSE and CCE – 38 (53 in July 2024)

Males 77 (94 in July 2024)

Female 59 (82 in July 2024)

Other Gender Identification 2 (1 in July 2024)

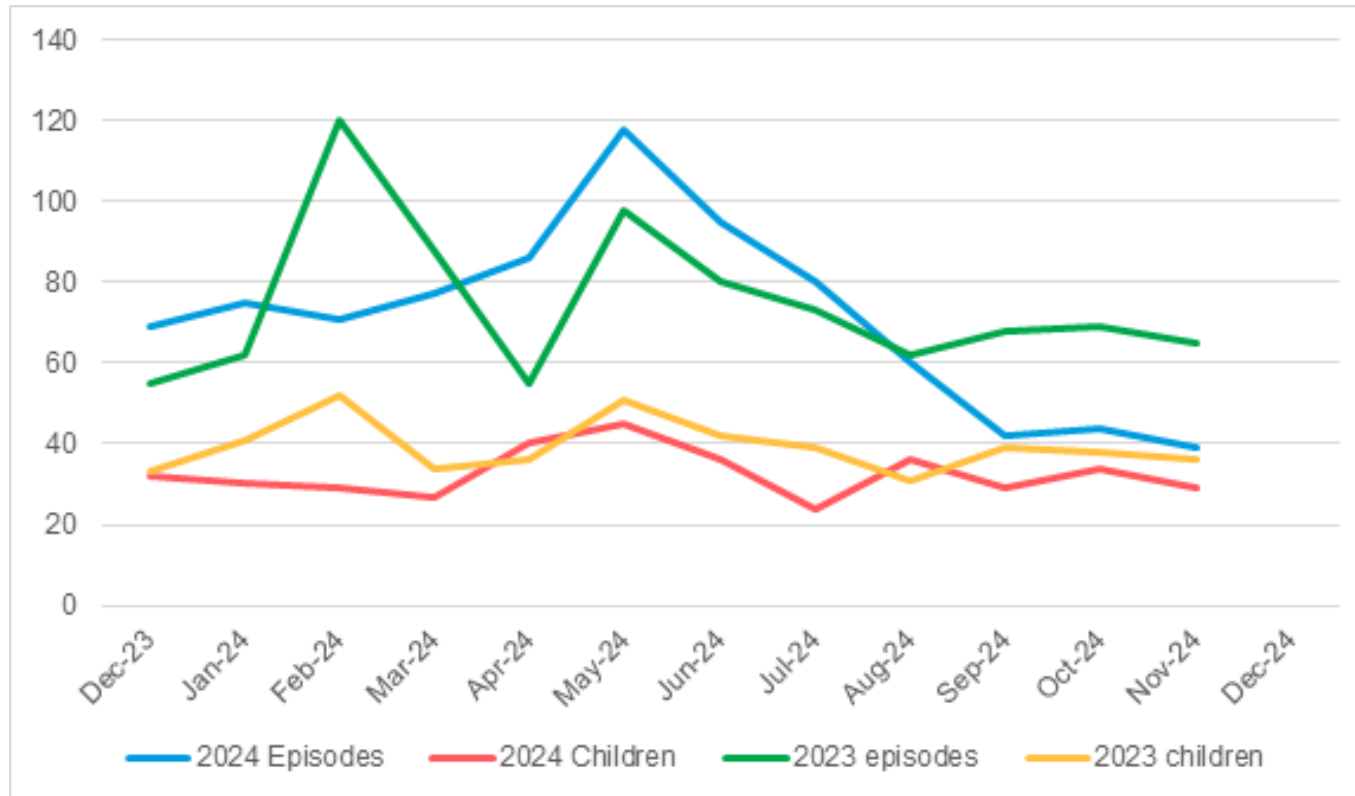
Identification of Child Exploitation



Why a reduction in identification and performance? (theories and feedback)

- ▶ Prioritising statutory tasks and timescales in stretched capacity services - exploitation may be identified by practitioners, but toolkit not completed
- ▶ Complexity of need/vulnerability re: exploitation can impact upon confidence, competence and hope for change
- ▶ Withdrawal of engagement and/or consent from child and/or family
- ▶ Length of toolkit form?
- ▶ Exploitation Team capacity for consultation, advice and support
- ▶ System gaps - MASH/EH referral received via portal are not notified to Exploitation Team
- ▶ Turn around of staff across the Partnership and training/induction needs
- ▶ Social normalisation - of CSE and CCE
- ▶ Adulthood - viewing children as older and more capable/implicit than they may be

Missing Children 2023/2024



December 2024 - 28 missing episodes, 21 missing children - 5 Other Local Authority Cared For

More individual episodes for children not previously known - repeat missing children are not being reported

Why a reduction in children being reported missing? (theories and feedback)

**We know that children are out overnight as they are being reported by public, being arrested, or intelligence received*

We refer to this as 'hidden missing'.

- ▶ Parental feedback = invasive process for police visit, RHC and also followed up by MASH/Social Worker (some may actively avoid to hide issues in the family home)
- ▶ Repeat missing episodes - families report physical and emotional exhaustion, discriminatory/unhelpful responses, impact on younger siblings or elderly members of the family
- ▶ Arrests may be followed by need for parent to be AA, attend Court, liaise with professionals - taking over the night and daytime
- ▶ Length of phone call to 101
- ▶ Family members are aware of/co-erced or threatened by the perpetrator/s of exploitation

Challenges

- ▶ Implementing national learning at pace with current pressure on partnership resources – organisation responses to organised crime/tackling organised networks and children who require high levels of safeguarding and resource for protection
- ▶ Identification and swift response to victims/trauma to reduce vulnerability – maintaining victim support for as long as needed
- ▶ Consent and disengagement
- ▶ Disruption of adult perpetrators (including Probation reset) and speed/reach of recruitment by individuals and networks
- ▶ Identification and swift responses to cuckooing and trafficking – confidence and resources (relationships between adults of concern and vulnerable families)
- ▶ Addressing domestic abuse, substance misuse and vulnerability of parents
- ▶ Ever expanding forms of exploitation of children – now including sextortion/AI/crypto-currency

Next steps - Children's Services

- Toolkit performance (being up to date within 3 months) – continue to tackle
- Review local training, take on feedback and consider next steps
- Consider and plan how Return Home Conversations will be moved back 'in house'
- Enhance data collection further (CFE, PREVENT, increase characteristic capture of vulnerable children and peer groups) – aim to lead nationally with data capture and understanding
- Submission of UASC exploitation toolkits, understanding profile of vulnerability and response to safeguarding upon transfer
- Ensure exploitation/missing processes are added into induction for new staff and/or newly qualified staff

Next steps - Torbay Safeguarding Partnership

- Develop relationships with new partner representatives and develop strong relationships
- Review and Update Exploitation strategic plan - has commenced
- Re-commissioning and re-organisation Child Sexual Exploitation support, Return Home Conversations and Substance Misuse
- Contextual Safeguarding framework - proposed framework by end February 2025 followed by launch and training across the TSCP
- Consider improvements to children with SEND and disabilities re: identification and response to child exploitation and missing episodes
- Continue cross border working and practice sharing with Peninsula authorities
- Extend relationships with safeguarding partnerships nationally and internationally
- Continue supportive links with National Working Group, national and local expert organisations
- Prepare for Ofsted inspection

Thank you for your time

▶ Any questions/comments??