

1 – Who are the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel?

- The panel is the independent commissioner of reviews into serious child safeguarding cases with a view to improving learning, professional practice and outcomes for children.
- Statutory guidance in 'Working Together' sets out how the panel operates however the panel is independent of the government. The panel supervises the production and quality of reviews. This is the first national review published by the panel.

2- Overview of report

- Examined cases involving 21 children from 17 localities who were referred to the Panel between July 2018 and March 2019.
- Key questions – do adolescents in need of state protection from criminal exploitation get the help they need? How can services designed to keep adolescents safe improve to prevent further harm?
- The children involved were described as “not being easy to reach” with much of their lives hidden due to fear of reprisals.
- The most frequently used weapon in incidents was a knife. The children had often been involved in previous knife related incidents.

7 – Case study facts

- 3 children subject to CP plans for extra familial harm.
- Past substance misuse and mental ill health present for 12 families and criminality present for 10 – not a threshold for Children's Social Care.
- 16 of the children were known to be involved in gangs and for 12 there was evidence of links to county lines.
- 8 of the 21 children were moved out of area at some stage for their safety. 2 returned to their home areas and were murdered.
- There appeared to be no correlation between the child being exploited and the level of support they were receiving

6 – Recommendations

- New practice framework created to use when a child at risk of exploitation has been identified.
- Review of Working Together to reflect on lives of children at risk of exploitation
- Review of the use of the National Referring Mechanism (NRM).
- Data collection to improve local/national knowledge of exploitation prevalence.
- Children excluded from school to receive immediate alternative full-time provision
- Practitioners to respond rapidly and flexibly at critical moments.
- Recommends lead professional should be Children's Social Care.



5 – Key findings 2

- Practitioners often told, “You haven't got a clue” by children. Superficial engagement was common due to children's fears of repercussions.
- Little local awareness of strategies to disrupt perpetrator activities which differs from the dual approach to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation.
- National Referral Mechanism (NRM) not known about or used effectively.
- The use of tags and other curfews were effective in helping children move away from exploitation.
- No central point of dissemination of effective practice to target exploitation – leads to inconsistency.
- Common indicators of vulnerability not present in the majority of cases with the major exception being exclusion from school.

3 – Case study facts

- All 21 children were male.
- 11 of the children died,
- 7 suffered serious harm 3 perpetrated serious harm against another, including one case where the victim died.
- 19 of the children lived at home with immediate family at the time of the significant incident.
- Over 100 practitioners, 21 parents/carers and 6 children were spoken to for the review.

4 – Key findings 1

- 15 of the children were from BAME backgrounds indicating that boys from black ethnic minority backgrounds are at higher risk.
- Exclusion from school was a trigger for serious escalation of risk – 17 of the 21 children had been permanently excluded.
- Moving families out of area was an effective immediate safety strategy however often failed as a medium or long-term solution.
- Parental engagement was nearly always a protective factor however families need targeted support to know how to respond and help.
- Trusting relationships between children and practitioners are key.
- Practitioners being able to respond decisively at crisis points could often be key turning points e.g. arrest, hospitalisation, exclusion.