



One minute guide

'Trusted Relationships': Service Update (March 2021)

Background

The North Yorkshire and York Trusted Relationships project offers support for children and young people (principally aged 10 – 17) **who are primarily at risk of or subject to Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**, including County Lines, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Modern Slavery. Underpinning the support offered through the project is relationship and strengths based practice approach, to harness the power of relational repair and development.

At the heart of the delivery model is the ambition to foster positive, persistent and long-term relationships and develop protective factors that build resilience in this highly vulnerable population. A key feature of the support offer is for a 'Trusted Relationship' to be identified and developed for each young person supported through the project to help to build resilience, self-esteem and self-efficacy. This approach acknowledges that positive Trusted Relationships are a key enabler for change.

To find out more about the project and delivery model, please see the following links:

- a) [Trusted Relationships – One Minute Guide](#)
- b) [Trusted Relationships Delivery Plan and Support Offer](#)

Service Update, Emerging Outcomes and Achievements:

The local Trusted Relationships project became operational in February 2019, and up to the end of February 2021, there has been a total of 156 referrals in to the service. Over the course of the first two years, there has been the emergence of some outstanding outcomes, good practice examples and the project has attracted both local and national acclaim:

- **Independent Evaluation:** An overarching aim of local Trusted Relationships projects is to strengthen the evidence base on what works to protect young people from exploitation and abuse to improve services over the course of the programme and beyond. A key finding from the independent evaluation report (published

autumn 2020) states: “*The key outcome of engagement in the intervention was the development of the trusted relationship, which was described as young people having someone they trust with whom they can talk to about their day and any challenges they are facing, while receiving advice and support. Despite it being still too early to know definitively about the long-term impact on the young person’s risk of sexual or criminal exploitation, staff and young people reported a range of positive intermediary outcomes on one or more areas in the young person’s general personal development, relationships, education and employment*”.

Alongside the evaluation, we have compiled catalogue of good practice case studies that illustrate how the project has made a real difference in the lives children and young people at risk of or subject to CCE.

- **Risk Reduction:** Although it is still relatively early to report on longer-term outcomes and/or benefits realised through the project, North Yorkshire data reporting indicates that in 47.5% of closed episodes, the Trusted Relationships service has supported a reduction in the child exploitation risk level associated with the case, illustrating the impact of the service. In addition, in 49.2% of cases the exploitation risk has remained at the same level, indicating that support through Trusted Relationships has helped prevent increased exposure to child exploitation risk.
- **Local Government Association (LGA) – Case Study:** We are delighted that the North Yorkshire and City of York Trusted Relationships project was identified and included as a case study within the LGA’s '[taking a public health approach to tackling serious violent crime](#)' publication. Within the publication, the LGA have pulled together a series of case studies to highlight some examples of best practice across local government. The case studies also highlight how councils have been working in partnership to deliver early interventions that help to prevent children and young people from becoming involved in serious violent crime.
- **Government Tackling Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) Strategy:** This strategy, published in January 2021, is the first of its kind in setting out the government’s vision for preventing, tackling and responding to CSA in all its forms. The [Tackling CSA Strategy](#) is centred around 3 objectives:
 1. Tackling all forms of child sexual abuse and bringing offenders to justice;
 2. Preventing offending and re-offending; and
 3. Protecting and safeguarding children, and supporting all victims and survivors.A key strand of the third objective is the protection of children and young people who may be at increased risk from offenders seeking to exploit their vulnerabilities. Trusted Relationships projects are included within the strategy as a positive example of targeted support to children and young people who are at-risk of child sexual exploitation or abuse, as well as criminal exploitation and peer-on-peer abuse. The case study included within this section of the strategy relates to a case from the North Yorkshire and York project, recognising the excellent practice delivered by local Trusted Relationships services (please see pages 63-4).
- **NYCC Innovation Award Nomination:** In the autumn 2020, the local project was nominated for an Innovation Award. The nomination relates to highly innovative element of the project where a group of young people aged 16–24, who have had a previous involvement with Children and Families (C&F) Services, have been appropriately trained and employed as Restorative Practice Relief Workers (RPRWs). One of the ‘difficulties’ the project aims to help tackle is young people at risk of or subject to CCE are often ‘hard to engage’. As part of the Trusted Relationships project, the young people can be offered support through a RPRW, who will be relatively close in age and may be able to draw upon their ‘lived experience’ to engage and develop a positive mentoring relationship with the young person. This relationship is used as a vehicle to help build resilience, develop safety and move the young person away from risk and exploitation. Qualitative evidence suggests the offer of support via RPRWs has facilitated significantly improved engagement with vulnerable young people, when compared with more traditional offers of professional support.
- **National CCE Conference:** The North Yorkshire and York Trusted Relationships project was invited to present at a national ‘CCE – what is our understanding?’ conference, where there was opportunity to promote the local programme, explain the referral pathway, support offer and delivery model, as well as showcasing some good practice case examples. In presenting at the conference, the project received excellent feedback and numerous commendations, including from the Head of Exploitation Projects in the Home Office, who said: “It was invaluable to have the local delivery perspective, and for attendees to hear about how the programme is structured and integrated into wider safeguarding and multiagency working”.

Accessing Support Through Trusted Relationships:

To avoid the implementation of parallel pathways and ensure children and young people most in need of this support are identified at the earliest opportunity, the referral process for Trusted Relationships has been fully integrated within the designated Child Exploitation process for each local authority area. In North Yorkshire, this is the Multi-Agency Screening Team (MAST) Child Exploitation process and within York, it is the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation and Missing (MACEM) Meeting pathway. As such, as a precursor to making a Trusted Relationships referral, the case-holder must first route the case through the relevant Child Exploitation pathway, which requires the case to become open to a C&F service to complete a Child Exploitation Risk Assessment (CERA) in conjunction with partners.

The CERA and case will then be discussed in a multi-agency forum who make recommendations in relation to the case and Trusted Relationships will be considered as one potential support option. If an outcome of the MAST / MACEM discussion is that the case would be suitable for and would benefit from Trusted Relationships support, the case-holder will be asked to consider making a referral to ensure the young person can receive Trusted Relationships support. Following submission of a referral, the case will be considered by the Trusted Relationships Panel. This panel will consider the CERA and referral and will allocate the case to receive support through the project. The pathway to access support through the Trusted Relationships programme is set out in the diagram on the following page (appendix 1).

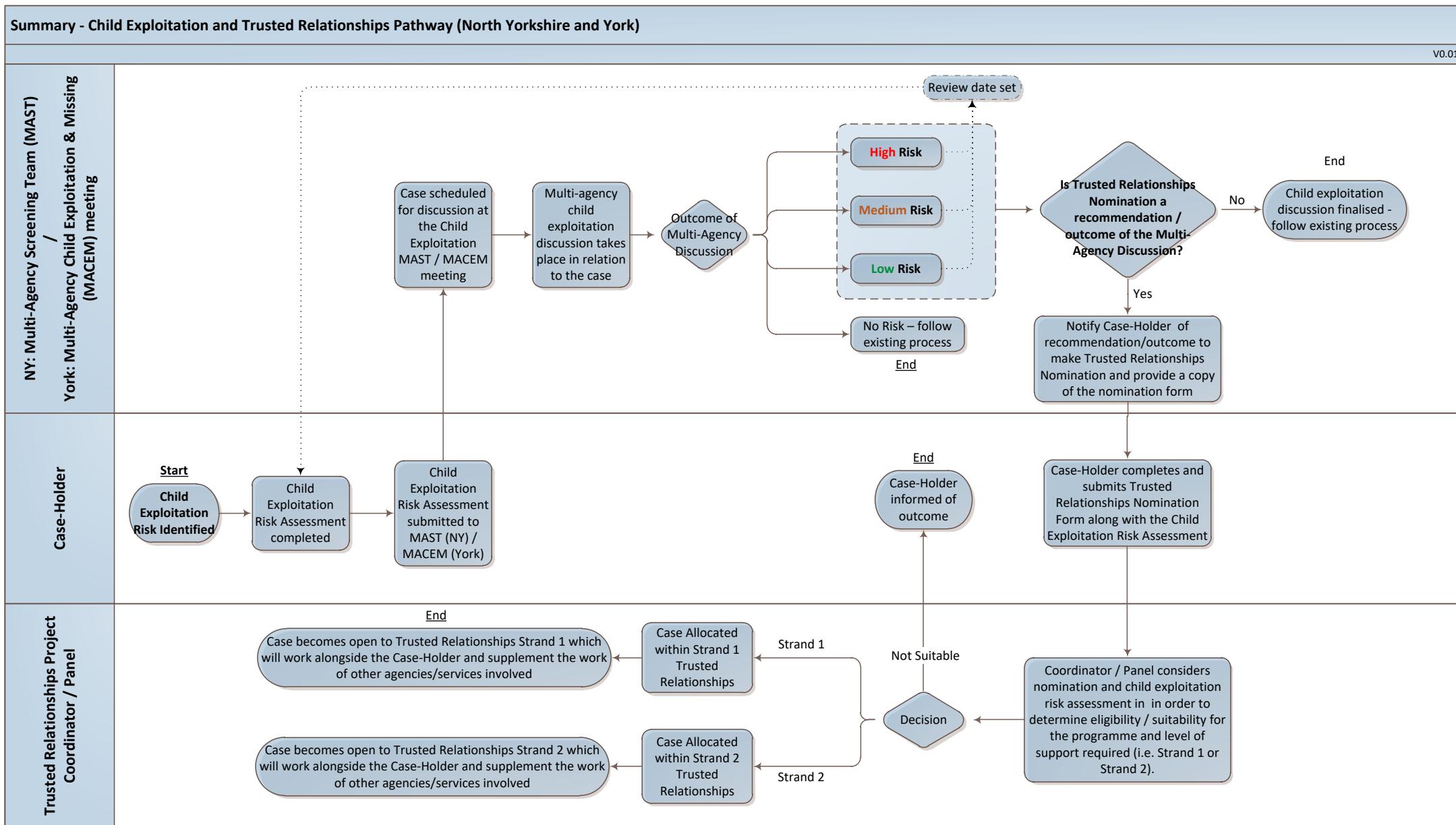
It has been agreed that agencies external to C&F services cannot submit a referral directly to the Trusted Relationships project; this is to ensure the existing child exploitation pathway is not bypassed. Taking this approach to manage referrals in to the Trusted Relationships service, it delivers significant benefits, including:

- promoting consistency in how cases are considered, referred and allocated to the project
- ensuring there is multi-agency agreement on the appropriateness of Trusted Relationship Project support in the context of the existing range of options and interventions available to children and young people vulnerable to or subject to different forms of exploitation
- ensuring child exploitation forums (MAST / MACEM) retain oversight of children and young people within their local authority area
- ensuring case-holding responsibility remains with the C&F service, with this project supplementing the work of other agencies/services.

Contact

If you have any questions in relation to the North Yorkshire and York Trusted Relationships project, please contact Mike Lord, Trusted Relationships Project Coordinator, on: Michael.Lord@northyorks.gov.uk

Appendix 1



Strand 1: Support for children & young people who are **vulnerable or at risk of CCE** (including County Lines, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Modern Slavery) – in North Yorkshire delivery through Restorative Practice Relief Workers, in City of York delivery through Volunteer Mentors

Strand 2: Network / family finding approach for young people identified as being **subject to CCE** (including County Lines, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Modern Slavery) – delivery through Family Network Coordinator(s)