# Bristol Children Exploitation Collaboration

Final Project Update Session
12th October 2022
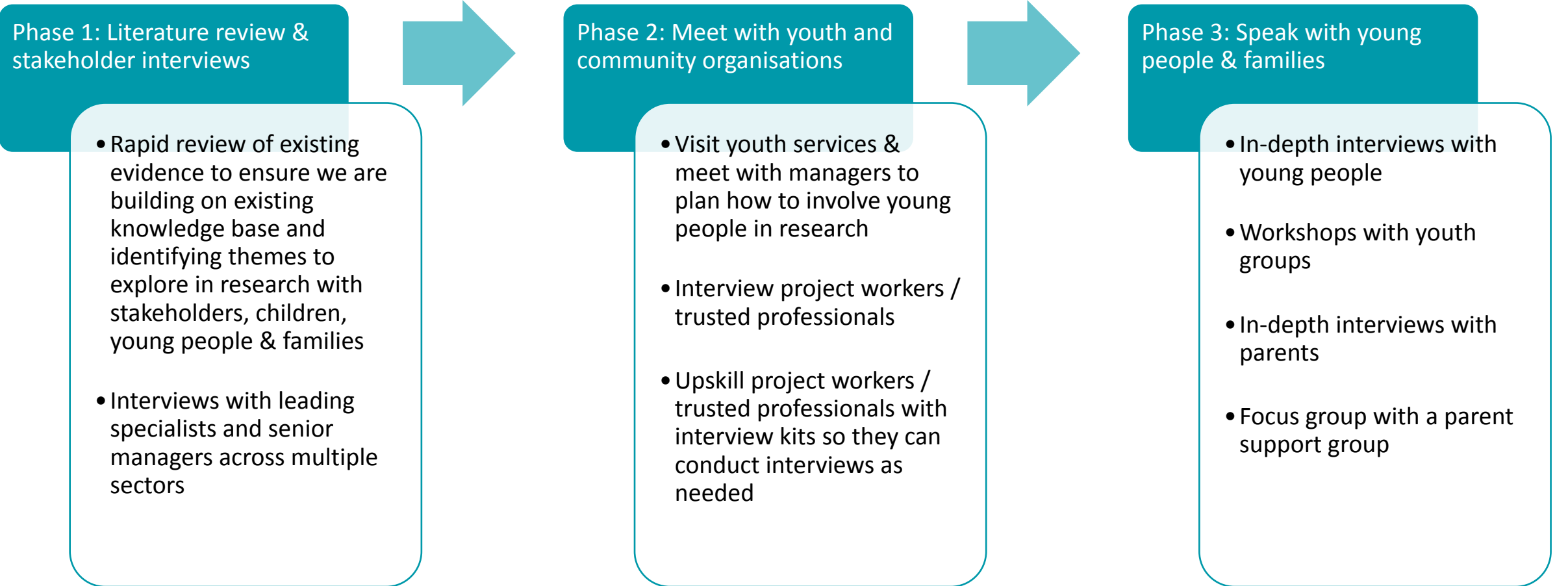
# Research Objectives, Methodology and Sample

# Research objectives

1. What **challenges** are young people who have been exploited, and their families facing?

2. What are the **underlying needs** for young people and families experiencing extra-familial harm?

3. What have young people and families **experiences of the current services** and system been?

4. **How effective is the current system** in meeting the needs of young people, and families?

# Research methodology

**Phase 1: Literature review & stakeholder interviews**

- Rapid review of existing evidence to ensure we are building on existing knowledge base and identifying themes to explore in research with stakeholders, children, young people & families

- Interviews with leading specialists and senior managers across multiple sectors

**Phase 2: Meet with youth and community organisations**

- Visit youth services & meet with managers to plan how to involve young people in research

- Interview project workers / trusted professionals

- Upskill project workers / trusted professionals with interview kits so they can conduct interviews as needed

**Phase 3: Speak with young people & families**

- In-depth interviews with young people

- Workshops with youth groups

- In-depth interviews with parents

- Focus group with a parent support group

*Bristol City Council Peer Influencers supporting with tool design, workshop facilitation and analysis*

# Research sample

**30** young people from across Bristol participated in the research

**9** Parents and **1** Sibling participated in the research

They gave their views via in depth interviews and focus groups, with some young people participating on more than one occasion

## Ethnicity

47%  White
20%  Black African
14%  Black African / Caribbean
7%  Somali
3%  Black Caribbean
3%  Filipino
3%  White / Black
3%  Unknown

## Age

20%  13 – 15 years
63%  16 – 18 years
17%  18+ years

## Care Status

10% Care experienced

## Gender

50%  Male
50%  Female

## Locality

43%  East Central
30%  South
17%  North
7%  Out of Area
3%  Unknown

## Education, Employment and Training

27%  In Education
14%  Employed
10%  NEET
3%  ALP
3%  SEN provision
3%  University
30%  Unknown

*Included young people from:*
Barnardo's ROUTES & BASE; Bristol Drugs Project, Bristol Horn Youth Concern, Call In Programme, Creative Youth Network, Youth Moves

# *Research sample continued*

**58** stakeholders from across Bristol participated in the research

- Stakeholders included; Children and Families Services, Police, Health, Education Providers, Community Organisations, Charities, University of Bedfordshire and the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse

- They gave their views via in depth interviews, group interviews and multi agency working groups; with some stakeholders participating on more than one occasion

**5** visits were made to Youth Organisations who support young people who have been or at risk of exploitation

# Context: understanding the landscape for exploited children

- Exploitation occurs within a context of wider challenges young people are experiencing

- They experience interlinking challenges that can lead them to being more vulnerable to exploitation

- Young people who are exploited or involved in youth violence often have multiple vulnerability factors and complex needs

- They may face additional and multiple vulnerabilities as a result of the intersection of socioeconomic disadvantages, ethnicity, gender, disability and immigration.

- Young people tells us about challenges that fall within these broad themes:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. High **prevalence of crime** in their community and lack of positive inspiration | 2. A longing to **belong and be accepted** | 3. Feeling **let down** and unsupported |

# 1. High prevalence of crime in their community

The communities where exploited young people are living often have disproportionately high rates of crime. This surrounding environment somewhat normalizes risky behaviours.

- **Drugs and alcohol**

- **Seeing violence in their area**

- **Parents talk about the challenges raising teenagers in urban areas where there are many risks their child is exposed to.**

*"I think people in my community are surrounded by crime - knife crime and loads of people are selling drugs and stuff. If you live where I live, at least one time in your life, you're going to see someone get stabbed. And then that, that really opens your eyes. Cause you got to be kind of on guard, like watching to see if you get stabbed next or, to see what will happen"* Male, 15

*"Gangs and drugs are the biggest problem in Bristol. Castle park is an absolute cesspit. My daughter has been beaten up and mugged there, the police know what goes on there but never seem to be in the right place at the right time"* Parent

# ..and a lack of positive inspiration or role models

- **Criminality is glamorized**

- Young people talk about a **lack of positive role models** they can relate to and look up to, that come from their area/background

- There is also a **lack of relationships with safe adults** within their community.

- When they do have positive adults they trust and can go to, such as family members, family friends, neighbours or workers, this stands out as being valuable and helpful to them. It gives them a place to go, someone to turn to and someone to look up to.

- Boys talk about a lack of male family role models and when this is missing boys look to other older males in their community, who may exploit that relationship.

*"The way the lifestyle is glorified – county lines and all that – is very hard because yes, the money is nice to have. To sit there counting out £10,000 is lush, but you can't spend it. Kids don't realise you are doing 24 hours 7 days a week work. You can never put it behind you. The one thing I struggled with was the constant phone ringing, the sound of that ring tone sends you crazy after a while. Only 2 hours sleep a night. That's why in my music I refuse to glorify the lifestyle. When you see your best friend who you grew up with die, yeah. That's it. So at the end of the day, if more people would actually speak about the realistic side of the lifestyle, then maybe people would understand, but being truthful, it doesn't make money."*

Male, 19

"It's like, most people don't really have a father figure in their life or some people might not have an older brother, but then they could go on the streets and then someone will be at that older brother that they just never got. I have a cousin who's been kicked out of like 10 schools and he's only 13. And he doesn't really have a father figure in his life. So he looks up to the other people in life and *stuff.* " Male, 15

"I'd say there is [positive role models], but other people would say nah there's not. I'd say there is but I have people who are better than the bad people, but I do still have the bad people around. I have 2 good people around. They don't do crime. They have families. You go into their house and all you do is smoke, play with their children, and eat food. But when you go to someone else's house it's not that environment. Your there to go make money or to go to work. So you've got to make sure you can do both of those mindsets" Male, 17

# Young people want to hear aspirational stories

*"We're sick of hearing these **fear stories** about what will happen if you stab someone and how you'll end up in jail. I've heard so many of those, **do they not think we know that.** We see it all the time. I want them to **bring us someone inspiring** who's done big things and made something of themselves. That's the stories we want to hear."*

Male, 17

# 2. A longing to belong & be accepted

- For any young person, the **need to be socially accepted** and 'fit in' is exacerbated.

- Young people and their parents tell us that the **desire to fit in socially makes young people more vulnerable to manipulation** and **exploitation** as they fear saying no.

- The **fear of being alone** and needing to be part of a social group that accept you, can make those without a good friendship group particularly at risk. Young people highlight the transition to secondary school (year 7, age 11) can be a particularly vulnerable time given the increased need to find social acceptance. This is also true for any transitions such as moving to a new school or leaving school at age 16.

*"He instantly found people… he gravitated towards popular, big people that he felt made him untouchable, probably because he didn't have great social skills… and he fell into the trap of being friends with a gang and they wanted [him] to get involved in mulling drugs from one place to another."* Parent interviewed as part of the Cross-border peer-on-peer abuse and CCE Thematic Child Safeguarding Practice Review, 2021

*"Acceptance is a big thing. If you tell them no, automatically you're going to be seen as the lame one, or as not like them. It doesn't even have to be forced, but if you want to be with them it's so easy to be manipulated without you even knowing it, because you want to be accepted. A lot of people are scared to be alone. If you're in a good group of friends but they kick you out, if a bad group come to you and ask you to do something, you'll do it just because you don't want to be alone"* Male, 21

# 3. Feeling let down
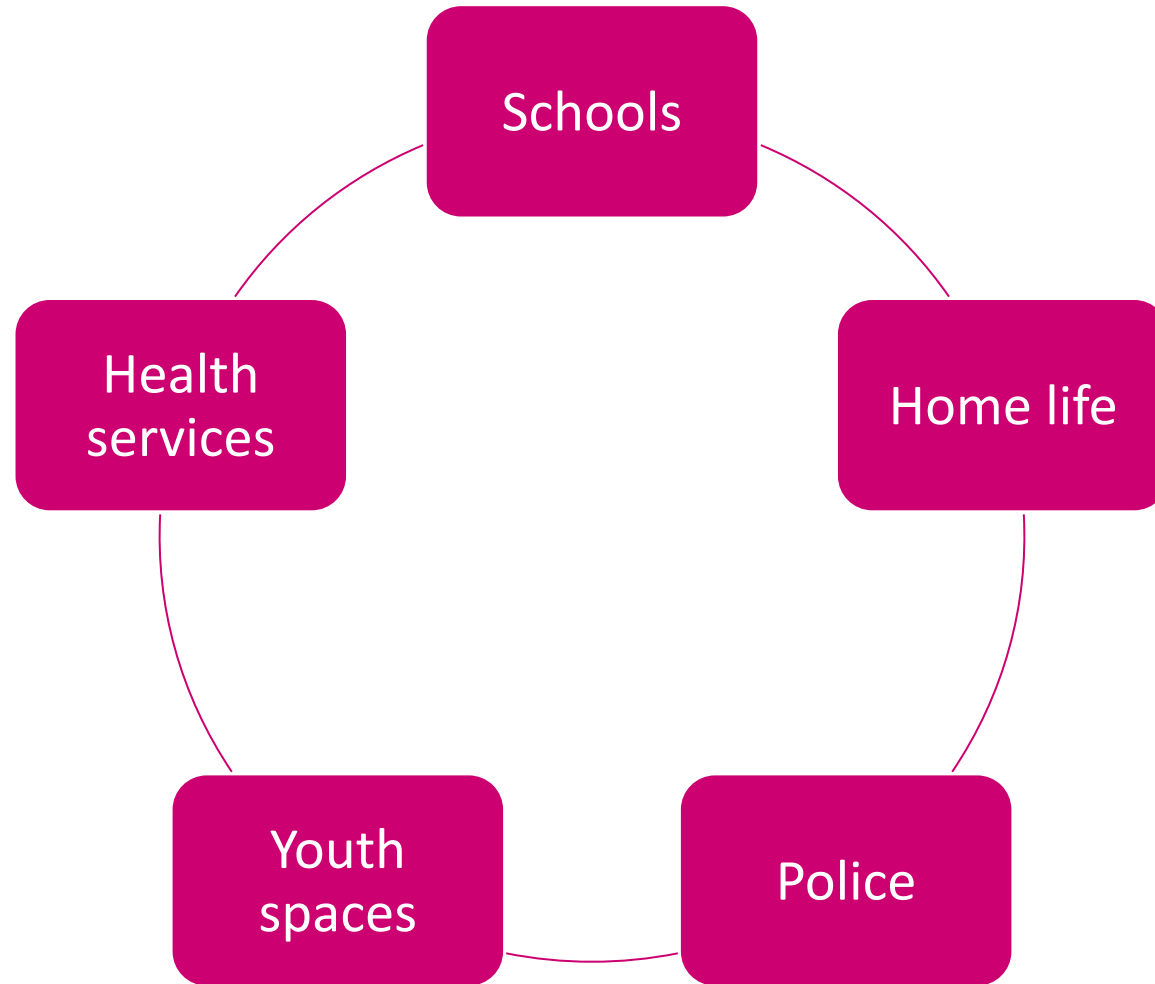
*"What as professionals we do is we go 'risk high - no', rather than 'risk high - safety plan. What support do we need?' I've seen that across education, across care settings in some youth settings they've banned young people from youth services because of the trouble they bring to their door"*

Stakeholder

# Feeling let down: **schools**

- Professionals are increasingly frustrated with the **high numbers of school exclusions** across Bristol

- Many young people feel like **school doesn't understand them and blames them**. Some talk about school making them feel worse, labelling them as the 'naughty kid', and giving them less opportunities than the 'more clever' children.

- **Changing schools is a source of anxiety**

- There are positive examples of teachers who stand out as being helpful and trustworthy, and when this is the case **young people value having someone they can talk to at school**.

*"A lot of people talk about young people being disengaged from education... I put it the other way. **Education is disengaging young people**. And I think the culture needs to change"* Stakeholder

*"I didn't enjoy school. A lot of my friends were like the 'naughty kids'. So I feel like the way they deal with that isn't great because they just chuck them in isolation, then they don't have to see it so there could be more like support for these people"* Female, 19

# Feeling let down: **youth spaces**

Young people feel like there **isn't enough places for them to go** or things for them to do.

- They lack a space where they feel like they belong. They often feel like they face judgement from the community just for 'hanging out' when they don't have anywhere else to go.

- The older ones talk about the missing youth clubs and spaces where they used to be able to go.

- For those that do have a youth-focused space they can go to, this is highly valued and often the highlight of their week.

Some professionals think there is a **correlation between the cuts in youth services**, particularly youth clubs, **and the rise in exploitation and youth violence**.

- They see this as an important part of the 'how we got here' story and are increasingly frustrated to see the negative impacts of the reduction in youth services.

- Some youth professionals feel like there is simply a redistribution of funding, with funds now being spent on 'crisis' high-risk intervention instead of early prevention.

*"Youth Clubs. That's what we need.* **Youth club used to be sick and then one day they just disappeared fam**. *There was bear youth clubs. I went to after school club in Fishponds and I went to one in Hillfields. Adventure Playgrounds were sick. Everyone went Adventure Playground at St Paul's. They just want the kids to be on the streets now. They don't have nothing. Even the parks are kind of dead. And if anyone's just chilling in the park five minutes later the police come anyway"* Male, 17
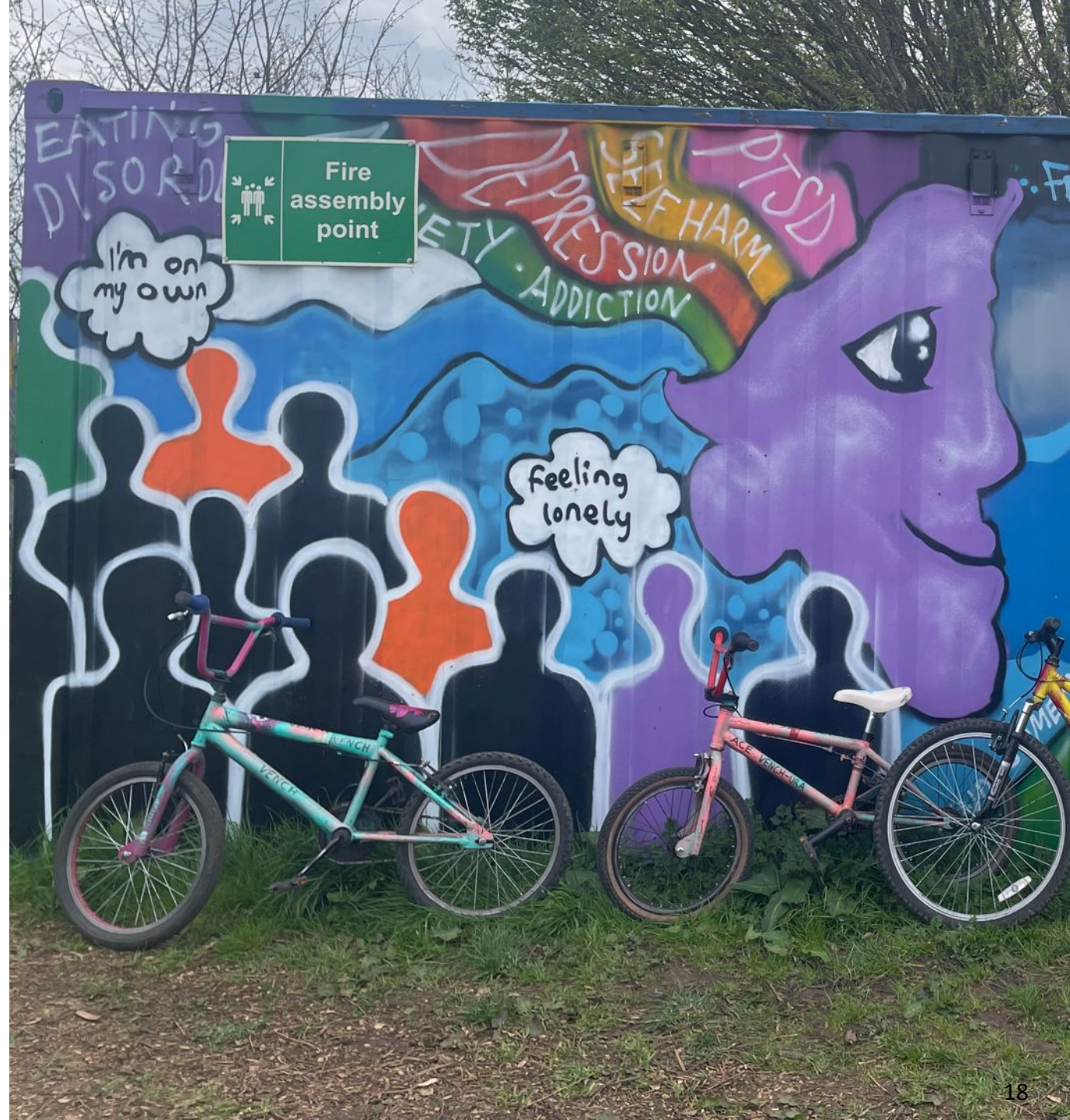
# Feeling let down: **the police**

For young people who have been **criminally exploited, there is extreme distrust of the police** and they don't feel protected by them.

- Reports of **generational tension** with the police and feeling that they are 'against us'

- There are **fears of corruption and racism**, stemming both from media stories as well as experiences of family and friends

Assumptions made by professionals based on gender and/or stereotypes in relation to vulnerability may impact on the profile of those identified and receiving support in the context of extra-familial (e.g. Adultification bias).

In the context of ethnically diverse groups and men, the literature suggests that perceptions and stereotyping has led to young people being criminalised, rather than being seen as victims.

Sexually exploited **girls generally have had better experiences with the police**, especially when they have dealt with Operation Topaz.

"Some of my friends they carry knives, but that's not because they like doing it, it's more solely out of protection because like, they don't know what's going to happen. But sometimes it's not even like they have problems with anyone it's more like the police I would say. Because sometimes people in my community, they're not even scared of other people, they're more scared of the police, just because of how we were raised. It's were 'oh don't talk to the police, don't do this, don't do that, their bad people" Male, 15

"My friend used to want to be a police officer when he was younger. And then like, just cause like where we grew up, he didn't want to become a police officer just because he thought like people would hate him and stuff" Male, 15

# Feeling let down: **health services**

- Young people who have been sexually exploited feel there is a **lack of mental health support**, and it often feels 'too little too late':

- There is **stigma around getting mental health support for criminally exploited boys**.

- A local safeguarding review found that **families have faced challenges in accessing health services needed** for their child, which in some cases led to parents not receiving help with speech and language therapy for example. Often, **special educational needs and disability (SEND) are not being identified and diagnosed**, which can be a barrier to supporting young children effectively especially through their education.

*"Anxiety was probably on a spike, like, at it's highest peak probably in my first years of secondary and then moving to another school and then kind of in the moment now with how things are, I guess their all changing and all like being different and stuff. It just kind of, I guess, being independent as well. I guess that's kind of like made me feel good, but also like a bit like paranoid about stuff, I guess. And overwhelming" Male, 16*

"A lot of our young people are coming to us with undiagnosed speech, language and communication needs. So because we've got a Youth Offending Team speech and language therapist, we tried to get all of our young people assessed. And by doing that, she can write to Court to let court know what helps them best and how to best communicate"
Stakeholder

"More and more we're seeing undiagnosed needs. So where they have educational needs, that actually haven't been diagnosed yet, and they should have Education Health Care Plan (EHCP), but they just haven't gone through that process or hasn't been picked up historically. So that's quite challenging in terms of education and the link to services and how that works and how young people are accessing the right services. Because sometimes you need a piece of paper to get the right support. And if that's been undiagnosed or unmet that can be quite challenging"
Stakeholder

# Feeling let down: **home life**

Some young people have an **unstable home life** making it harder for them to recover from exploitation. They may:

- Have family blaming them, making them feel like it's their fault, or just generally not understanding what they are going through.

- Be a child in care and struggle to stay in one place.

- Young people told us about the **difference it made to them when they were given help to change** their negative home environment e.g. move to a foster home.

- Others that do have a supportive parent at home value that relationship in their life and having a parent who is looking out for them.

*"As soon as I moved out of my Nans and in with my Foster Carer it became a lot easier. I didn't have family cussing at me all the time and I finally realised that it wasn't my fault"* Female, 18

*"It's kind of hard because I didn't grow up in a household where you told everyone how you're feeling. Until my dad left. But while my dad was living there. You could not tell no one how you were feeling it. You have to boil it up inside. And then I think that's one of the main reasons why I started smoking weed"* Male, 15

# Service Experience of Young People

# What's working.

## RELATIONSHIPS

**Have trusted people to talk to**

- Connection - someone relatable I can trust who cares about me
- Consistency - someone who's not going anywhere
- Feeling understood - someone who gets what I'm going through

## KNOWLEGE

**Equipped with information & understand risk**

- Learning information that helps me become more aware
- Learning techniques to help me cope with thoughts and emotions

## ACTIVITIES

**Engage in meaningful experiences**

- Fun experiences that help me bond with my worker/peers
- Finding passions & interests that help me build my confidence / self worth

## ENVIRONMENT

**Contextual safeguarding**

- A space where I feel comfortable
- A police officer I can talk to
- Support with my education or home life
- Accessing health services in an easy way

**Support that fits into their world, instead of the young person having to fit into a system**

# ❤ RELATIONSHIPS

*"You as a person are not going to know how to understand that if you have not experienced any type of trauma in your life, so you don't know how that person's going to feel. So I definitely think you lot need to figure out what your doing with your workers and stuff like that because not all workers are suitable to be workers. Like when I confided in [X], even if she hasn't been for what I've been through, she has an understanding of it. If that makes sense. There's some workers that literally don't have any understanding of it"*
Female, 18

*"Something I always remember, on my first home visit when you met me and my mum, the first thing I asked is how long is this service for? Because I don't want to go to another worker in a couple of weeks time. And you told me there was no end date. And I said good. I've got used to social workers before and then they leave. Now it's been three years, and in that time I've had three or four social workers, 2 YOT workers and 4 schools"* Male, 17

*"I would get in her car, get under a blanket and sleep while we drove out of the city. And she just let me sleep as long as I needed. When I woke up she'd buy me some food, and when I was ready, we would talk. I always liked that I didn't have to talk about things, it was just if I was ready. If I didn't feel like talking it was OK, I could just have a sleep and some food."*
Female, 18

# KNOWLEDGE

> *"The Call In protects me from myself, my own detriment. You guys come in and show me other options, what else I could do like get a job or whatever and help me with my mindset"* Male, 21

> *"It shows you the bad side and what you need help with. It makes you realise to look out for them (risk). We did a worksheet where we talked about a Netflix series. I went home and watched it and realised how much of it was wrong. Because they were under 18 I realised they weren't prostitutes they were being exploited. Now I look out for the risks more not just for me but for other people as well."* Female, 13



*Art created by a BASE young person*

# ACTIVITIES

"Now I've made more music with Ambitions and the team have helped me make it better. **I love when people compliment me saying nice things and all of that.** And I know I've got a bit of talent in music so when I play it to people and I see on people's social media and stuff like that, promoting me and saying good stuff about it. So again, it makes me feel good. It's a self appreciation as well as the appreciation from others, which gives you self appreciation as well, which is just nice"

*"I go to Empire Fighting Chance. The team there are just jokes you can have a laugh with them. And it's a chance to get all my anger out, I feel better and stronger from it"*
Female, 19

*"We baked a cake while doing a worksheet. The decoration was amazing. It's fun and easy to talk to someone instead of a worker speaking to me like someone's died"*
Female, 13

*"Remember when we went go karting, that was sick"*
Male, 17

# ENVIRONMENT

"I was in a school for about two months, got kicked out. [worker] helped me get back in. I had to go to another school, and I wouldn't have got through it without her, it was a horrible school. Then she helped me get into College. I was there for a week and left but she helped me get in. She helped me find a job too" Female, 19

"I saw the CAMHS nurse here [Old Market], my worker came with me because I was really scared. Having her there made me feel that I can trust this person" Female, 19

"She's a really nice person I felt like I could trust her. I'd meet her weekly and I could talk to her. She wouldn't arrest me and she didn't wear uniform. But the people above her aren't good. It was like talking to a brick wall trying to get to the outcomes." Female, 13

"Let's say my confidence has boosted ever since I've gone here. This is where I met my best friend, we've been best mates for like six years now. It's a great place to socialize without the fears you're going to be harmed because everyone here is really chill" Male, 16

# Gaps and opportunities.

## RELATIONSHIPS

- More availability and consistency of workers
- More connection to other young people
- More community guardians and local role models
- More flexible access to mental health support from their trusted professional
- Support beyond 18 for CSE

## KNOWLEGE

- More awareness of exploitation from a younger age
- Better understanding of exploitation from schools

## ACTIVITIES

- Opportunities for a change of environment
- More connection to local activities
- Help to find activities of interest & passions

## ENVIRONMENT

- More support with career opportunities
- More housing solutions
- More genuine support from the police
- More safe spaces

# Service Needs of Families and Support Networks

- Families are important to ensure YP recover from exploitation but are often missed out of specialist service

- Families & support networks are under an immense amount of pressure to keep their child safe and they are anxious about risks

- The system feels overwhelming and hard to navigate, and thresholds feel too high

- They appreciate the in-depth and long-term support the current specialist services offer their child, but also see a need for longer-term psychotherapeutic interventions for their child and family

- Families feel there is not enough support for siblings and wider family support networks to understand the impact of exploitation and recover.

- Parents want more connection to others who are currently going through or have had similar experiences

"The other person this has really impacted is her sister. She has seen me broken in pieces. Our house bares the scars of the last 3 years and her sister lives amongst this. She (sister) is playing a role she didn't volunteer for, the conversations around her are quite toxic. There is no conversation around how this impacts our family unit. We need help to work through the impact on the family unit but also helping [sister] navigate the aftermath of this. Helping her understand why her sister is so angry sometimes and that how she manages that. There is a gap supporting those around the child, especially other siblings who living through this" Parent

"I am always stressed, every time he walks out the door I worry if he is being stabbed, is he ok, what has he done now, I struggle to live like that. I do have empathy, I don't know what it's like to be exploited but he knows right from wrong… no one talks about the impact this has on families" Parent

"I think it disrupted our family more than it helped because we felt that it's not streamlined in that there were too many people involved. So she had Helping School, she had CAMHS, BASE, Social Care, Topaz and Families in Focus. There was just too many people involved all at the same time" Parent

# Reflections from
# Multi-agency Professionals

# Key Opportunities for
# System Change

# 1. Stronger multi-agency collaboration

- There are many good examples of multi-agency approaches in Bristol, but multi-agency working is variable across localities.

- We hear the success of multi-agency working largely depends on personalities and individual relationships.

- The system feels complex and fragmented and the multi-agency response takes time to mobilise.

- The landscape for exploitation is fast moving and evolving, especially with online abuse and social media platforms, so the system needs to allow for a quicker and more nimble multi-agency response.

- There are reports of overlapping working and too many people being involved with a child at one time; there needs to be a clear lead professional and streamlined processes.

- There are some frustrations around data-sharing, especially with Police.

- There needs to be clear expectations and consistency around sharing information between statutory and voluntary sectors

*"I use the word cluttered because people can move around these processes quite quickly. It could be that somebody has a MARAC meeting, has a MASH meeting, has a Safer Options meeting, and then also a Strategy meeting, all looking at a similar thing, but all involving different professionals and it can get quite confusing, but they're all looking at different things around the same person"* Stakeholder

# 2. Lower thresholds

- Thresholds are too high

- Referrals take place after harm has occurred

- Most services focus on high-risk children or early intervention

- There is a gap for young people who are at a lower level of risk, but still face risk of serious harm.

- The longer a young person is exploited the more resource-intensive and complex the intervention will need to be.

- They would like to be able to offer a lighter touch intervention option for children earlier on.

*"It's like, okay, well, how do they, have they beat anyone up, in the street? You know, have they been seen selling drugs at the cycle path? No. Okay. Well then, well just wait until we see in a couple of weeks and then see what they've done. I'm being very cynical, but that's how I feel sometimes that we're just waiting for them to get worse before we can offer them support"* Stakeholder

*"I think there's probably gaps in our practice or children that are being missed and don't get a service of any kind essentially. So, you know, I know that we do really good job for children of really high risk of harm. Or I think we do, what about the other children that might not come in to us, what's happening with these children and how do we know that they are getting a same good level of service and might not need the police, but how are we making sure for me we're not missing any children and that they're getting the appropriate response that they need for their particular circumstances or situation"* Stakeholder

# 3. Intersectional lens & addressing disproportionality

Evidence shows that **addressing the disproportionality in the system needs a holistic approach** and greater collaboration across different agencies.

Any service model needs to:

- **Understand the intersectional lens**: trusted professionals needs to be aware of how different factors interplay and impact a young person. For example, considers how a young black disabled woman from an LGBTQ+ community is supported by a service.

- **Have a diverse team** both in terms of workers delivering interventions with young people but also ensuring representation at the management/decision making level

- **Adopt a 'cultural humility' stance**: creating a service and working culture that allows staff to be humble enough to express any lack of knowledge on certain communities, and willingness to learn and increase cultural understanding

- **Build relationships with diverse communities** and grassroots workers / organisations to listen and learn about exploitation issues that may be occurring

*"You've got certain schools who will call the police and it's very disproportionate about who they call the police on. So the ones who decide that white peer will get away with something that the black boy won't get away with and the police will be called immediately."* Stakeholder

*"We don't have enough representation across our workforce that connects with these young people. And then part of that is culture part of that is race but part of it is just about being able to work with young people"* Stakeholder

# 4. Raise understanding of exploitation within professional networks

- Exploitation is an issue rooted in tension between vulnerability and criminality, and has had an evolving perception over recent years.

- CSE is thought to be better understood by professionals

- CCE has only been recognised as an issue in recent years.

- Victim blaming language is still present and professionals recognise a need to further educate around the right language to use, especially across the police force, education and social care.

*"A strand that we're dealing with with criminal exploitation rather than sexual exploitation is the narrative around it. With sexual exploitation young people are very much now seen as victims. I know that certainly wasn't the case necessarily when I started my career, but we've definitely moved into that place. But we're not in that place with criminal exploitation. And I think particularly because it involves lots of boys and whether there's a race element or not, I don't know, I'd be curious about that, but they're very much not always seen as victims"* Stakeholder

# Service Design

# Findings
# and
# Recommendations

Investigate the problem space

Areas of research

Ideas we can test

Ideas that work

Deliver

| Discover | Define | Create/Build | Test/Iterate |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Develop | |

Find the right problem to solve

Solve it the right way

**Current phase of the project**

**Next phase of the project**

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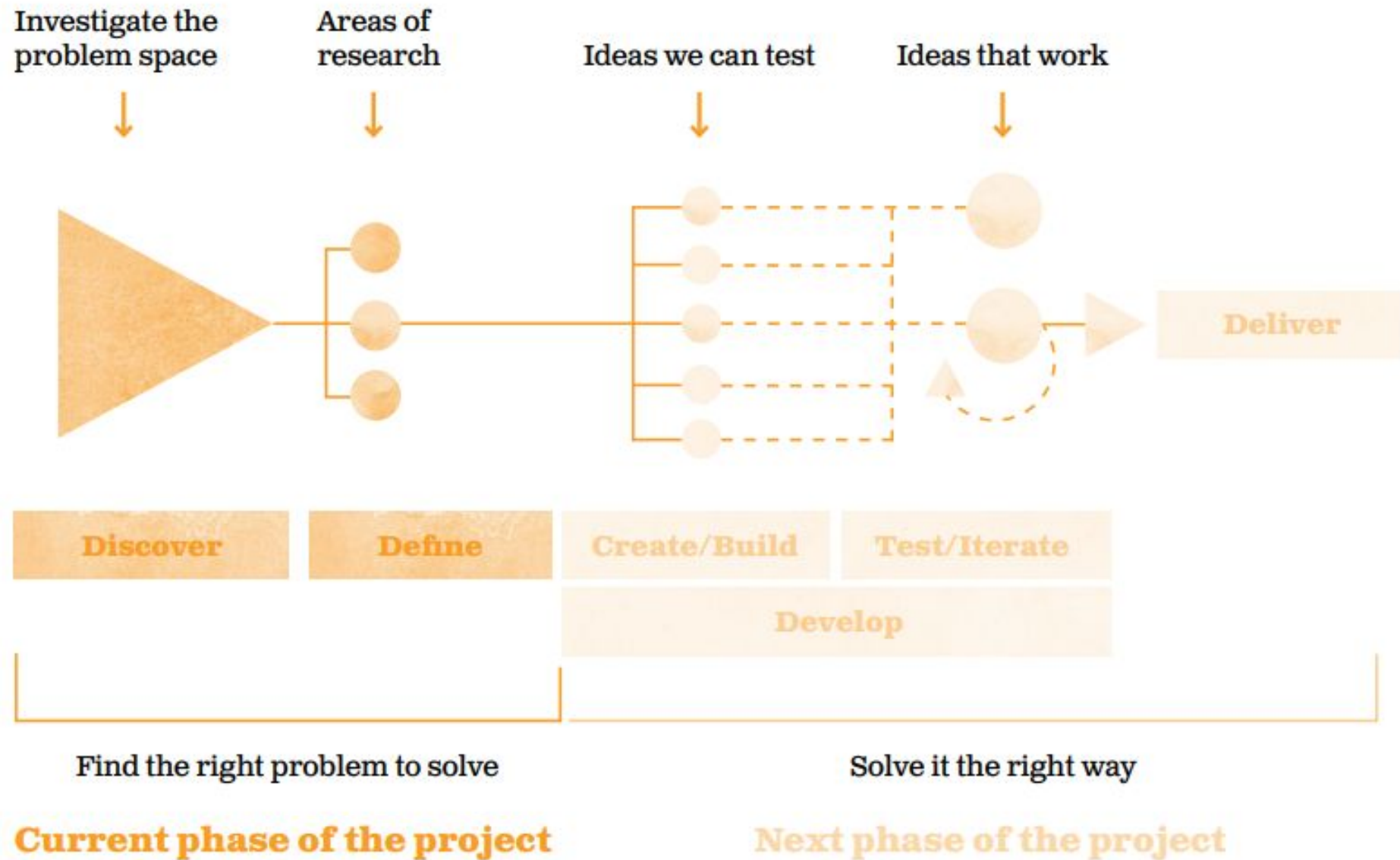
# Our research sits within four opportunity areas

**Systemic Conditions**

**Knowledge**

**Relationships**

**Activities**
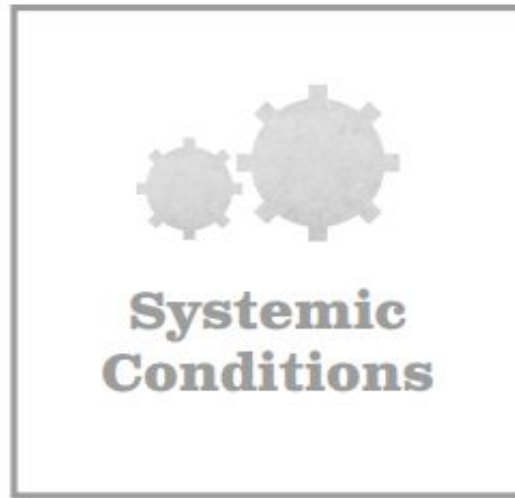
## Define , Create and Test

From Evidence and research, we have to:

▶ Define problems and opportunity areas

▶ Create and Generate a range of ideas

▶ And then test solutions

## The New Service Model needs to:

▶ Understand the intersectional lens

▶ Have a diverse team

▶ Adopt a 'cultural humility' stance

▶ Build relationships with diverse communities

# Key Recommendations

- Reduce thresholds and earlier access

- Expand co-located professionals

- Improved ways professionals collaborate

- Enhanced therapeutic training for Specialist Workers

- Work with peer groups

- Support young people to build support networks

- Specialist support for families /carers

- Young people define their own outcomes

- Personal budgets for activities

# Proposed Journey of a Child.



**Key:**

**Child / Young Person and / or Family**

At the point the concern of exploitation has been identified.

**Statutory Process**

Dark Blue markers represent parts of the journey that are existing statutory obligations.
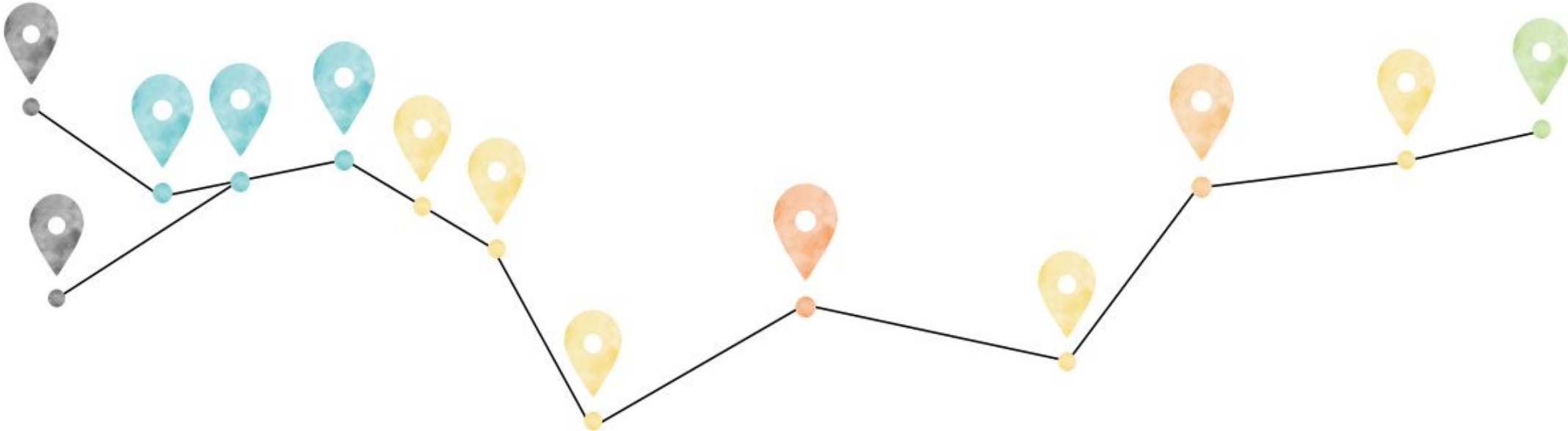
**Existing Systems**

Orange markers represent existing Support provided by the Commissioned Service.

**Points of Change**

Yellow Markers represent where there are suggested options to make a positive change to existing processes and systems, informed by what children and families told us.

**Child Exiting the Service**

# Navigating the Proposed Journey of a Child

- Professional identifies a child is being or is likely to be being exploited or seriously harmed in the community.

- **Professional contacts First Response to "First Assessment Service"** of Children's and Families Service regarding concern for child.

- A multi-agency referral triage is undertaken as part of daily decision-making meeting. In line with our research around the need for specialist support at the earliest point, we recommend there is a requirement for Specialist Service presence to ensure a specialist exploitation lens. This could be do through an Integrated Specialist Duty Service, whereby time is scheduled for a staff member to always be available through co-location. It would be during this screening there would be a recommendation to invite the area ICTG/RPC to attend the Strategy meeting should a trafficking element to exploitation be suspected or identified.

- Allocation on Liquidlogic Children's System to Specialist Service not dependant on consent, Dependent on need there will also be an offer for early allocation to a Specialist Worker following identification, should there be a requirement for immediate support in addition to roles and responsibilities of the Social Worker and key agencies. Alternatively in cases where a child may be missing from home for example, a Specialist Service Management team will be responsible for advice, guidance and attendance to statutory meetings until introduction to worker.

- Strategy Meeting - Held within 24 hours initiates section 47 enquiries by Social Worker and attended by Key Agencies including Specialist Service and ICTG/RPC if required.

- Strategy meeting determines whether police investigation is initiated and allocation of Operation Topaz Victim Engagement Officer and agrees key roles in the joint investigation/safeguarding period.

- Or... Young Person who is already allocated to FIF, YOT or Social Care and there is an escalation in concern or newly identified exploitation concern, allocated at weekly Safer Options meeting.

- Or young person is 18+ and referral is made direct to specialist service or via Safer Options meeting.

- For children where need is identified but is not yet considered significant, allocation to FIF or social care for assessment is made.

- Introduction into service - Referral to Specialist Service, allocated worker, joint meting with social/FIF worker and specialist worker where appropriate.

- Collaborative Meeting - The purpose is to share existing knowledge about a young person, identify any knowledge gaps, and agree actions on how to close these knowledge gaps, with review dates set in agreement. In line with the A/B testing explored later in the document, this will be chaired in part by the Dedicated Facilitator and other by nominated Chair ie. Clinical Psychologist.

- Reflective Session where Young Person and their allocated Specialist Worker review information in Collaborative meeting and give space for Young person to review, contribute and identify gaps if there were in attendance.

- Focused Recovery Support from Specialist Worker support centres around Relationships, Activities, Knowledge and Environment. See "Core Offer Slide".

- Co-Located Services in addition to focused support from "Specialist Worker", there will be access to "Outer Core" support which will include working with co-located services such as CAMHS, Health etc. Access to Co-located services will be accessible for all children who have been exploited, this is not determined by the services they access.

- Step down from statutory services and specialist services become Lead Professional when safeguarding needs reduce and focus is on recovery.

- Transition/Exit out of service will be when it is jointly felt safe to do so, anytime up to the age of 25 years.

# Within the 4 opportunity areas, we have 11 problem statements that have been our focus.

## Systemic Conditions

- How might the system support a young person at the time when it is most impactful?

- How might professionals in the system work as a genuine team to meet young people's needs?

- How might young people have a faster access to specialist support in a way that feels comfortable and safe?

- How can we use an intersectional lens to improve equality of access?

## Knowledge

- How might professionals in the system have a shared understanding of young people's needs?

- How might professionals in the system have a shared understanding of young-people centred outcomes?

## Relationships

- How might the system have a shared understanding of the role of a Specialist Worker?

- How might the system ensure consistency and continuity of support that leads to trust?

- How might the system help young people to build support networks?

- How might the system better support trusted family members and carers?

## Activities

- How might young people have more access to meaningful activities that feel safe to try?

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# Child Need's Guiding Model/Tool



**Contributing health needs**

Neurodevelopmental
Speech and language
Sexual health
Needs around substance use

Exploration of **meaningful activities** (defined by a young person)

**Positive relationships with family members, carers & community members**

**Psychological Safety**

**Physical Safety**

**Support to Self Regulate and practice Mental Maintenance**

**Positive relationship with a trusted professional (no time limit on the intervention)**

- Our research shows that there is currently no single existing model that can be applied to all the children who have experienced exploitation
- The purpose of this model is to align people who support a child around a common vision and the unique needs of the child, their family/support network. This also acts a focus to think intersectionality about the child and their families lived experience.
- Child's Needs Model can also be used to help young people and those supporting them to reflect on their existing relationships with trusted people such as family and community members.
- The model needs to be continuously updated to reflect changes in young people's lives.

# Solutions for identified problem areas -An Overview

**1. How might the system support to a child at the right time?**

**Reduce thresholds and earlier access considerations-** Our research with children, families and stakeholders tells us that services often react when a child is harmed or interventions are made available when there is a point of crisis. There's a sense the intervention has come late, and the support they have from their worker would have been more beneficial earlier on.

**2. How might professionals in the system work as a genuine team to meet children's needs?**

## People

- Dedicated focus on improving the foundations for building teams around children
- Dedicated collaboration coordinator

## Processes

- Co-location of a wider network of professionals including Return Home interview and Support Service
- Collaboration meetings
- Clinical consultation

## Tools

- Guiding model
- Outcomes matrix
- An integrated IT system

# Solutions continued…

**3. How might children have a faster access to specialist support in a way that feels comfortable and safe?**

**Hours of Support**

Flexible opening hours and access to support to better meet the needs of young people at times that work for them.

**Co-Located Services In-House Multidisciplinary team**

Keep support and skills close around the young person, allowing for continuous collaboration between disciplines and ongoing in house upskilling of team specific to the needs of those within the service.

**Access to specialist support**

What does this look like?

**Personalised Budget for meaningful activities of their choosing**

Barnardo's have previously used Personal Health Budgets with Care Leavers in Bristol, funded by NHS England as part of a PHB pilot. The money was spent using person centred planning to enable young people to buy things that would help them combat loneliness and isolation. Young people used these funds to purchase items that were impactful in terms of improving their wellbeing, including bikes, arts / crafts access and goods, allotment membership, gym membership and computers.

**Introductions not referrals**

Move away from formalized approaches to movement into and between services by introducing open door pathways and recommendations to services where anyone with concern can refer in, reducing the need for multiple written referrals to varying services and for differing needs. Change language through using terminology such as "introductions" and "warm handovers" as opposed to referral and transition.

**Equality of Access**

The Specialist Service needs to have a Core Offer of support which is available to all young people accessing the service. This will ensure equality of access and also better identify gaps or areas where additional support, services and organisations are needed to work collaboratively, creating a individualised holistic packages of support for each child based on their needs.
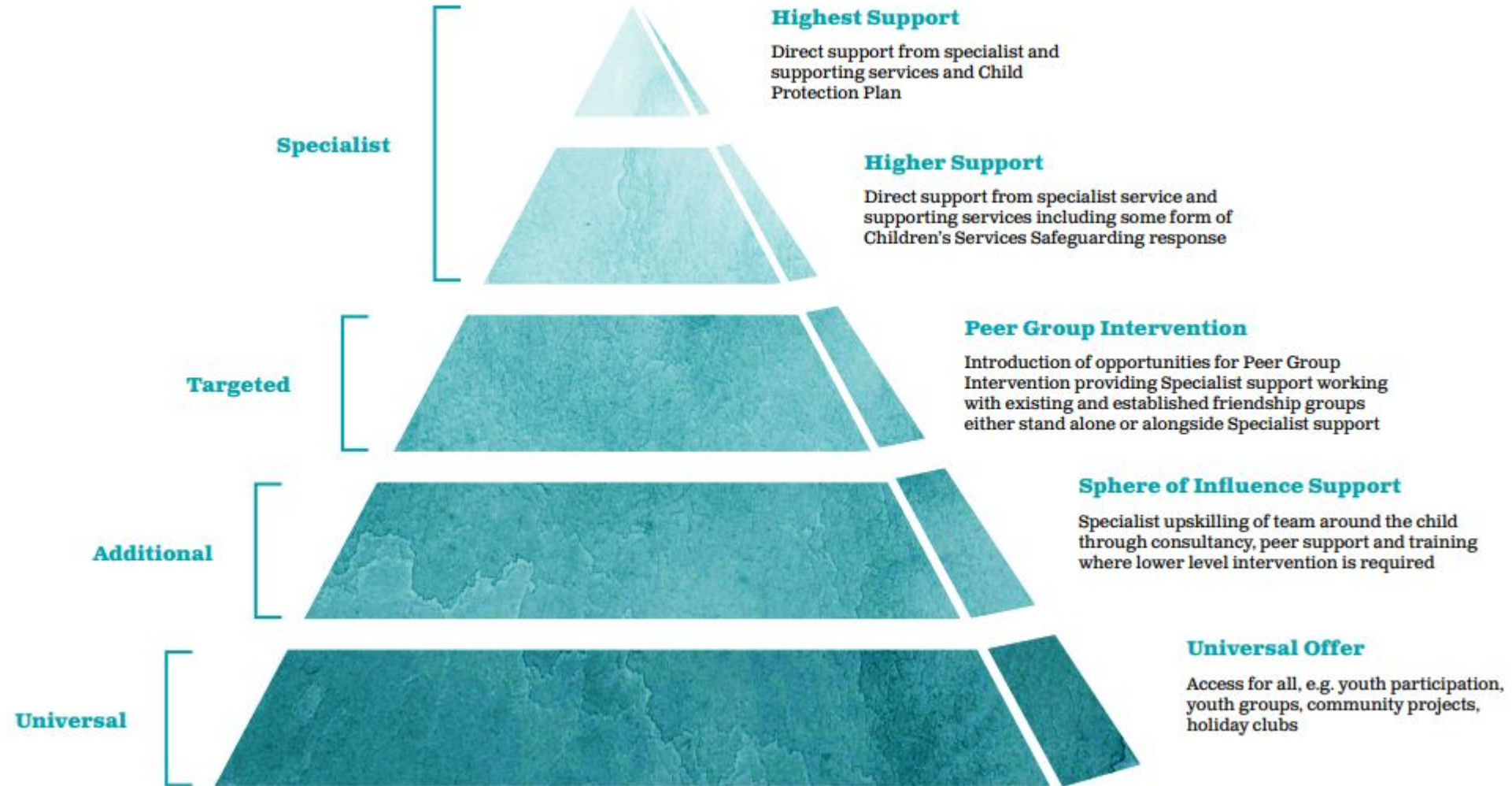
# Solutions continued…

**3. How might children have a faster access to specialist support in a way that feels comfortable and safe? continued..**

**Specialist**

**Highest Support**
Direct support from specialist and supporting services and Child Protection Plan

**Higher Support**
Direct support from specialist service and supporting services including some form of Children's Services Safeguarding response

**Targeted**

**Peer Group Intervention**
Introduction of opportunities for Peer Group Intervention providing Specialist support working with existing and established friendship groups either stand alone or alongside Specialist support

**Additional**

**Sphere of Influence Support**
Specialist upskilling of team around the child through consultancy, peer support and training where lower level intervention is required

**Universal**

**Universal Offer**
Access for all, e.g. youth participation, youth groups, community projects, holiday clubs

# Solutions continued…

**4. How might professionals in the system have a shared understanding of children's needs?**

- Co-designed and Co-Facilitated Support
- Thresholds that are understood by all professionals and applied consistently
- A better articulated Framework of our Core Offer of support, available to all children accessing the service in order to better identify gaps or areas where additional support, services and organisations are required to work collaboratively, creating a holistic package of support.
- Framework to also include wider overarching "contextual support needs" which may include other professionals, services, support networks and community groups
- All aspects of work and service delivery will be though an intersectional lens and bespoke - promoting inclusion, fostering active participation, equality and combating all forms of discrimination.
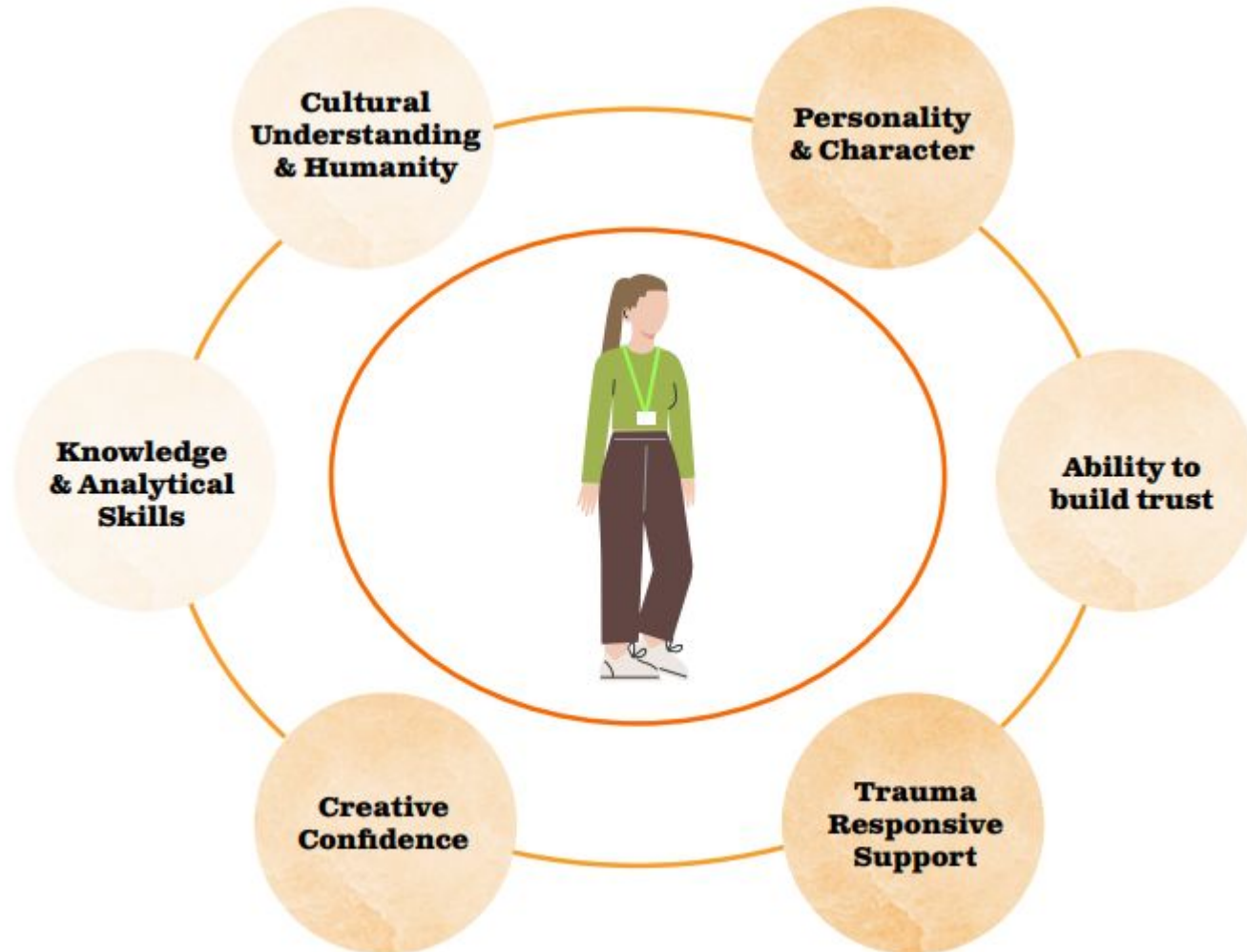
**5. How might professionals in the system have a shared understanding of child centred outcomes?**

Our research tells us that current ways of measuring outcomes needs to be more child centred. Current practices can be restrictive and do not give space to accurately reflect and capture the key milestones and achievements made by children in their recovery journey Therefore we have created a "Child Outcomes Matrix" and "Roadmap" that children and their multi-agency teams can use to help track progress and plan support.

Which:

- Is strengths based and future focused
- Allows children to set aspirational and realistic outcomes alongside their specialist worker
- Provides a "Distance Travelled" picture of change, unique to the child by repeating the rating at different point.
- Allows Specialist Workers to capture the benefits resulting from project activities that may be missed if only existing outcomes are recorded

# Solutions continued…



Cultural Understanding & Humanity

Personality & Character

Knowledge & Analytical Skills

Ability to build trust

Creative Confidence

Trauma Responsive Support

**6. How might the system have a shared understanding of the role of the Specialist Worker?**

Children told us having a genuine and connected relationship is the foundation and most valued aspect of any exploitation service for them.

With this in mind, a visual of the worker as defined by children in our research was created.

To form the basis of this they need:

- Connection - someone relatable I can trust who cares about me. Feeling understood - someone who gets what I'm going through (lived experience is optional - understanding exploitation is the key).
- Understanding what they do.
- Learning information that helps me become more aware.
- Learning techniques to help me cope with thoughts and emotions.
- Consistency - someone who's not going anywhere

# Solutions continued…

**7. How might the system ensure consistency and continuity of support that leads to trust?**

Children tell us that having a consistent relationship with a trusted professional that is not time-bound is the foundation for meeting their needs and supporting their recovery. In order to meet these needs there needs to be a number of considerations within the commissioning of a Specialist Service, these included:

- Pay, to ensure retention of experienced and skilled staffa and in line with the level of skills and knowledge and increase over time to recognise progression.
- Ensure specialist staff feel valued, safe and supported in their work though co designing services and support offer with staff.
- Amend service hours to include more staff availability late afternoon and evenings.
- Where staff work part time, agree staff buddying arrangements with the child and family so that they have a level of consistency.
- Ensure young people's equality of access to long term support though increased funding to align age ranges within the new service offer.
- Ensure adequate staffing to child ratios to reduce current thresholds.
- Commit to positive culture change within the system including facilitation of psychological safety, trust and conflict resolution where required.

**8. How might the system help young people to build support networks?**

- Opportunity to use Tools such as the "Child's Need's Guiding Model" to help young people and those supporting them to reflect on their existing relationships with trusted people such as family and community members.

# Solutions continued…

**9. How might professionals support a group of children being exploited?**

- Peer Group Support for children who already know each other, in places and spaces that are meaningful and safe to them, delivered in partnership with the appropriate local community organisation or Youth Service.

**10. How might the system better support trusted family members and carers?**

- Families have said they want to be supported to find solutions specific to their unique family network that aren't just based on or rely on services and intervention, therefore we recommend introducing FGC.
- Families told us they would like to see a more flexible and in-depth package of support. To meet this, alongside the offer of family group conferencing, we propose 2 Co-located Specialist Family in Focus Workers, for a trial period of 2 years.

**11. How might children have more access to meaningful activities and more integrated support with education / employment**

- A pathway for young people who have been exploited to be able to become youth workers, using their lived experience to benefit other young people and raise awareness of the issues.
- Expanding "The Ambitions Programme"
- Hosting and Facilitation of Education, Employment and Training Support within Co-located services.