

Appendix A: Child Criminal and Child Sexual Exploitation Data

Over the past two years, we have seen an increase in the numbers of children being identified as being at risk of Child Criminal and Child Sexual Exploitation. The reasons for this increase are complex and multi-faceted. It includes an increase in awareness and identification of exploitation, as well as an increase in specialist resources to tackle these challenges, particularly in the establishment of a dedicated Police Missing and Exploitation team. It also reflects increases in complexity and the ways in which children are being exploited within communities, both locally and nationally. We know nationally from research from the National County Lines Coordination Centre (NCLCC) who released their [strategic threat assessment](#) in November 24, that county lines and gangs are utilising a more localised model of exploiting children, with fewer lines running outside force boundaries. Similarly, continued development of social media networks enabling children to link together quickly and increasing accessibility of them by those who may pose a risk of harm both at home and abroad presents ongoing challenges.

Table 1: Children and Young People assessed as being at risk of Child Sexual and/or Child Criminal Exploitation across North Yorkshire.

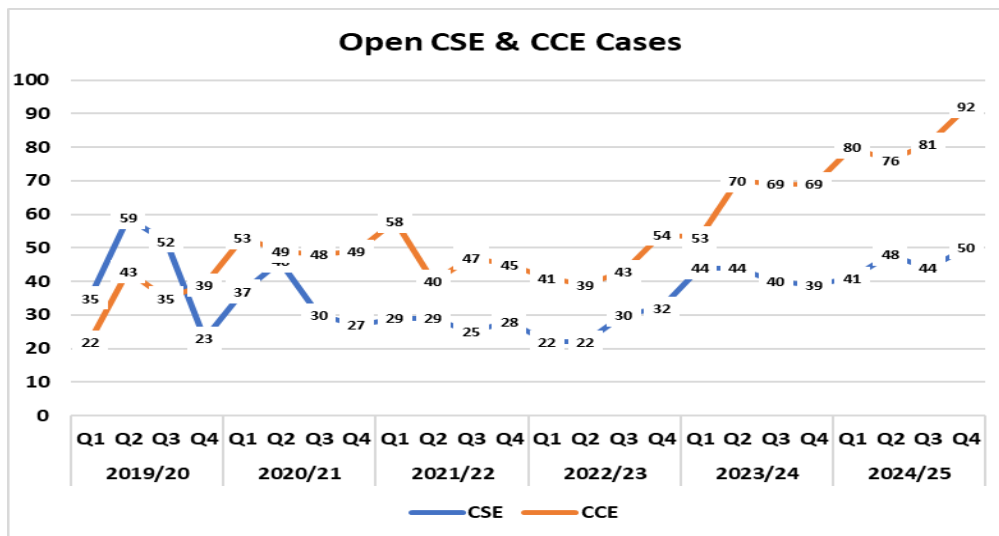


Table 1 above outlines the increase that we have seen since 2019. From the beginning of 2023, we started to see increases in the numbers of children identified as being at risk. This increase was particularly apparent for child criminal exploitation. We know COVID has influenced these numbers, as many children returned back to school and built relationships back in communities. We therefore saw increased confidence in children and young people disclosing what was happening for them. As a result, we now have nearly double the number of children identified as being at risk of exploitation than we did two years ago¹.

¹ Of note, increased of identification of children at risk of exploitation can be as a result of better identification and professional curiosity by frontline practitioner in identifying risk factors for children.

Our MACE Strategic and Operational groups regularly review and monitor this data to seek assurance regarding our current arrangements to support families whose children are being exploited, as well as our disruption plans for those who exploit children and the places and spaces where that harm occurs. For some children, sadly they can be at risk of both sexual, as well as criminal exploitation. Currently we know that 87% of children and young people who are at risk of sexual exploitation are female and 13% are male. The ages of those who are at risk range from 8 – 17 years with the most common age being between the ages of 15 – 17. Whereas with Child Criminal Exploitation, 81% of children and young people at risk are male and 19% are female. The ages range between 11 – 17 with the most common age being 16 years. The majority of children white British with 10% of children at risk of sexual exploitation coming from an ethnic minority background and 13% of children at risk of child criminal exploitation.

Across the county, we see the localities of Harrogate, Scarborough and Selby with the highest numbers of children who are at risk of exploitation which largely mirrors our more densely populated towns and cities. However, we do see children exploited across our geographical borders into other counties requiring us to have good links to other MACEs in our bordering Local Authority and Force areas.

Table 2 Children and young people at risk of Child Sexual and Child Criminal Exploitation by locality area

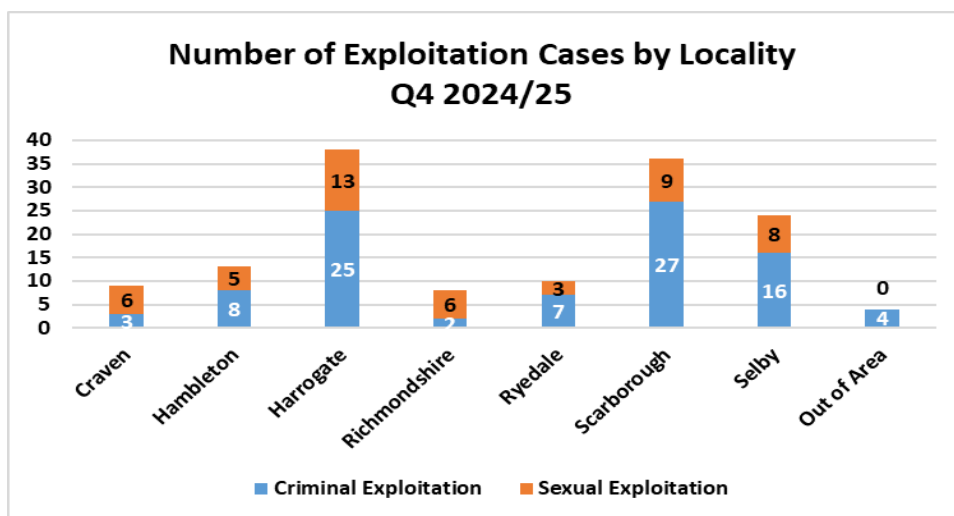


Table 2 above outlines the breakdown of children at risk of both sexual and criminal exploitation by locality. This is correct as at the end of Q4 for 24/25. Not all children who are at risk of child exploitation will be identified as potentially being a victim of modern slavery and human trafficking. Ensuring children are appropriately safeguarded is covered through Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) and is a statutory duty placed on our partners. However, the [National Referral Mechanism](#) places a duty on Local Authority and Police, as well as other ‘first responders’ to refer into this framework where there is a suspicion that a child may be a victim of trafficking, slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. In North Yorkshire, we are one of

the pilot areas for the Home Office’s devolved decision-making panel overseen by the Single Competent Authority (SCA). The North Yorkshire NRM panel is an independently chaired multi-agency panel who meet twice a month to consider cases where there are concerns that a child has been a victim of modern slavery or human trafficking and examine the circumstances to determine if they meet the legal definition as outlined in the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Table 3: Children and Young People referred to the National Referral Mechanism across North Yorkshire

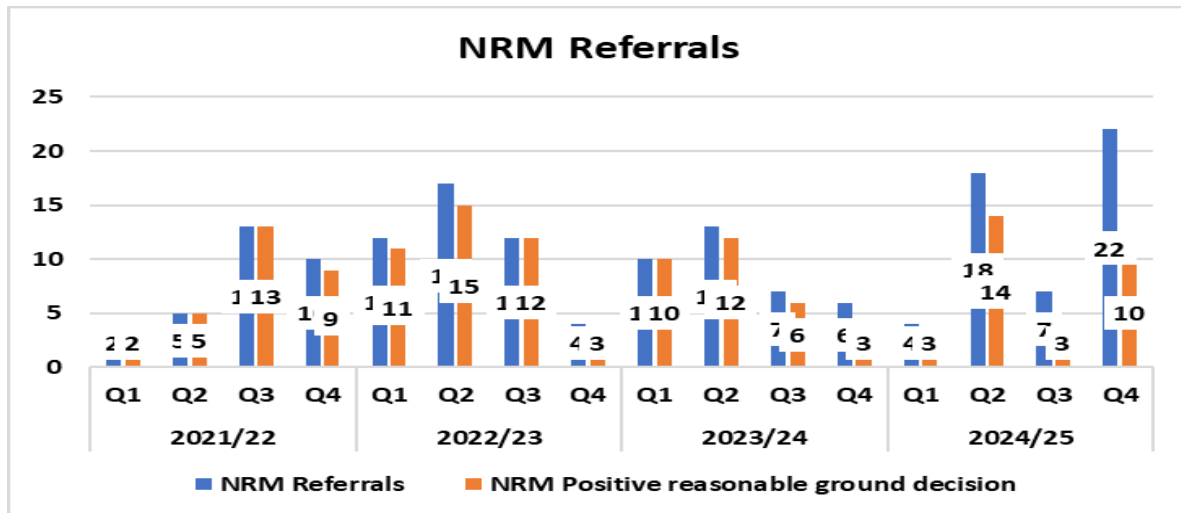


Table 3 above outlines the data which is correct as at the end of 2024/25 Q4. Once a child is referred into the NRM, the initial panel meeting will determine is whether there is sufficient information available to suspect that a child has been subject to modern slavery or human trafficking. This is referred to as the total number of referrals to the NRM (shown on the graph in blue). Those children whose cases have then met the threshold to receive positive reasonable grounds are then highlighted in orange. Please note the criteria for referral into the NRM is on each and every occasion whereby we suspect a child may have been subjected to modern slavery and human trafficking. Therefore, a child may be referred into the NRM more than once. Referral to the NRM is important in recognising a child as being a victim of modern slavery and human trafficking and enabling the potential for them to use what is known as a Section 45 defence in any criminal prosecution, they may be subjected to which may have been as a result of their exploitation. Regular oversight of this data is provided to the MACE Strategic and Operational Groups within North Yorkshire as well as reported back to the Home Office through the NRM Panel Quality Assurance processes.