**It was hard to escape** one page briefing 02.10.2020

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (2020) has published *“It was hard to escape: Safeguarding Children from Criminal Exploitation.”*

[Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel: “It was hard to escape”: Safeguarding Children at Risk from Criminal Exploitation](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/870035/Safeguarding_children_at_risk_from_criminal_exploitation_review.pdf)

This document investigated practice reviews; involving 21 children; from 17 different LAs were a child either died or was seriously harmed owing to criminal exploitation. This is the national panel’s first publication of its type and focuses upon just a nine month period in 2018-19.

**Key Findings**

* Ethnicity and gender are factors for consideration of the 21 children, 15 were from a BAME background and all were male
* Known risk factors are not always predictors i.e. only 2 out of the 21 were Looked After Children and the majority were not known to Children’s Social Care until the exploitation became known. However school exclusion was significant in removing protective factors and exacerbating the issues
* School exclusion was a trigger point; 17 of the 21 had been excluded and therefore wraparound services to replace school is needed
* There is no overarching understanding of what interventions works best for this group of children. There is still a need to develop an evidence based model of intervention (although it is clear school exclusion alternatives would play apart).
* Trusted relationships are critical; the key professional need time to establish this based on assertive engagement that is persistent, tenacious and creative
* There is a need to identify and respond to critical moments such as school exclusion, when physical violence is first used, or first arrested (children can be more receptive in a crisis and further research is needed).
* Parental involvement is nearly always a protective factor and skilled work to engage rather than blame parents is needed.
* Moving children and families out of area only works for a short period; there needs to be plans to manage the risk in the new location
* There needs to be a greater focus upon disrupting perpetrators; there is a lack of local knowledge about disrupting criminal exploiters akin to actions taking place with child sexual exploitation
* National Referral Mechanism; children are being referred when trafficking is identified, but its use is patchy and is not always a good fit.
* Comprehensive risk management can make a difference; things that can work include tagging and work to build rapport with child and family

**Recommendations and Learning – The need to create a good practice framework:**

1] This needs to be based on strong relationship with the child

2] Engagement and support to parents

3] Full time education packages especially for those who are excluded

**Learning Points**

1] Local knowledge needed on scale and nature of the problems

2] Produce tailored services for those at risk

3] Create a service design model with practice development for staff

4] Quality assure services and review approaches