

MPS Children's Strategy

What is the Children's Strategy?

This strategy has been developed for officers to inform policy and practice for children, children are all those under 18 years old. Through the strategy we are working to achieve;

Outcome	Objective
More Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build strong and trusted relationships with London's children
Less Crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase our efforts to prevent and reduce crime committed against children and will do more to identify those who exploit and abuse children and bring them to justice.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure children who engage in criminal behaviour have access to appropriate and effective interventions
High Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure our officers and staff have the capacity and capability to safeguard all children
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve our partnership working setting out clearly the role of the police in keeping children safe.

Child First

Through this strategy, we will be introducing a Child First policy into the Met. This means officers in all their encounters with children, aim to see them as children first. Child First recognises that children are different to adults, they have different need and vulnerabilities and need to be treated differently. This does not mean a criminal justice intervention should not be used and there will be instances where we have to use our power. In this operational context we seek to be more attuned to the vulnerability of children and take a child first approach.

Actions we will take to deliver

1. In order to build strong and trusted relationships we will:

- Tackle discrimination by training officers and staff on adultification bias and how it impacts responses to children

- Improve relationships with children by training officers on how to effectively communicate with children and help them understand how neurodiversity and mental ill health can affect children. We will also develop tailored messages for secondary school aged children to inform about crime prevention and build trust.
- Strengthen links between neighbourhood policing and education settings by integrating trained schools officers into Neighbourhood Ward teams.
- Deliver precise and fair stop and search with the introduction of a stop and search charter.
- Promote policing as a career by maintaining a cadet unit in every BCU.
- Work with children to help deliver the strategy.

We will measure success by reviewing the percentage of children surveyed by MOPAC who have a good opinion of the police and feel they can trust the Met.

2. In order to reduce crime that children are significantly affected by, we will:

- Work with partners and use data to better identify those at risk of serious violence to ensure they are supported.
- Increase capacity in our child exploitation teams, improve working between all teams who work with children who are at risk of exploitation and those who are missing and improve our partnership guidance.
- Increase the number of prosecutions for exploitation cases that do not rely on child victims to give testimony.
- Work in partnership with law enforcement and tech companies to tackle online perpetrators of child abuse and improve victim support for those impacted by online abuse.
- Provide a range of responses to prevent children becoming radicalised.
- Provide better support to child victims of domestic abuse and improve our communication with victim's schools so they can provide appropriate support.

We will measure success by monitoring specific crime types, the number of positive outcomes for certain offences where the victims is a child and a reduction in repeat missing incidents.

3. In order to ensure children who are engaged in criminal behaviour have better access to appropriate interventions, we will:

- Use the Child Gravity Matrix to ensure consistency in deciding outcomes for children who offend.
- Introduce a Deferred Prosecution scheme for offending by children (when appropriate).
- Improve guidance on child offender management and responding to youth-produced sexual imagery.
- Reducing Criminalisation of Looked After Children Protocol, including better recording of its use.

We will measure success by monitoring the percentage of Out of Court Resolutions and deferred prosecutions in children's case disposal data.

4. In order to ensure our officers and staff are equipped to safeguard children, we will:

- Implement the learning from the HMICFRS inspections.
- Embed Child First into our learning packages and train officer of trauma and ACES.
- Review our policies to ensure they distinguish between how we deal with children versus adults and set out how to take a Child First approach.
- Deliver the Victims Code for under 18s.
- Continue the Engage programme for children in custody and provide training for solicitors and legal advisor on providing advice to children in custody.
- Use our inspection team to ensure learning is put into practice.

We will measure success by improved HMICFRS inspection results, increased numbers of cases recording the child's voice and a reduction in the amount of time spent in custody.

5. In order to improve our partnership working, we will:

- Review our funding contributions to Local Safeguarding Children's Partnerships.
- Commission research to understand the gaps in safeguarding provision.

We will measure success through the number of Superintendents and Chief Inspectors who have received multi agency safeguarding training and increasing the quality of multi agency safeguarding hubs referrals (assessed via audit).

The overall success of this strategy will ultimately be measured by; how we best ensure the safety of children in London and improve their trust and confidence in the police and bring to justice those who abuse and exploit them.