

The Youth Connect Team

Cumberland Youth Connect Team focus on building and encouraging positive connections for children and young people within their network, local community and services whilst breaking negative connections to keep our children safe.

The team is made up of a Family Help Manager, a Family Help Senior and five Family Help Workers. The Family Help Manager – Youth Connect is the Child Exploitation (CE) Lead for Cumberland.

The Youth Connect Team sits in The Family Help, Prevention and Youth Justice Service within the Children and Family Wellbeing directorate in Cumberland.

Co-Work Model and what our workers do:

Offer direct support to children, families, including siblings (when affected), carers, and the wider professional network working with the child.

Take the lead on any Child Exploitation support and interventions. The team will not case hold the child's plan but will work alongside case holders who will remain the key worker for the family. This model allows the Youth Connect Worker to build meaningful relationships with children and allows capacity for the allocated case holder to focus on their statutory/non statutory responsibilities. This allows the Youth Connect Worker to focus on the relationship building with the young person, to build trust and engagement.

Will attend any relevant meetings for the young person and family including strategy meetings, CIN, CP, Cared For, Early Help and review CE meetings and share information both verbally and in written format where required for any care planning processes.

Build working relationships with health providers, education providers, care homes and other contexts that children find themselves in such as youth zones, cadettes etc to raise awareness and focus on harm reduction for children.

A discussion will take place at the start of the Youth Connect Team's involvement with the allocated case holder to clarify the role of the Youth Connect Worker with the family/care provider and to ensure all key professionals and their respective managers agree about the scope of the work. The Youth Connect Team Manager will record this discussion.

How to contact the team:

Email: cerar@cumbria.gov.uk

Family Help Manager - Youth Connect

- Belinda Worrall – 07825 054869

Family Help Senior – Youth Connect

- Vacant – May 2026

Family Help Workers – Youth Connect

- Joanne Dixon – 07785 740806
- Kerry Armstrong – 07880 052359
- Alison Dacre – 0774 8930095
- Ailsa Taylor – 07917 305768
- Emma Bedford – 07880 055970

The teams aims and overarching objectives:

- Children who are identified as at risk of or suspected/believed to be experiencing exploitation will receive timely assessment of need and targeted plans to disrupt behaviours of the person(s) of concern/offenders and safeguard children. The Child Exploitation Risk and Review Framework will be followed. [Child Exploitation \(including Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation\)](#)
- Children who have been missing will be offered and receive prompt missing from home return chats where their voice can be heard. This will influence any subsequent planning at Stage 1 or Stage 2 missing meetings.
- The Youth Connect Team will respond to contextual safeguarding within the wider partnership.
- The team will provide a multi-agency approach to safeguarding children at risk of or experiencing child exploitation, Youth Connect Workers will coordinate this response alongside the responsible case holder.
- The team will share intelligence and information with key professionals at the earliest opportunity.
- The Youth Connect Team Manager will lead mapping of hotspots, locations and connected persons of concern which will feed into the MACE meetings.
- The role of the team will be to work closely with our partners in the police to disrupt perpetrators of exploitation.
- The team will provide specialist support/consultation to partner agencies.
- The Youth Connect Team will raise awareness of all forms of exploitation within Cumberland and support knowledge exchange through campaigns, training, and consultation within partner agencies and the wider community.