



**WE BELIEVE IN A WORLD
WHERE NO CHILD EVER HAS
TO LIVE ON THE STREETS**

**Our Mission Story
2022-2027**

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND, WHEREVER WE WORK

RAILWAY
children
No child lost to the streets

THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN IN DANGER ARE FOUND ON THE UK TRANSPORT NETWORK EVERY YEAR

Across the UK, hundreds of thousands of children and young people are experiencing abuse, poverty, exploitation and neglect every day. Few will be able to break out of this cycle of trauma without help. The systems designed to protect them are stretched to the limit and too many children are repeatedly being let down.

Many of these children and young people are found on the rail network running away from homes where they face physical, mental and emotional abuse and neglect. Others are trying to escape bullying or are being exploited by gangs, forced into criminal behaviour such as county lines drug activity. Often, and increasingly, these vulnerable children are experiencing poor mental health, suffering from depression, anxiety and are even contemplating suicide.

Children and young people can be viewed as challenging, difficult or threatening. But our teams know the signs of a child or young person at risk or in crisis, and they are highly experienced in spotting a cry for help. We know how to respond. We work with children on a one-to-one basis, offering them someone to talk to, and delivering trauma-informed interventions to reduce risk and build resilience.

The number of these children and young people is growing and we can't keep them safe alone. So, as we head for 2027 we're working with other agencies, station communities, families, schools and government departments to make the UK transport system a safe place for vulnerable people, and a place where everyone understands and accepts their role in safeguarding children and young people.

Our transport industry has a critical role to play in protecting children and we intend to support them to do so as we deliver our ambitious plan to 2027.

WHY WE FOCUS ON RAIL

Every year, British Transport Police identify around 10,000 children at risk on the rail network. It offers young people a means to escape whatever they are running from and a place of shelter that feels safe. However, public transport can also deliver them to danger and makes an ideal hunting ground for predators, gangs and criminals seeking to exploit and abuse vulnerable young people.

With strong relationships across the UK rail industry, Railway Children's experience and partnerships provide a unique opportunity to intervene early and protect children before they come to serious harm.

Our unique projects and close relationships across the rail community create turning points in young people's lives that help them on a path to a better future. Together we make our country's transport system a safe place for everyone.

WHO WE ARE



OUR VISION

We believe in a world where no child ever has to live on the streets.



OUR MISSION

Create and enable sustainable change for children living alone and at risk on the street.



OUR AIM FOR 2027

We will evidence and demonstrate, effective and sustainable safeguarding solutions for street connected children.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

We stand for children

- The children who don't have a voice.
- The invisible children.
- The children struggling to survive on the streets around the world every day.
- The generations of children suffering repeated cycles of abuse.

WE STAND FOR CHILDREN, THEIR CHILDHOODS AND THEIR FUTURES! WILL YOU?

THESE FIVE VALUES GUIDE OUR WORK



NEVER GIVE UP

Face challenges head on.



HAVE COURAGE

Push boundaries. Think big.



EARN TRUST

Be Honest. Always act with integrity.



SHOW COMPASSION

Be kind and show respect to all.



NURTURE TALENT

Encourage growth. Enable others.

OUR CHARTER FOR CHILDREN

All children have the same rights and are entitled to the same protection. Wherever they are and whatever their story, children are children. None of them should ever have to live on the streets. It is unacceptable for any child to be abused, exploited and left alone to survive and we must build a movement of like-minded people who are inspired to stand with us.

We recognise that if we want the world to join together and help us to create systemic change, we must give children and young people a voice. If we want to create a movement of people committed to our mission, we must amplify these voices and we can't do that alone. We are developing our Charter for Children with children so that they can influence who we collaborate with and how we unite the public to help us ensure no child is left behind.



We want people to passionately believe that:



We all have a part to play in protecting our most vulnerable children.



No child found at risk should ever be ignored or passed by.



Abuse is simply unacceptable in the family and in communities.



All children have the right to a safe and nurturing family environment where they are loved.



All children have the right to an education to help them reach their potential and thrive.

We want the public to join us in standing up for vulnerable children by:



Not ignoring a child on the streets.



Reporting any incidence of abuse and exploitation.



Respecting children's views and listening to them.



Join our movement by supporting our campaigns and amplifying our voice to as many people as possible.

As we develop our Charter for Children further, we will ensure that children remain actively involved in harnessing support from all our key stakeholders.

Our charter will help us to build activities with children at the centre and enable us to strengthen conversations and activity with key influencers and partners.

AS WE CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN GOVERNMENT SYSTEMS, INFLUENCE THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND ENSURE NO CHILD IS LEFT BEHIND, THIS CHARTER AND THE VOICES OF CHILDREN WILL BE AT THE HEART OF OUR VALUES AND ACTIONS.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

Since we were established in 1996, we've worked hand-in-hand with key partners – bringing together transport police, rail authorities, government stakeholders, Train Operating Companies and all of their staff and passengers to help.



We have worked with the Department for Transport, British Transport Police (BTP) and UK rail operators to introduce safeguarding guidance for UK rail stations.



We have trained over 17,000 staff of Train Operating Companies to identify and safeguard vulnerable children.



We have supported 15 Train Operating Companies to enhance safeguarding including work towards achieving safeguarding accreditation from BTP and the Department of Transport.



We have pioneered Safeguarding Action Groups in key stations across the UK bringing together stakeholders such as police, BTP, facilities and retail managers, security firms, local agencies and other charities to collaborate in identifying and addressing local safeguarding issues at the station.



We train British Transport Police; Train Operating Companies and the wider station community to understand how trauma and vulnerability can manifest and what action can be taken to reduce the risk for children and young people.



Our skilled and experienced youth practitioners have helped over 500 young people referred to us by BTP to get their lives back on track, through long-term trauma informed interventions.



We support the Home Office County Lines taskforce and Local Authorities to disrupt child exploitation in county lines.

Over the next five years, it is more critical than ever that we come together from across the international Railway Children group, consolidating our expertise to empower other key players to create maximum, sustainable change for generations to come.

We must build on our success and knowledge to create and evidence programmes that can be replicated **ANYWHERE**.

As the world commits to a decade of action towards achieving the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals, it is vital that no child is left behind.

AND SO, OUR AIM AS WE SET OFF FOR 2027 IS TO LEAVE NO CHILD BEHIND, WHEREVER WE WORK.

OUR NEW STRATEGY MODEL FOCUSES ON FOUR KEY ACTION AREAS FOR CHANGE

During the last ten years, our strategy has concentrated on creating change at three levels: on the street; in communities and with governments.

We have made significant progress during that time and delivered compelling results to inform our future work.

During the last year of our previous strategy, we began the process of reviewing our work through a theory of change model. This deep analysis into all our programmes, the contexts in which we operate and the experiences of street connected children, has informed and underpinned the development of our new group strategy. It has enabled us to set shared goals that will lead us to our aim for 2027 – leaving no child behind wherever we work.

Our ‘three step change agenda’ as it was previously known, has evolved, adding new learning and practice which ties all our actions together and weaves core new elements throughout our work. In addition to our hands-on work with children, families and communities and our collaborations with child protection agencies, we are focusing on the development of research and evidence.

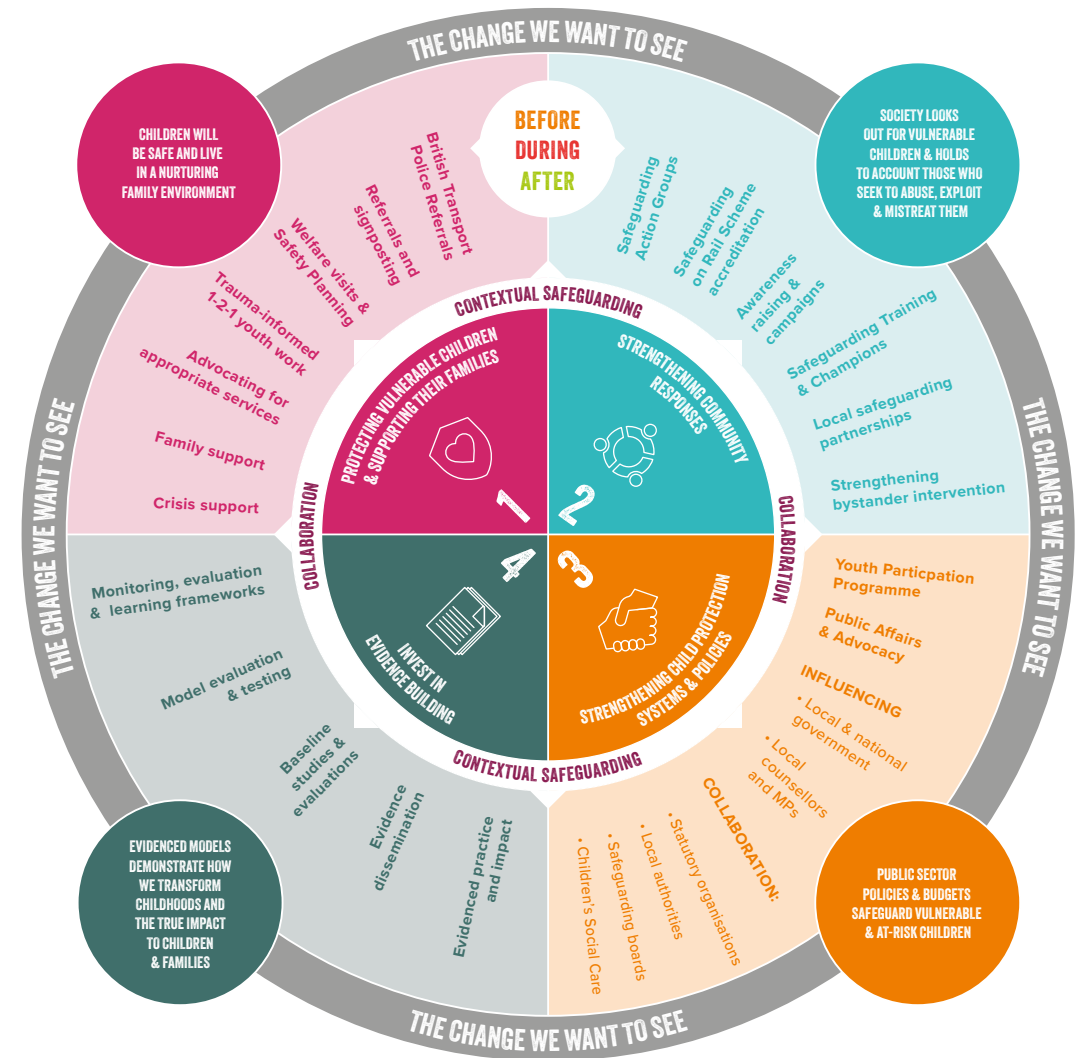
Our aim is to create programme models and practice that can be replicated, evidenced and used to support other organisations as we collaboratively position ourselves to influence the post 2030 development goals.

A strong evidence base will enable us to demonstrate to policy makers, influencers and budget holders the value, impact and need for coordinated, systemic efforts to protect the most vulnerable children in society.

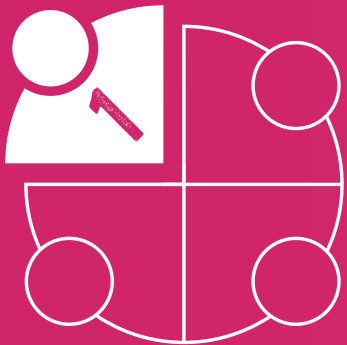
Our new strategy model focuses on four key action areas for change in order to protect the most vulnerable children before, during and after they are lost to the streets:

1. **Protecting vulnerable children & supporting their families**
2. **Strengthening community responses**
3. **Strengthening child protection systems & policies**
4. **Strengthening the evidence base**

At the heart of this is a focus and dedication to collaborating with others and the development of contextual safeguarding solutions, to protect all young people from harm and abuse. This involves addressing the underlying causes as well as the effects and is therefore prominent in all four of our action areas for change.



The following pages explain in more detail how each element of the model will combine to achieve our goal for 2027, leaving no child behind, wherever we work.



CHANGE AREA 1: PROTECTING VULNERABLE CHILDREN & SUPPORTING THEIR FAMILIES

We will strive to keep children and young people safe and enable them to stay in a nurturing family environment where they can attend school or college and thrive.

We will work with the most vulnerable children - and their families, who are referred to us by the British Transport Police after being found at risk on the rail network. Our youth practitioners design bespoke interventions with each young person to address their specific vulnerabilities and help them to get their life back on track. As other services and other professionals come and go, we will stick with them for as long as we're needed.

If we're not best-placed to help, we provide information, sign-posting and onward referrals to other organisations to ensure that every vulnerable child and young person identified and engaged on the rail network gets the right support for them.

How do we ensure children at risk have an improved quality of life within a safe and nurturing environment?

Every day, our partners within the rail networks are identifying young people who have suffered abuse, neglect and exploitation and require immediate action before their risks escalate.

- We work with British Transport Police to ensure that young people who are repeatedly found on the network are supported.
- We prioritise young people who are not known to social services or who are not currently engaging with services.
- Where statutory care plans are more rigid in structure, we engage young people who find it difficult to trust adults or services by designing creative and autonomous youth work solutions tailored to every child's individual needs.
- We work extensively with children, their families and their family networks to offer the right support when it is needed the most.
- Unlike many services, our family and child led interventions are not time-bound, meaning we are there for as long as we are needed.

We will improve the quality of life of every child and young person we work with by delivering interventions that address trauma, hopelessness and lack of opportunity. Through collaboration with the rail community and relevant safeguarding services, we will reduce risks to vulnerable children by strengthening families and communities.

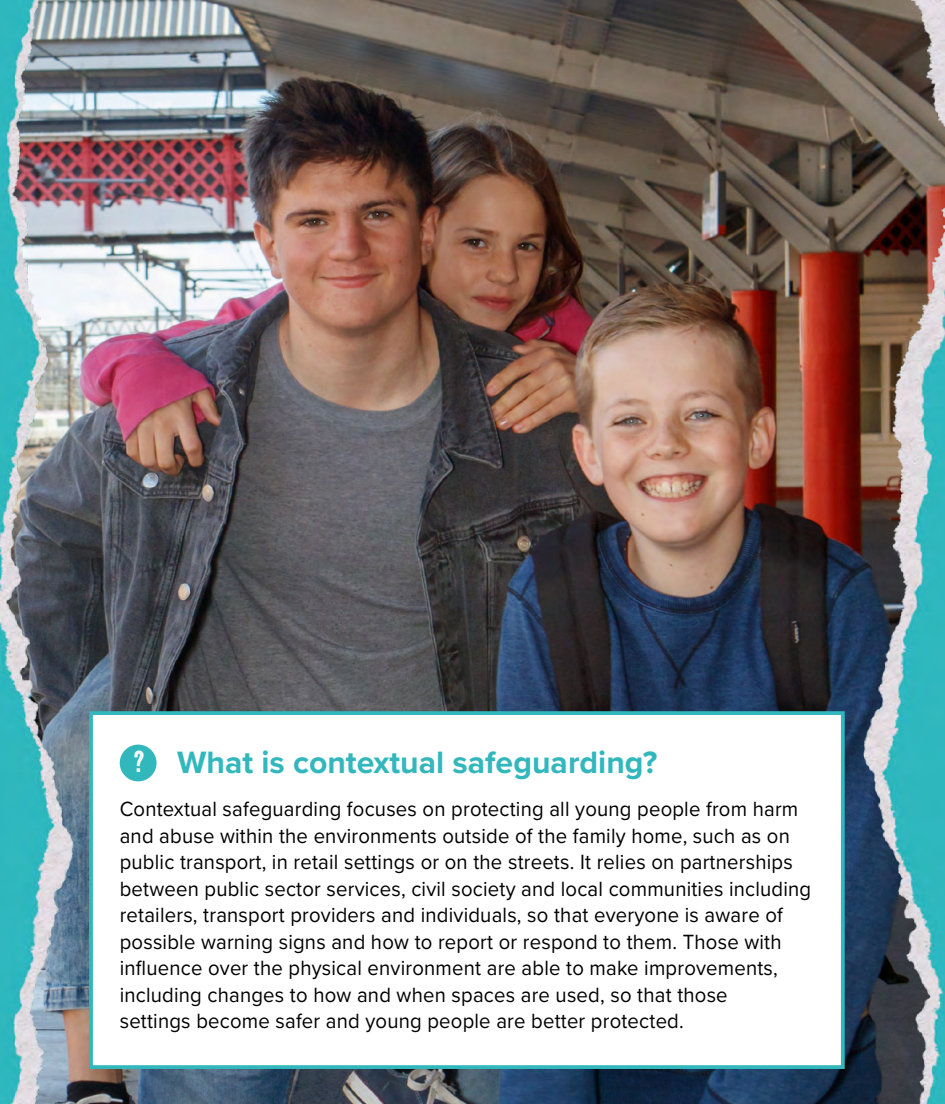
Our strategy will focus on:

- Improving wellbeing and reducing risk to vulnerable children, young people and their families.
- Developing and enhancing our critical referral scheme with the British Transport Police to respond swiftly, supporting children in crisis before they fall into even greater danger.
- Identifying the most at-risk children demonstrating repeated instances and patterns of vulnerability to ensure child services and multi-authority interventions are coordinated and tailored to specific needs.
- Maximising the impact of every referral through the development of highly personalised, bespoke care plans and trauma informed one-to-one youth work.
- Supporting families who need a helping hand through welfare visits and safety planning.

By 2027 we will:

- Ensure 5,000 vulnerable children and young people get the support they need after being identified and engaged on the rail network.
- Facilitate improved wellbeing and reduced risk for 800 vulnerable children, young people and their families.

**TOGETHER, WE WILL KEEP
CHILDREN SAFE AND IN
A NURTURING FAMILY
ENVIRONMENT WHERE THEY CAN
ATTEND SCHOOL AND THRIVE.**



CHANGE AREA 2: STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY RESPONSES

We will work in partnership with communities and the transport industry, helping them to create environments that are hostile to abuse and where people are equipped to play their part in protecting all vulnerable children.

We will build awareness with the public so that it becomes unacceptable for any vulnerable child to be overlooked or ignored and people feel compelled and equipped to challenge and report abused, exploitation and neglect where they see it.

? What is contextual safeguarding?

Contextual safeguarding focuses on protecting all young people from harm and abuse within the environments outside of the family home, such as on public transport, in retail settings or on the streets. It relies on partnerships between public sector services, civil society and local communities including retailers, transport providers and individuals, so that everyone is aware of possible warning signs and how to report or respond to them. Those with influence over the physical environment are able to make improvements, including changes to how and when spaces are used, so that those settings become safer and young people are better protected.

Over the past five years, our work in communities has progressed and evolved significantly. Thanks to the appetite and commitment we have seen from our rail partners, we are now making a real difference through our station-based Safeguarding Action Groups that strengthen skills, increase awareness, build safer environments and create a community of people united in their commitment to play their part in keeping children safe from harm.

Our efforts will concentrate on strengthening safeguarding responses around the transport system where we know high numbers of children are at risk. We will work in partnership with the rail community to identify and protect vulnerable children.

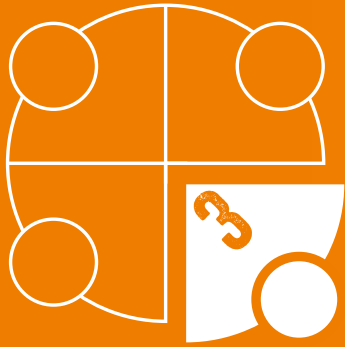
By 2027, we will:

- Increase the capacity of transport staff, police and others who work on and around the rail networks to protect vulnerable children.
- Make physical transport spaces safer for vulnerable children by bringing together key stakeholders to collaborate and embed Safeguarding Action Groups at stations where they are most needed.
- Increase communication and awareness across the transport network to ensure vulnerable children are referred to us for support swiftly and appropriately.
- Enhance the safety nets on UK rail by supporting the UK train operating companies to achieve their Safeguarding on Rail Scheme accreditation.

This means:

- The protection of vulnerable children across the rail network will be enhanced as 10 train operating companies achieve and retain their national Safeguarding on Rail accreditation.
- Safeguarding Action Groups will be established and operating effectively at the top ten UK stations identified by British Transport Police.
- Communities around transport settings will create safe environments where society looks out for vulnerable children and holds to account those who seek to abuse, exploit and mistreat them.

**TOGETHER, WE CAN
TRANSFORM THE LIVES
OF VULNERABLE CHILDREN
AND ENSURE THAT NO CHILD
IS LEFT BEHIND**



CHANGE AREA 3: STRENGTHENING CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEMS & POLICIES

We will work closely with policy makers in central and local government, and agencies and influencers within our sector to develop ways to strengthen child protection systems so that no child is left behind.

Whilst social and government structures and public policies are in place to protect the most vulnerable, we know that – despite the best intentions – there are many gaps in the system that allow children at risk to repeatedly slip through the cracks and leave them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.



Limited capacity, overstretched resources and organisations working in isolation from each other are all factors that make it difficult for child protection systems to function as well as they should.

We cannot create the change we are determined to achieve, at the scale it is needed, alone so we will collaborate with key partners to galvanise global action and lead the case for change. By combining efforts, resources and expertise with fellow agencies, rail partners, local governments and authorities, we will:

- Develop and evidence effective safeguarding solutions that can be replicated and adopted on a system-wide level.
- Advocate for improved policy and provision of children's services at a national and international level.
- Develop our advocacy plan to influence the Department for Transport and Great British Rail.

By 2027, we will:

- Ensure children are more protected at UK stations when the government makes the 'Safeguarding on Rail Scheme' a compulsory criteria within train operating contracts.
- Support the Home Office County Lines taskforce and Local Authorities to disrupt child exploitation in county lines.
- Develop a Youth Participation programme providing opportunities for our young people to influence both how we work and the systems we operate in.
- Use our unique position and relationships with the rail industry and BTP to inform and strengthen safeguarding responses and national policy, using our specialist data to influence conversations with local authorities, MPs and national government.
- Share learning from our UK-wide Safeguarding Action Groups to identify thematic issues experienced by children on a local and national level, highlighting the gaps in services. We will provide critical intelligence and bring together appropriate stakeholders to develop appropriate practice.
- Enable children and young people to participate in BTP panels and safeguarding training to ensure their perspectives are heard and incorporated into safeguarding approaches.

**TOGETHER WE WILL BE
STRONGER AND WE WILL
LEAVE NO CHILD BEHIND,
WHEREVER WE WORK.**



CHANGE AREA 4: INVEST IN EVIDENCE BUILDING

We will evidence effective and sustainable safeguarding solutions for street connected children, demonstrating how we transform childhoods and the true impact of these interventions on their lives and their families.



Building outstanding evidenced informed services will enable us to establish programme models and practice that can be replicated.

Whilst data collection tools for counting children on the streets are helpful in amplifying conversations at government level, it is vital that we understand the issues that drive them there and their experiences whilst on the street. For us to influence change at a national level and beyond – and to achieve real impact at scale, it is also critical that we can evidence the impact of our services on the well-being of children and their families.

By 2027 we will:

- Collaborate with other organisations to share, align and combine our respective data about street connected children and their experiences.
- Collaborate with academic researchers to help grow understanding of what works.
- Ensure children's views and voices sit at the heart of our research and evaluation in a way that helps them feel protected and empowered.
- Launch our first UK Youth Participation programme providing opportunities for our young people to influence both how we work and the systems we operate in.
- Identify and measure gaps and opportunities in child protection systems.
- Evidence effective safeguarding solutions, demonstrating their impact and how they can be replicated or adapted.
- Ensure that a robust evaluation framework covers every element of our programmes.
- Collaborate on a comparative study of contextual safeguarding approaches in the three countries where we operate.
- Collaborate with key partners to galvanise global action and lead the case for change. Building a strong evidence base will provide a platform for us to influence and ensure that global and local action leaves no child behind.

**BUILDING A STRONG EVIDENCE
BASE WILL PROVIDE A
PLATFORM FOR US TO
INFLUENCE AND ENSURE THAT
GLOBAL AND LOCAL ACTION
LEAVES NO CHILD BEHIND.**

TOGETHER TO LEAVE NO CHILD BEHIND

No matter where they come from all children are entitled to the same protection and have the same rights – the right to a nurturing family environment, an education and the chance to fulfil their potential.

No child should face, danger, abuse, exploitation or violence. Children are children and no child should ever have to live on the street.

We are totally committed to our mission, and we will push the boundaries to overcome the challenges that will face us along the way.

Our collaborations and efforts with other passionate people and agencies are strengthening all the time and together we will ensure no child is left behind.

**IF YOU BELIEVE NO CHILD
SHOULD EVER HAVE TO
LIVE ON THE STREETS AND
ABUSE IS UNACCEPTABLE,
PLEASE JOIN US.**



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