

# BRIDGING THE GAP

## TRANSITIONAL SAFEGUARDING AND THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORK WITH ADULTS



A knowledge briefing

“Abuse and exploitation doesn’t end at 18 years of age, and yet many of our services for adults are designed to support only those people with ongoing care and support needs. This doesn’t reflect the evidence regarding people’s needs during this developmental life stage, and is why many local areas are seeking to adopt a more transitional approach to safeguarding. In adult social work, we need to think more widely about our safeguarding responsibilities to these young women and men who can find themselves continuing to face harm having lost all the support they once had. It’s our collective responsibility to learn more about this issue, change the way we work and respond differently. I understand safeguarding young people from harm can be complicated and transitioning into adulthood can be challenging.

While balancing risk and rights is not easy, there is so much that social work with adults has to offer in making Transitional Safeguarding a reality. Working with some of our closest partners in this area we have developed this knowledge briefing to improve our collective response to this crucial issue.

Sometimes you just have to do something because it’s the right thing to do.”

A handwritten signature in grey ink that reads "Fran Leddra". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fran Leddra, Chief Social Worker for Adults



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**Fran Leddra** – Chief Social Worker for Adults

**Dez Holmes** – Director, Research in Practice

**Dr Ruth Allen** – CEO, British Association of Social Workers (BASW)

**Dr Anusree Biswas Sasidharan** – Care and Health Improvement partnership (LGA and ADASS)

**Dr Adi Cooper** – Care and Health Improvement partnership (LGA and ADASS)

**Steve Baguley** – NWG Network

**Cheryl Stevens** – NWG Network

**Rhiannon Sawyer** – National Policing Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme, Norfolk Police

**Claire Barcham** – Association of Directors of Adult Social Services in England (ADASS)

**Seona Douglas** – Executive Director, Social Care and Health, Reading Borough Council

**Natalie Dalby** – Greater Manchester Police (GMP)

**Fiona Bateman** – National Safeguarding Adults Board Chairs Network

**Samantha Keith** – Service Manager Safeguarding Adults Newcastle City Council

**Jack Rowlands** – Chief Inspector – Violence Reduction Unit, Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime

**Hannah Miller** – National Safeguarding Adults Board Chairs Network

**Sian Walker-Mcallister** – National Safeguarding Adults Board Chairs Network

**Shirly Williams** – National Safeguarding Adults Board Chairs Network

**Sue Redmond** – National Safeguarding Adults Board Chairs Network

**David Elvy** – Hampshire Safeguarding Adults Board

**Helen Matthews** – Chief Executive, Walsall Street Teams

**Claire Mawby** – Preparation for Adulthood Integrated Transitions Team, Birmingham City Council

**Rachael Roberts** – Safeguarding and Learning Disability Services Adult Social Care, Portsmouth City Council

**Professor Christine Cocker** – University of East Anglia



**Alex Bridge** – Southend on Sea Borough Council

**Hannah Miller** – Hounslow Adults Safeguarding Board and Childrens Safeguarding Partnership

**Alex Wakefield** – Head of Adult Safeguarding, Liberty Protection Safeguards, DHSC

**Emma Hill** – Service Manager Placements/Transitions Children, Young People and Families, Plymouth City Council

**Jennifer Rogers** – City of Wolverhampton Council

**Brooking Ann** – Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust

**Shona McFarlane** – Deputy Director, Social Work and Social Care Services, Leeds City Council

**Dr Claire Baker** – Research and Policy Consultant (Children and Young people’s services)

**Susan Lee (Adult Services)** – Strategic Safeguarding Partnership Manager, Hampshire County Council

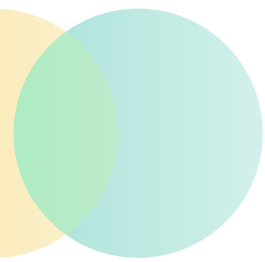
**Beverley Latania** – Head of Mental Health Social Work, People Directorate, Islington Council

**Linda Middlewood** – Head of Service, Barnsley Directions Panel, Older People and Physical Disabilities Teams, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

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research  
in practice





# CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	3
Introduction	6
1 Key messages	7
2 What and who this briefing is for?	9
3 What do we mean by Transitional Safeguarding?	10
4 Why it is important	11
5 Key principles of Transitional Safeguarding	20
6 What can support this approach?	23
7 How you can contribute to making Transitional Safeguarding a reality	28
8 Local area examples of innovation in this area	35
9 Reflective questions	50
10 Links to regulatory and professional standards	52
11 Further reading / learning	55
12 References	57

# INTRODUCTION

This Transitional Safeguarding knowledge briefing has been co-produced with the Chief Social Worker for Adults, Research in Practice, the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS), British Association of Social Workers (BASW), Care and Health Improvement Programme (Local Government Association and ADASS) and the NWG Network,<sup>i</sup> with input from police colleagues.



It is aimed at all those committed to ensuring high quality social work with young adults, from practitioners and people receiving support through to strategic leaders across local safeguarding partnerships.

It draws on evidence from research and knowledge from local areas in order to describe what Transitional Safeguarding is, why it is needed and how the contribution of adult social work is key to developing and embedding a more transitional approach to safeguarding young people into adulthood.

Whilst Transitional Safeguarding is about a wide range of issues that affect a young person's safety and wellbeing, this briefing particularly focuses on sexual and criminal exploitation. This is in recognition of the significant harmful impact these have on young people's lives and the need to share effective and promising practice in this area across the country.

Whilst achieving a Transitional Safeguarding approach requires a systems change involving input from all agencies, we strongly believe that colleagues involved in safeguarding adults specifically, have a vitally important role to play. This briefing aims to inform, inspire change and celebrate the contribution of the adult social work sector to this important agenda.

<sup>i</sup> The NWG Exploitation Response Unit (formerly National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children and Young People)



# 1

## KEY MESSAGES

- Transitional Safeguarding is an “approach to safeguarding adolescents and young adults fluidly across developmental stages which builds on the best available evidence, learns from both children’s and adult safeguarding practice and which prepares young people for their adult lives<sup>ii</sup>.” It focuses on safeguarding young people from adolescence into adulthood, recognising transition is a journey not an event, and every young person will experience this journey differently.
- Transitional Safeguarding is not simply transition planning for people moving from children’s to adult social care services. It is about activity that often falls outside of traditional notions of both ‘transitions’ and ‘safeguarding’, emphasising a needs-led, personalised approach. It requires practitioners, leaders and all involved in services for children and adults, to consider how they might work together and think beyond child/adult silos for the benefit of young people at a key life stage.
- Transitional Safeguarding requires changes in practice and across systems involving all agencies. Colleagues involved in safeguarding adults have a particularly important role to play and need to develop new approaches. Many local areas are already innovating and creating opportunities for more flexible support, providing valuable experiences for young people at a key point in their lives. The local case studies show that this work is holistic and creative, often extending far beyond statutory safeguarding activity, underpinned by boundary-spanning leadership.
- This briefing particularly focuses on the harms associated with sexual and criminal exploitation. Where young people are experiencing coercion and other forms of control and exploitation under 18, these experiences and the impact they have rarely stop when a person turns 18. Young people’s brain development continues to mature cognitively and emotionally well into their twenties. This has important implications regarding, for instance, potential ongoing coercive influence of exploiters. The transitional nature of maturation after 18 requires us to take a nuanced approach to the ‘age of maturity’ and to take account of young adults’ individual experiences and circumstances in how we protect their rights and understand their capacity to take particular decisions.

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ii Holmes & Smale, 2018





- Children’s and adults’ safeguarding systems are governed by distinct practice, policy and statutory frameworks. In particular, a focus on eligibility criteria at the expense of preventative work and wider wellbeing can result in some young people not receiving support when they need it. Some young adults might require help to be safe and healthy, even if they don’t have formally defined care and support needs.
- Supporting young people’s safety and wellbeing during transition is not only morally and ethically important, it also offers potential economic benefits and is important for the future health of society and future generations. Safety and wellbeing needs intersect the life course; the interconnected nature of harms requires an integrated system of support. Investing in support to address harm and its impacts at this life stage can help to reduce the need for more costly and intrusive intervention later on in life.
- The key principles of a Transitional Safeguarding approach are that it is: evidence-informed, contextual, developmental, relational, participative and that it attends to issues of equalities, diversity and inclusion. These principles align with a number of social work professional and regulatory standards, and Transitional Safeguarding aligns with Making Safeguarding Personal in its emphasis on a person-centred and rights-based approach to adult safeguarding.
- Everyone involved in safeguarding adults – in strategic roles such as Safeguarding Adults Boards, commissioners and strategic managers, and in practice roles, such as social work supervisors and practitioners – have a valuable contribution to make to Transitional Safeguarding. Practical ideas include: shared learning and development opportunities, greater emphasis on co-design, flexible commissioning frameworks, improved local needs analysis and sharing examples of innovation across local areas.



# 2

## WHAT AND WHO THIS BRIEFING IS FOR?

This briefing is designed for all those involved in safeguarding adults, from frontline practitioners to senior leaders and has a particular focus on the role of social work with adults.

It is not intended to be prescriptive. It provides key information drawn from research and local areas and is intended to inform and inspire, rather than instruct. Section 7 offers suggestions for how each of us can make Transitional Safeguarding a reality and section 9 offers a series of reflective questions intended to support local areas in developing a Transitional Safeguarding approach.

It should be read alongside [Care and support statutory guidance](#), [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) and other relevant frameworks which emphasise that effective safeguarding is achieved by putting people at the centre of the safeguarding process, and by every individual and agency across the system playing an active part in safeguarding. It also aligns with a number of social work standards (see section 10 for relevant links).

Whilst this briefing is specifically aimed at those involved in safeguarding and social work with adults, it is intended to be helpful for adult social care more generally, and for other agencies working with young people and young adults who might require support to be and feel safe.

This briefing pays particular attention to exploitation. It focuses on the role of safeguarding adults and adult social work colleagues, but it is important to recognise that support and diversion are just one part of an effective response to exploitation. Disrupting the sources of harm is key and supporting police colleagues in using a variety of disruption tools and legal orders may be essential.

The Prevention and Disruption Toolkit is available from the [NWG new knowledge hub](#).



# 3

## WHAT DO WE MEAN BY TRANSITIONAL SAFEGUARDING?

The term Transitional Safeguarding describes the need for, “an approach to safeguarding adolescents and young adults fluidly across developmental stages which builds on the best available evidence, learns from both children’s and adult safeguarding practice and which prepares young people for their adult lives”.<sup>1</sup> It focuses on safeguarding young people, from adolescence into adulthood, recognising this period of transition will be experienced differently by young people at different times.

For the purpose of this document, ‘young people’ refers to people aged mid-teens to mid-twenties, though some flexibility is important as Transitional Safeguarding encourages a shift away from age-determined boundaries that can be overly rigid.<sup>2</sup>

Transitional Safeguarding is not simply transition planning for people who are moving from children’s social care to adult social care services. It refers to activity that has often fallen outside of the traditional notions of both ‘transitions’ and ‘safeguarding’, where these have sometimes been interpreted through a lens of eligibility, rather than in the wider sense of human experiences and needs. The local case studies (section 8) and personal stories included in this briefing demonstrate that much of this work extends far beyond statutory duties, and highlights the holistic nature of effective social work with adults and the value of social workers collaborating with and supporting other professionals.

Working this way includes seeking to prevent harm for these young people, protecting them where harm is occurring and also recognising and responding in ways that can help them recover from the impact of harm. As such it is a multi-agency issue, dependent on collaboration and connection between services and with communities.

Transitional Safeguarding complements approaches such as Contextual Safeguarding and Complex Safeguarding, which several local areas are adopting.<sup>3</sup>

Transitional Safeguarding is not a prescribed model. It is a joined-up approach to policy and practice that is being developed and applied in different ways according to local circumstances. For example, in some local areas the focus is on extending the support available to young people experiencing harm in their communities, for others there is a drive to develop services for young adults to prevent them developing longer-term care and support needs.<sup>4</sup> The local case studies (section 8) illustrate the variety of different ways in which local areas are seeking to offer a more transitional approach, this includes engaging commissioned services in a way that allows them to work creatively and flexibly.



# 4

## WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

Children's and adults' safeguarding professionals share a common aim of protecting people from harm, but these two systems have evolved differently over time and are governed by distinct practice, policy and statutory frameworks.<sup>5</sup> Social work, as a unified profession, is well-placed to support a coherent life-course approach.

For young people under 18, safeguarding duties are intended to protect all those at risk of harm.<sup>6</sup> Adult safeguarding focuses on people with care and support needs who might find it more difficult to protect themselves from abuse or neglect because of those care and support needs.<sup>7</sup> This can sometimes be misinterpreted as limiting or restricting which local services are permitted to support. This can result in some young adults experiencing significant safeguarding risks in their lives and not receiving support when they need it. Young autistic people or those with learning needs are a particularly important group to consider, and some evidence suggest that they are over-represented in youth/criminal justice services.<sup>8</sup>

A person cannot consent to abuse. Having capacity and 'making unwise decisions' is not consenting to be abused.

Supporting young people in ways that promote their safety and wellbeing is not only beneficial to them, but also offers potential economic benefits. Investing in support to address harm and its impacts at this life stage can help to reduce the need for more costly intervention later on in life for example, by avoiding some costs associated with the criminal justice system or health services.

Some misconceptions about safeguarding adults need addressing so that young adults get the support they need to be safe. It is not the case that if someone says they don't want safeguarding support then we simply 'walk away'.<sup>9</sup> There could be many reasons why a young adult initially declines support. Making Safeguarding Personal and Transitional Safeguarding both emphasise the importance of curious, tenacious, relationship-based practice. Social workers are highly skilled in working with people in this way and have much to offer (see section 6).

It is important to acknowledge that support cannot always mean a person is safe. Identifying and disrupting sources of harm is crucial. Police have a vital role to play here but need to be supported by other colleagues – for example, by sharing intelligence and information in accordance with local and national guidance.



## Jay Southend

Jay was known to Children's Social Care due to his high risk of exploitation and involvement in county lines. He was referred to an Adult Support Worker (ASW) as he was approaching 18 years old. Jay's relationship with his family had broken down, making him homeless by 18.

Jay was associating with 14/15 years olds involved in county lines. Jay was arrested following a violent offence and disclosed he was sleeping in stairwells in tower blocks and had been involved in county lines. At this point he was referred to the ASW specialising in exploitation. Jay said he wanted help to move away from that way of life but felt like he was trapped. The ASW brokered a conversation with police and Jay disclosed intelligence regarding drugs and organised crime in the area and it was at this point that the extent of the exploitation was understood.

A housing support service fast tracked interviews for other accommodation and Jay registered to claim Universal Credit as a source of income. He also attended various apprenticeship workshops at the college, all accompanied by his ASW. When Jay needed to be placed in temporary accommodation out of the local

“ Without the support provided, Jay would have fallen through the cracks in the system ”

area, due to safety concerns, he was contacted daily and visited twice weekly by his support worker. Jay was also linked in with therapy and other support services.

Jay was supported to secure more permanent accommodation, and helped with this move. The ASW continued to visit Jay during this transition period to ensure he settled into the new area.

Without the support provided, Jay would have fallen through the cracks in the system. Professionals feel he would have undoubtedly become more deeply involved in county lines and been exploited further.

In Southend there is an ASW based within the adolescent team who works with people approaching 18 years old. There is also an ASW within adult social care who specialises in working with adults at risk of exploitation and need support to be safe and these practitioners co-work cases like Jay's.



## Tom Barnsley

Tom had been known to services from a young age. Tom's mother had struggled to parent her children due to substance misuse. Tom was vulnerable to criminal exploitation and was well known to the police. He was sofa surfing and was placed in accommodation in another area.

As Tom neared his 18th birthday, all the agencies working with him felt he was extremely vulnerable. The housing options team were struggling to place Tom due to his behaviour in his placement and there was risk of him being asked to leave the accommodation.

The housing manager and social worker raised Tom's case at a directions panel for young people. Following a multi-agency discussion, a clear support plan was agreed for Tom which involved him being accommodated back in Barnsley in his own flat, with joint working between adults/children's social care. Tom agreed to the plan and revealed he had ambitions of joining the army but that a lack of effective support networks and his vulnerability had made his ambition hard to achieve. He had received a provisional offer, but this was put on hold because of a pending court hearing for criminal offences.

“ With the development of the Directions Panel we are now working closer together in Children and Adult services in order to achieve the best outcomes for young people as they transition to adulthood. ”

In Tom's case, joint working across adults' and children's social care services, coupled with supported accommodation, at a much earlier stage, could have helped Tom to achieve his ambitions of joining the army. He is now in suitable accommodation with wrap around support and is doing well. With the development of the Directions Panel we are now working closer together in Children and Adult services in order to achieve the best outcomes for young people as they transition to adulthood. He has been allocated an adult social worker who will be looking at his ongoing support needs and safeguarding concerns. Tom now feels proud of his home and is making attempts to attend full time education.



## Dee

Walsall (Street Teams)

"I was groomed when I was younger. I couldn't see what was happening to me, I couldn't see that these men were taking advantage of me. I thought it was normal what they was doing. My relationship with my parents was breaking down as I was going missing all the time, always running off with these older guys. My mum didn't know what to do to support me, I wasn't bothered. All I wanted to do is be out with the girls and these older men.

The police spoke to me on many occasions but I wasn't interested in talking to them. When I reached 18, they had me arrested for grooming (I still feel sick now at the thought of this). My faith in the police had gone and my life just felt crap. I felt alone.

Gail became my support worker, and helped me. She helped me furnish my flat, as I had nothing, and helped me to look at a way out. Everything was hard to deal with but Gail made it better for me, she was (and still is) always on the end of the phone if I need her. I now feel so much more confident within myself and she has built my confidence into going to the police. She has made me realise that what was happening to me wasn't normal it was wrong. I am a survivor of sexual exploitation.

“ Gail made it better for me, she was (and still is) always on the end of the phone if I need her. ”







Whilst there are good reasons to understand children's and adults' safeguarding needs as distinct, evidence from research and practice suggests that a more fluid approach is needed in order to help young people be safe during this transitional life stage:

- Whilst turning 18 means that a young person legally becomes an adult overnight, the transition to adulthood is a process not an event – and this process differs from one person to another. Some young people over 18 might require additional support to be safe and well during this phase of their lives, even though they might not have formally defined care and support needs. Similarly, many young people under 18 could benefit from the highly personalised and rights-based safeguarding approach usually used with adults.<sup>10</sup> There is a need to see the person holistically, rather than defining their needs, vulnerabilities or strengths according to eligibility or age.<sup>11</sup>
- Some researchers have found that the brain continues to develop until the mid-twenties, and have called for an expanded definition of adolescence that extends into a person's mid-twenties<sup>12</sup>. The power imbalance between young adults who are still developing cognitively and the coercive influence of often highly sophisticated abusers is stark. Whilst evidence regarding brain development should never be seen as a reason to underplay a person's rights or capacity, it does encourage us to think about maturity in a nuanced way that takes into account an individual's experiences and circumstances.
- Evidence suggests that not addressing harms and adversity for young people can mean that problems worsen in later adulthood. This can lead to more costly intervention<sup>13</sup> as well as undermining a person's ability to lead a happy, safe and fulfilling life. The Care Act 2014 'prevention principle' is key here – we should always aim to prevent, reduce or delay care and support needs.
- As we develop our understanding of harms such as criminal or sexual exploitation, community violence, modern slavery and trafficking, local areas are continuously learning to adapt and innovate in how they safeguard young people. This invites a Transitional Safeguarding approach for a number of reasons:
  - These types of harm rarely stop at 18, nor does the impact of such harms. A young person over 18 can suddenly find themselves without support, despite being highly vulnerable. Moreover, the withdrawal of support could potentially increase their vulnerability to perpetrators who feel emboldened by the absence of professional support.
  - Exploitation can have damaging effects not only on people being exploited, but also on their families and carers. Supporting people to understand and process the impact of these types of harm can help to maintain family relationships and requires an understanding of attachment and family dynamics. Social workers and others used to working with families have a vital role to play in helping young people stay connected to those that care about them.





## Bea Portsmouth

Bea is an 18-year-old young woman being supported by leaving care services. Bea lives in supported living accommodation commissioned by the local authority housing department. Bea received support from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), but is not currently known to Adult Mental Health Services and has missed several GP appointments to discuss her mental health. Support workers have become increasingly concerned as Bea is not returning to the accommodation and not making contact with services for a week or more at a time. The last time Bea was reported missing, the Police located her 80 miles away with people who have been linked to county lines. Bea has recently disclosed that she has a new boyfriend who is reportedly 10 years older than her and who tells her not to inform staff of her whereabouts. Other young adults within the accommodation have said that Bea has self-harmed and upon her return appears under the influence of substances.

A safeguarding concern was raised by Bea's personal assistant within the local authority through care team due to concerns that she may be at risk of, or experiencing, domestic abuse and/or sexual or criminal exploitation. The Adult Safeguarding team, in partnership with the leaving care service, applied the Multi-Agency Risk Management Meeting (MARM) framework.

“ Bea consented to a referral to a voluntary sector organisation that supports young people aged 18+ who may be at risk of trafficking. ”

Bea disclosed that her boyfriend was asking her to stay at addresses she felt uncomfortable with. Bea consented to a referral to a voluntary sector organisation that supports young people aged 18+ who may be at risk of trafficking. Neighbourhood policing teams have spoken with Bea and provided safeguarding advice. Bea felt empowered to speak to her GP and, though she doesn't yet feel ready to begin therapy, she has been accessing Samaritans telephone support. Bea is now working with the team of professionals around her to explore career aspirations.



## Cat Rochdale

Professionals were concerned that Cat was the victim of child sexual exploitation, domestic violence and coercive and controlling behaviour inflicted by the perpetrator of the sexual exploitation. As Cat grew older, concerns grew that Cat had become ensnared in sex work. She was struggling significantly with adulthood and was not meeting her own basic needs, she was also becoming involved in relationships and friendships that were harmful to her. Professionals were concerned about her becoming homeless.

Professionals were concerned about the longer-term impact on Cat's wellbeing and were keen to prevent her needs from worsening. A safeguarding strategy meeting was held and support was put in place to minimise the risks and ensure Cat's safety, whilst also recognising her rights – in keeping with Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP). Cat was referred to the recovery and reablement team and an initial assessment explored the level of support Cat required.

Cat was willing to engage and receive support via the Recovery and Reablement service. Care was taken to ensure Cat had the opportunity to take in all the information and make a decision about what support she felt she needed.

Housing was an important issue to focus on, and Cat was supported to make initial referrals and to attend assessment for housing. Cat is now successfully living in her own home with housing support. Further work was undertaken with DWP, so that Cat could understand and feel in control of her finances. Cat now has her own bank account and is receiving her benefits entitlements.

Cat is also being helped to understand her mental health and emotional well-being. She has agreed to being referred for support and has registered with a GP to access this. She is considering counselling to help her process her childhood experiences. Cat has been supported to engage with programmes designed to help her understand the signs of an unhealthy relationship and know what support is available. No further domestic violence incidents have been reported.

This package of support has ensured that Cat has not required ongoing and more intrusive intervention in her life. Cat continues to engage with the Recovery and Reablement Service and makes contact when she needs advice.



- Some young people affected by exploitation can become ensnared in perpetrating harm as well as being a victim of harm.<sup>14</sup> Once a young person turns 18, they could face criminalisation for this<sup>15</sup> if their vulnerabilities are not recognised.
- Young adults can become trapped in exploitative circumstances, for example through ‘cuckooing’ – where a person’s home is occupied by those selling drugs and engaged in other criminal activity. Adults with substance misuse issues or poor mental health or autism may be targeted, highlighting the importance of partnership working. Importantly, adults with other vulnerabilities that might not ordinarily mean they are receiving professional support, such as those experiencing poverty or social isolation, can also be targeted.<sup>16</sup>
- It is important to ensure that trauma-informed support is available for these young people and is offered in a way that affords them a sense of choice and control. This focus on empowerment is a key principle of the [Care Act 2014](#) and is particularly important when people have experienced coercion and feelings of powerlessness.<sup>17</sup>
- These types of harm tend to involve complex dynamics. A young person may not recognise they are being exploited, and even if they do it can be highly risky for them to exit the groups or situations they are ensnared in. Working with people facing these kinds of harm requires an approach to safeguarding which is thoughtful, person-centred and nuanced. It also requires close partnership working so that each agency can exercise their responsibilities effectively, whether their primary focus is on pursuing and disrupting the source of harm, identifying and preventing harm, or supporting a person to heal from the impact of harm.
- Safety and wellbeing needs intersect in complex ways across the life course.<sup>18</sup> A young person experiencing exploitation can often experience poor mental health or develop health-harming behaviours, as a result. Family breakdown can be a driver for homelessness, which in turn can increase vulnerability to exploitation. People may become dependent on drugs as a means of dealing with the trauma of exploitation and in turn substance dependency can be a driver for exploitation, for example through drug debt bondage. The interconnected nature of harms requires an integrated system of support, this benefits the young person and can also contribute to more effective use of resource. The local area case studies and individual stories highlight the variety of way in which a young person might need help to be safe, including housing support, therapeutic support, financial advice, employment support, legal support, and practical support.

- Some groups might face structural disadvantage, as a result of systemic racism, ableism, classism or sexism. These persist into adulthood and may mean a person is targeted by those seeking to exploit them. Transitional Safeguarding requires a focus on equalities, diversity and inclusion in recognition of this.
- It is important to use the full range of tools available to prevent and disrupt exploitation, as well as supporting the individual affected. A comprehensive disruption toolkit can be found on [www.nwgnetwork.org](http://www.nwgnetwork.org)
- As lead professionals within adult safeguarding, social workers should ensure they understand the tools and can work with partners to apply them as necessary.

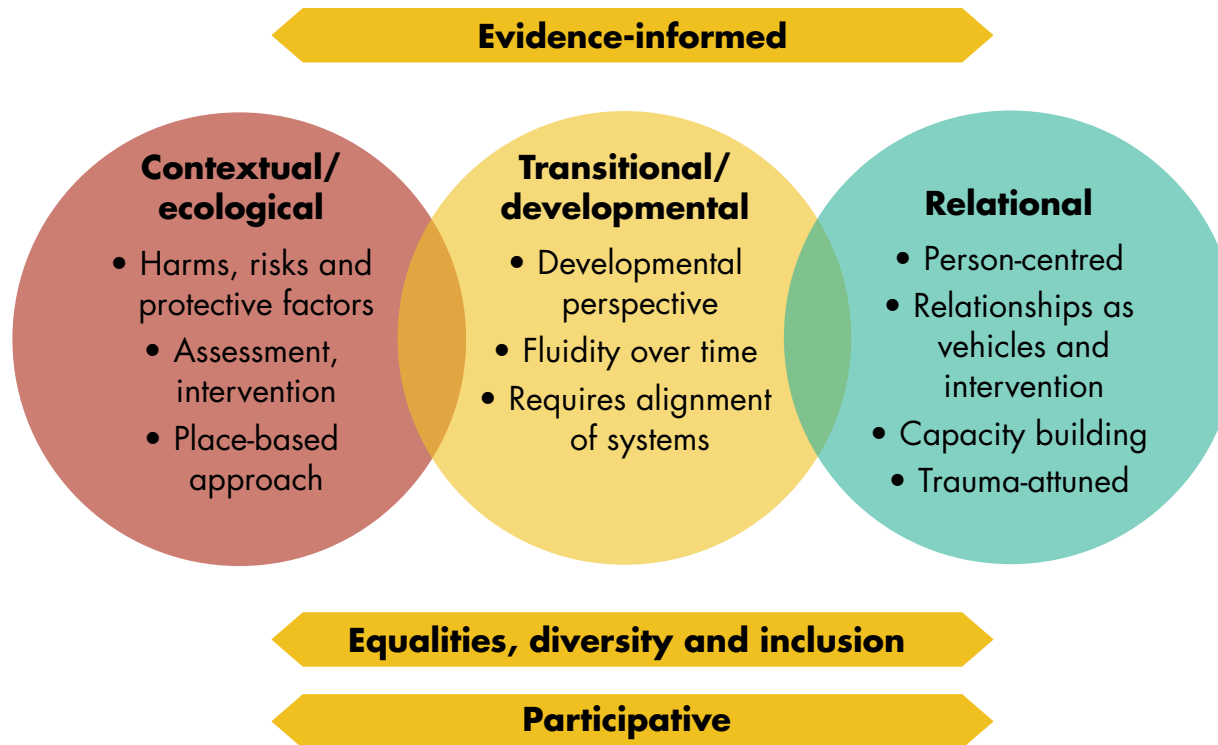


# 5

## KEY PRINCIPLES OF TRANSITIONAL SAFEGUARDING

Transitional Safeguarding is based on a number of key principles,<sup>19</sup> as outlined in Fig 1 below.

**Fig 1. A framework for Transitional Safeguarding.<sup>20</sup> Adapted from Holmes, 2018.**



See Firmin's work: [www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk](http://www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk)



Three core intersecting pillars should underpin practice and policy in this area, these underscore the need for a safeguarding system to be:

- **Contextual**,<sup>iii</sup> or ecological<sup>iv</sup> in its perspective. This means recognising and responding to the harms young people face in a variety of spaces beyond their family and seeking to make these contexts safer rather than only focusing on the individual. It encourages a systemic approach to assessment, intervention and outcome measurement.<sup>21</sup>
- **Transitional**, or developmental, in its design. This means understanding the distinct developmental needs and strengths of this life stage and creating services and pathways that reflect the individualised nature of transition to adulthood. It encourages greater fluidity between children and adult safeguarding processes and requires an active effort to align systems to create a smoother more holistic offer for people being supported.

- **Relational** in its ethos. This means being person-centred and trauma-informed in practice, recognising that meaningful relationships are an important aspect of any therapeutic support. It requires us to adopt a capacity building and empowering approach, so that young people are supported to build resilience and exercise positive control in their lives. It also means using language that is inclusive and respectful, avoiding terminology or expressions that could be victim-blaming (see Further Reading section 11).

Three cross-cutting themes act as a guide to inform not only practice and policy, but also the way practice and policy should be designed. These themes require us to:

- Be **evidence-informed** in our approach. This means drawing on knowledge from a variety of sources – research and data, practice wisdom and the expertise of people with lived experience. It means adapting approaches in light of new knowledge and being curious and committed to continuous learning.

- 
- iii Contextual Safeguarding is a term coined by Dr Carlene Firmin. It is an approach to understanding and responding to children’s experiences of significant harm beyond their family and home, for example in peer relationships, online and in their community. Parents and carers may have little influence over these contexts and young adult’s exposure to extra-familial abuse can impact negatively upon support relationships. See section 11 for further links.
- iv According to Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory, people’s development is influenced by the various ecosystems in which we exist – from the home/family system to the community system, and then to the most expansive system including society and culture. Each of these ecological systems interact with and influence each other in all aspects of a person’s life.



- Actively attend to issues of **equality, diversity and inclusion** throughout. This means identifying where people’s safety and wellbeing is affected by structural and/or interpersonal discrimination and robustly addressing these within local systems. People’s safety and their experiences of support can be affected by racism, ableism, ageism, sexism, classism or other forms of prejudice, and these can occur in tandem with each other. This requires us to adopt an anti-oppressive stance at all times, and recognise the intersectionality<sup>v</sup> of people’s lives.



- Ensure a **participative, user-led approach**. This means adopting a strengths-based approach; respecting young people’s expertise and enabling them to coproduce solutions and support rather than being treated as a passive recipient. This is as important at a strategic level as it is in practice, and is a key means of promoting a person’s sense of self-efficacy, by affording them autonomy and agency.
- These principles are deliberately broad, rather than focussing only on statutory safeguarding responsibilities. As the personal stories included in this briefing demonstrate, for many young people being and feeling safe is about where they live, who they can trust, and how in control they feel of their lives and relationships. The multi-faceted nature of a person’s sense of safety and wellbeing requires a holistic approach and effective collaborative relationships between social work and other local partners are key.

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<sup>v</sup> Intersectionality is a term, coined in 1989 by Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw, to describe how race, class, gender, and other individual characteristics ‘intersect’ with one another and overlap, creating overlapping interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.





# 6


## WHAT CAN SUPPORT THIS APPROACH?

There has been a great deal of innovation and development in both the children's and adults' safeguarding systems in recent years, providing a useful basis from which to develop Transitional Safeguarding. For example:

- Contextual Safeguarding is a key example of how safeguarding practice with children and young people is being adapted to respond more effectively to harms faced outside the family or home. Contextual Safeguarding encourages us to move beyond an individualised approach to safeguarding and consider the wider systems, contexts and spaces in which a young person experiences harm and safety. It requires an expansive understanding of who constitutes a safeguarding partner – with local businesses, stewards of public spaces and communities playing a key role alongside statutory and voluntary sector agencies.<sup>22</sup>
- Making Safeguarding Personal is a person-centred and rights-based approach to adult safeguarding, which was incorporated into the Care Act 2014 guidance. It is a strengths-based approach, in which the person is understood to have rights to live their life, which need to be balanced with their right to/need for safety. It locates the person being supported as the expert in their own life and emphasises the importance of empowerment and partnership working alongside principles of accountability and protection.<sup>23</sup>

Existing legislation and guidance provide several levers to support local areas seeking to adopt and embed Transitional Safeguarding. In particular:

- The Care Act 2014 guidance emphasises the importance of preventing or delaying the development of needs for care and support and the importance of reducing needs that already exist. This principle can be applied to those young people whose experiences and trauma mean they may need support to live safely, without them having formally defined care and support needs.
- The wellbeing principle within the Care Act 2014 applies equally to those who do not have eligible care and support needs but come into contact with the system in some other way and applies equally to those who, for a variety of reasons, may find it difficult to engage with professionals. This overarching principle resonates with the need for an accessible offer of support for young people making the transition to adulthood.
- The Care Act 2014 guidance also requires us to ensure that decisions take account of the individual's circumstances, rather than basing decisions only on a person's age or appearance, any condition they have, or any aspect of their behaviour. Whilst this principle is important in ensuring proportionate and the least intrusive responses, it is equally important in ensuring that needs and vulnerabilities are recognised amongst young people who might be assumed to be ineligible for support.

- 
- The Mental Capacity Act assumes capacity from the age of 16, underscoring the importance of engaging with young people in a way that centres their rights and expertise. Adult safeguarding colleagues can offer valuable support in terms of legal literacy to those working with young people under 18, to create a more coherent experience for those who do go on to receive statutory support beyond 18.

Safeguarding Adults Boards (SABs) can provide valuable strategic leadership and oversight for Transitional Safeguarding activity:

- SABs are key to ensuring innovation is carefully planned, monitored and embedded across partner agencies.
- SAB partners are uniquely well placed to identify needs and service gaps for young people facing risks and harm.
- Many SABs work closely with, or are in some way integrated with, local children's safeguarding partnerships, enabling a more fluid safeguarding response.
- SABs provide important role-modelling and expectations for how local agencies understand their safeguarding remit; articulating the importance of thinking about safeguarding beyond eligibility for adult social care is key to shifting culture.
- SABs are able to adopt a system-wide perspective, influencing across service boundaries and identifying the collective strengths and opportunities of a local area. This is a useful basis upon which to develop Transitional Safeguarding.

Social work with adults has rights-based, person-centred practice at its heart. Within this, social workers need to adopt a holistic and whole-life perspective including understanding issues for young people coming into adulthood. They also need to understand the impact of early life experiences and harms on adults of all ages. Practitioners and first line managers, including those who specialise in mental health can enable and promote Transitional Safeguarding and develop their own direct practice, by:

- developing knowledge and understanding of Transitional Safeguarding issues within the local area/system, e.g. through building relationships and creating opportunities for dialogue and mutual learning with children's safeguarding colleagues
- sharing expertise in promoting self-determination and human rights-based practice with children's safeguarding colleagues so that young people under 18 are supported in a way that empowers them to pursue their right to be safe and seek ongoing help and support in adulthood
- supporting other professionals to develop their practice so that they are able to ensure that the concepts of choice, control, decision making, coercion and exploitation are understood by the young person and can be explored from a rights-based perspective that integrates protection and participation



- sharing legal literacy expertise with children's safeguarding colleagues, so that young people over 16 are understood as having capacity to make decisions in relation to their lives; help other professionals to understand the Mental Capacity Act and Human Rights Act
- drawing on the complementary expertise of child and family social work colleagues. This might include collaborative learning around the impact of childhood adversity, or co-developing trauma-informed approaches to practice
- identifying young adults with previously identified risk factors who might not be formally defined as having care and support needs as they move into adulthood; using the Care Act 2014 prevention principle to engage support, in order to prevent, reduce or delay longer-term needs arising
- promoting a personalised, strengths-based approach, not only in direct practice, but also by role-modelling to other colleagues within local partnerships and service systems
- within mental health services, using social work and wider knowledge to advocate for and promote effective transitional services and models of support for young people moving into adulthood, drawing on the key principles within this briefing
- within mental health services, ensuring Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP) practice integrates Transitional Safeguarding knowledge, e.g. through developing refresher training based on the key principles in this briefing and using AMHP forums to explore local gaps in support for young adults
- seeking to influence the wider system, ensuring that senior managers understand the barriers and enablers to person-centred, strengths-based practice with young people, and providing constructive challenge

Commissioners of services have a great deal to contribute to this agenda. They are uniquely well placed to:

- ensure robust local needs analysis, so that young adults' needs are understood and can be incorporated into service planning and reflected in local market shaping activity
- building flexibility into commissioning frameworks, in order that key services, such as those focused on substance misuse, trauma, and mental health, are able to span the transition to adulthood allowing young people a more coherent and fluid experience
- create opportunities, and set expectations, for local service offers and pathways to be co-produced with young adults and their families and communities

- design joint commissioning approaches, so that adults' and children's services, alongside health, are maximising the impact of investment across the local system

The stories of young people's experiences highlight the importance of holistic and personalised support, drawing on a variety of professional skills and expertise. They show the value of addressing young people's needs in a way that aims to prevent these escalating, rather than only focusing on narrow eligibility. As the local case studies in section 8 demonstrate, there is much innovation in this field of work and everyone at every level of the system has a key role to play.

Creative, collaborative and sometimes courageous thinking is what makes the difference.





## Ali

### Street Teams: Transition project

Street Teams is a charity based in the West Midlands, specialising in sexual exploitation. Street Teams started the Transition Project in June 2017.

Ali had been working with Street Teams since the age of 15. Ali had a baby when she was 15 who was in the care of her parents. Ali had experienced a number of foster placements.

Street Teams helped Ali understand she was being groomed by an older man and supported her through the difficult process of the trial. Project staff supported Ali with daily phone calls and weekly visits; focusing on her aspirations and what she would like for her future. Her overall goal was to one day be able to care for her child. Street Teams spent a lot of time trying to mediate between family members, supporting Ali with the impact on her mental health and liaising with Ali's social worker. When Ali became involved in relationships that were harmful to her, Street Teams were able to provide practical support, paying to get her locks changed to help her feel safe. Project staff remained on call on a 24/7 basis so that Ali could contact them if she felt scared.

When Ali began to suffer anxiety and depression, and started to smoke cannabis, she became ensnared in debt. Street Teams supported Ali to access health assessments, provided benefits advice and helped her set up a payment plan for her rent arrears. Ali was also referred to the drug service who supported her with her drug use.

Once Ali felt ready to engage with counselling, Street Teams were able to source funding for this and she had weekly counselling from a specialist sexual violence counsellor. The sessions were held at Street Teams base as this made Ali feel comfortable.

Ali had counselling for nearly two years and has learnt many different strategies to help her cope with her experiences. Over time Ali proceeded with the application to Court in order to be able to parent her child. Street Teams were on hand to provide practical and emotional support. After a difficult process, Ali's child returned to her care.

Ali has now moved to a new house and recently had another child. In her own words, "This year was the best Christmas ever and my family is now complete and I would not be here now if it wasn't for you, thank you so much for giving me a new shot at life."

# 7

## HOW YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE TO MAKING TRANSITIONAL SAFEGUARDING A REALITY

### For those who are...

**A social worker or adult mental health practitioner**



### You can

- Offer to support children's safeguarding colleagues to develop expertise in areas you are skilled in, such as legal literacy, mental capacity and/or positive risk-taking, sharing your professional knowledge and inviting them to share theirs.
- Use the key principles as a framework for reflecting on your practice with young people, using the support of peers and/or supervisors to explore how your practice demonstrates these principles.
- Champion the needs of young adults, highlighting where you see gaps in service provision or workforce skills so that you are contributing to system change and improvement. Raise your concerns in supervision and/or with managers, workforce development leads and other relevant system leaders.
- With colleagues in your organisation, organise a reflective learning session around the key principles and other supporting resources (e.g. UK Code of Ethics and regulatory professional standards) to inform your individual and collective/team development plans and priorities.
- Promote mutual support for the emotional and other impacts of working with young people facing risks and harms.
- Write a reflective or exploratory piece about your professional experience and understanding of Transitional Safeguarding, e.g. for discussion with colleagues or for a local or national social work publication. If appropriate, ask colleagues to share their thoughts on your piece, to promote understanding and knowledge sharing.



## For those who are...

### **A social worker or adult mental health practitioner (continued)**



## You can

- Invite interdisciplinary colleagues (e.g. from children's services, health, community and voluntary sector, police and lived experience organisations) to discuss the key principles and local priorities for action. Seek management/supervisory support for doing this as appropriate.
- All of the above can be added to your CPD portfolio for the regulator and used to inform your organisational annual review and development plan.
- Ask local social work and workforce development leads to incorporate Transitional Safeguarding and the key principles into local training and development plans.

### **Supervising or managing practitioners**



- Ensure that practitioners' learning needs or gaps in knowledge are acknowledged and support practitioners to address these by drawing on the expertise of others across the partnership, particularly those experienced in working with adolescents.
- Encourage practitioners to engage in learning activity beyond traditional training, for example skills exchange activity with partners, peer supervision, co-working with children's safeguarding professionals.
- Provide reflective trauma-informed supervision, so that practitioners can recognise and process the emotional impact of working in this complex field.





## For those who are...

### **Supervising or managing practitioners (continued)**



## You can

- Support practitioners to see how Transitional Safeguarding resonates with their professional ethics and sense of moral purpose.
- Encourage and create time and space for practitioner/team discussions about the key principles and how they can be embedded in practice and learning in the organisation.
- Support practitioners to raise awareness, speak out and identify gaps and areas for improvement within and between organisations in the local system. Support this information getting to commissioners, service planners and senior leaders.
- Enable learning events for staff and other managers/leaders that include the voices of lived experience and support the coproduction of solutions from people who have needed Transitional Safeguarding support.
- Capture evidence of need for, and impact of, Transitional Safeguarding to support the case for investment.



## For those who are...

### Commissioning services



## You can

- Ensure local market position statements are co-produced and informed by a robust local needs' assessment, taking a future view on emerging needs of young people and not only focused on existing service demand, in order to design solutions for those who might not meet formal eligibility criteria.
- Ensure commissioned services are afforded flexibility in order to support people across this stage of development, capturing impact and cost data in order to inform future investment and innovation.
- Incorporate co-productive principles within local commissioning approaches, so that 'designing with' becomes the norm.
- Pay close attention to how issues of equality, diversity and inclusion are addressed, or possibly exacerbated, within the commissioning process and within commissioned services.
- Draw on learning from other local areas seeking to develop and embed Transitional Safeguarding (see section 8).
- Draw on learning from other parts of the system that have developed a more transitional approach, such as Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), care leaving services or mental health, to inform a Transitional Safeguarding approach.
- Ensure that prevention is a key principle of commissioning for young adults, developing solutions that prevent, reduce and delay the need for formal care and support.



## For those who are...

### Leading social care / social work services



## You can

- Interrogate and develop a whole place understanding of current and future needs and associated expenditure for young people across your area. Support colleagues in making a rigorous case for investment by helping them to understand the consequences, both human and economic, of a binary approach to childhood and adulthood.
- Seek to challenge siloed working and binary thinking, highlighting the importance of boundary-spanning leadership in enabling system change.
- Deliberately and publicly role-model your commitment to the key principles, helping staff and partners to see these as underpinning an effective approach to safeguarding in the broadest sense.
- Ensure transition to adulthood is a whole council priority, helping peers to see their role in making the vision a reality.
- Identify and tackle inconsistencies between teams, services and organisations where different structures and criteria are impeding a coherent life course approach.
- Support middle leaders to reflect on how they have achieved other significant change. Help them to see that they have a key contribution to make and build their confidence and capacity for systems thinking.
- Draw on learning from other local areas seeking to develop and embed Transitional Safeguarding (see section 8) and encourage your local colleagues to share their learning with others.



## For those who are...

### **A member of a Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB)**



## You can

- Set the tone for this work by demonstrating curiosity, tenacity and ambition for change. This is particularly important for SAB Chairs.
- Interrogate the mechanisms by which agencies are able to offer a joined-up approach to safeguarding young people. Invite constructive challenge from wider stakeholders, including children's safeguarding partners, as to how effective these are and what improvements could be made.
- Ensure that young people's views and expertise are informing the development of Transitional Safeguarding approaches and the ongoing improvement activity required to embed it. Pay particular attention to ensuring that consultation and co-production activities are meaningful, inclusive and accessible to those whose voices are seldom heard.
- Challenge language that contributes to binary, eligibility-focused safeguarding practice and leadership, within meetings, published reports and informal communication.
- Role-model systems leadership, influencing across boundaries and seeking to understand the gaps and spaces between services in order to enable a whole-place offer.
- Ensure high quality learning and development opportunities are available to colleagues across the partnership, and seek to create shared learning opportunities with the local children's safeguarding partnership.



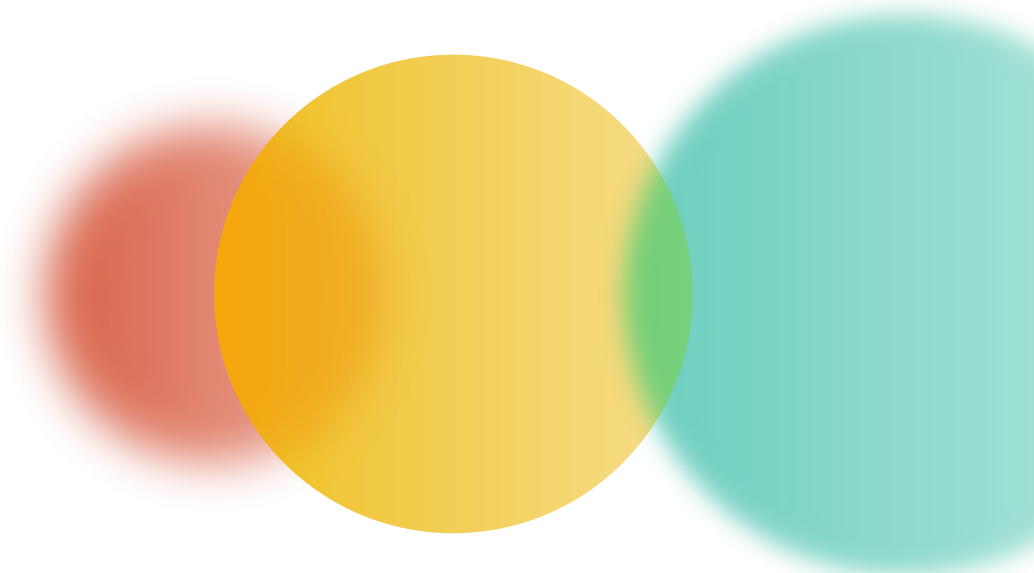
## For those who are...

### **A member of a Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) (continued)**



## You can

- Interrogate the nature and impact of unmet needs amongst young people, and the response from local agencies, and use this intelligence to inform system-level transformation.
- Draw on learning from other local areas seeking to develop and embed Transitional Safeguarding (see section 8) and encourage your local colleagues to share their learning with others.



## Hampshire Multi-Agency Risk Management (MARM) Framework

### The context and rationale for this initiative

Hampshire Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB), in partnership with its neighbouring Local SABs, has developed a multi-agency framework for people where there is a high level of risk but who may sit outside the statutory safeguarding frameworks and where it is felt a multi-agency approach would be beneficial.

The [4LSAB Multi-Agency Risk Management Framework](#) was developed in response to learning gained from serious cases and it enables a collaborative, proactive approach which helps to identify and respond to risks before crisis point reached. It supports a coordinated and multi-agency response to manage risks ensuring timely information sharing of risk, a holistic assessment of risk and the development of multi-agency risk management plans.

The MARM Framework is underpinned by a number of important principles including the duty to protect from foreseeable harm even when the person has decision making capacity not to engage in care and support; effective partnership working, professional curiosity, person centred working, strengths based and trauma-informed responses. MARM methodology recognises that complex cases often involve people with long-term and entrenched risky behaviours and this requires a relationship-based, trauma-informed approach.

In these cases, the focus is on building trust and rapport in order to foster engagement to enable work to take place to reduce potential harm.

### Brief description of the work undertaken

MARM does not replace single agency risk management arrangements, it seeks to build on and complement these by providing a multi-agency dimension. It is designed for situations where a person:

- is unable to obtain necessary care to meet their needs; and/or
- is unable to make reasonable or informed decisions because of their state of mental health or because they have a learning disability or an acquired brain injury; and/or
- is unable to protect themselves against potential exploitation or abuse; and/or
- has refused essential services without which their wellbeing, health and safety needs cannot be met and they are unable to recognise this



No one agency 'owns' the MARM process. Any agency can initiate the process however, in doing so it assumes the lead coordinating role with responsibility for convening and chairing the initial meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to gain a holistic overview of current risks and to agree a multi-agency risk management plan. As far as possible, the person should be included and involved in the process and in developing the risk management plan.

If the collaborative assessment highlights circumstances which can be more appropriately dealt with under an alternative risk management pathway, a referral would be made. The MARM process continues until the identified risks are either resolved or managed to an acceptable level.

### **What difference it is making**

The MARM Framework was introduced in 2018 across the 4 Local Safeguarding Adult Board (LSAB) areas and it is now being used consistently by a wide range of agencies including adult services, MASH, clinical commissioning group's, community and acute health providers, district and borough councils, housing providers, fire and rescue, police and children's services. Feedback and case examples from partner organisations indicate that the MARM is highly valued by partners as an effective tool for supporting adults to manage risks linked to:

- vulnerability factors placing them at a higher risk of exploitation or abuse
- self-neglect of personal care and health needs, hoarding and fire safety
- refusal or disengagement from care and support services
- a combination of unwise decision-making, disengagement/refusal of support and decision-making capacity
- complex/diverse needs either falling between or spanning, a number of agencies' statutory responsibilities or eligibility criteria
- Transitional Safeguarding
- on-going needs/behaviour leading to lifestyles that place them and/or others at risk
- complex cases involving people with long term and entrenched behaviours
- high intensity service use
- complex hospital discharge
- complex needs and behaviours leading the adult to cause harm to others



## What advice would you give to others trying to develop a Transitional Safeguarding approach?

The person should be involved in the MARM process as fully as they wish or are able and their rights respected to make apparently unwise lifestyle choices and to refuse support. MARM enables a collaborative approach in which the person being supported and those providing support, work together to determine an outcome that draws on the adult's strengths and goals. In this sense, MARM provides the adult with the opportunity to be a co-producer of their support rather than a passive recipient of support but supported where required by an advocate who can offer independent support, ensure the adult is heard and their rights are promoted and respected.

Responses from professionals need to be balanced with the personal rights and freedoms and need to be the least intrusive. Wherever possible, the person's consent to share information should be sought and if necessary, discussions held with them to explain why the meeting is needed, how they can be involved and potential benefits. However, in certain circumstances, a MARM meeting can be held without the person's consent even if this means overriding their decision not to consent. However, there has to be a lawful basis for this to occur with the decision and rationale for this action recorded.

Implementation of MARM has supported effective partnership working and the ability to achieve better outcomes for the person. This has been enabled by:

- the timely sharing of vital information
- avoidance of a 'refer on' culture
- attention to developing or strengthening the person's support network
- better understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of partner agencies
- a solution focused, relationship-based approach
- co-ordination and management of case work and interface with other processes
- jointly reviewing and communicating progress at regular intervals





## Birmingham – Preparation for adulthood

### The context and rationale for this initiative

Birmingham had an Ofsted and CQC local area SEND inspection in 2018. The report reflected significant failings. A written statement of action was required with a joined-up strategy. The Birmingham Children's partnership was created and Preparation for Adulthood (PFA) was one of the proposals.

Our mission statement and values mirror the requirements from these reports, alongside the NICE guidance for transition for health and social care. PFA has a national agenda lead by National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTI). Birmingham's vision extended beyond this model to include 14 to 30 year olds who may not transition as well or at the expected age to others.

We work collaboratively across Birmingham and are matrix managed between adult social care and the Birmingham Children's Trust. Health, education and criminal justice services are also key partners. Investment has been agreed for a proof of concept to demonstrate that by intervening earlier and differently, outcomes can be improved for young people who are transitioning from children's to adults' services and costs can be reduced.

### Brief description of the work undertaken

Our role includes:

- a focus on what the young person wants, supporting aspirations using a co-production approach
- being the system 'connector'
- creating joined up strategic and operational changes to improve outcomes
- supporting statutory teams by offering more time

We can support with at least one of these four outcomes:

- health
- employment
- housing
- friends, relationships and community

The **integrated transition team** includes two senior occupational therapists, a housing solutions broker, employment officer, two family support brokers, family support workers and a commissioning officer.



We work with young people who:

- have additional needs
- attend special schools and colleges
- have statutory health and social care assessments
- have extra support needs due to being in care or having been in care
- have received a young carers assessment in the last 12 months
- have a caring responsibility for an adult that takes up a lot of time

We also work with household members, aged between 16-25, who live with another young person who is receiving support from PFA and want support with the PFA outcome.

The **vulnerable adults team** includes two advanced mental health professionals, a mental health liaison co-ordinator, a restorative youth justice worker, a coaching and resilience worker and family support workers.

We work with people who:

- have endured trauma and/or have Mental health difficulties either diagnosed or undiagnosed

- have a vulnerability that could pose a risk or cause harm to themselves or others
- are at risk of offending
- are at risk of being exploited
- are part of the criminal justice system (CJS) either in custody or in the community
- are leaving the CJS or statutory service who require support in our four key areas where it will no longer be provided
- are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness

### **What difference it is making**

This initiative is at a very early stage.

Our aim is to offer a joined-up, smooth experience for the people we support, as well as demonstrating progress against the key outcomes.

We equally focus on system change – and will be aiming to explore whether and how we have achieved this through our very diverse multi-disciplinary team and our wide-ranging stakeholders.

We will also have a formal evaluation.

## **What advice would you give to others trying to develop a Transitional Safeguarding approach?**

This project was led by a need to deliver with the key stakeholder being young people. This project had a buy-in from all the other relevant stakeholders and providers and we are key to the council's business plans.

As we report to numerous boards, we have high scrutiny, support and extra resources. This has provided clear direction and pace with a lot of flexibility with us being proof of concept. A suggestion can be offered from anyone and we can try it out, without significant delays. PFA looks different every month.

Don't delay because of COVID-19. This project was created from our dining rooms and the last year has probably had the most creative, yet life changing impact on working life and how a service is delivered. Create a culture of distributed leadership with an equal voice to enable ideas to come through from every team member.

Communication has therefore been key, being able to have an honest conversation about what is going well, what needs changing across the system and what is realistic and include young people and parents/carers in this discussion.





## Met Police – DIVERT programme

### Background

DIVERT was created in April 2015 to address a gap in statutory provision for young adults who come into police custody. It is a Metropolitan Police Service diversion programme designed to use police custody as a teachable moment to prevent young people (from 18 to 25) reoffending, and leading them away from crime and into employment, education or training.

The overall objective is to prevent violence and reoffending by helping young people that come into police custody to change their lifestyle. The programme has been running in Brixton Police Station custody suite since 2015.

In 2016, it expanded to Bethnal Green and the programme is now based in six other police custody suites across London. DIVERT is funded by the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) in London.

### Brief description on how it works

DIVERT utilises trained Custody Intervention Coaches (CICs), embedded within Met Police custody suites, to approach suitable 18 to 25-year-old detainees. The CICs conduct initial consultations with these young detainees, talking to them about their lifestyle and aspirations and exploring the route of the subject's offending.

They will discuss ways in which they can help them change the course of their life through education, employment or training. The CIC will continue to work with the young person outside of custody, drawing on a network of partners and agencies for support.

This process continues completely independent of the criminal justice process. It is not unusual for coaches to maintain contact with subjects who have received custodial sentences and continue working with them on release.



CICs will tailor their approach to the individual's needs, assisting them in a variety of ways; from facilitating access to training, education or employment opportunities to assisting with housing issues or arranging support for mental health or addiction problems.

Offences such as possession of weapons, possession of drugs, theft and minor assault are considered suitable for referral through the programme, which looks to support first or second time entrants into custody.

The Met Police works with Bounce Back (Bounce Back is a scheme providing vital support to young people) and the New Era Foundation, which helps young people achieve their full potential to deliver DIVERT. Custody intervention coaches are based inside custody suites, enabling a fast-time approach to address.

Trained 'custody intervention coaches', who aren't police officers, use a 'teachable moment' to approach young people in custody and ask about their aspirations. Based on their individual needs, young people are then referred through DIVERT to employers and other organisations, who provide a long-term support plan.

## **What difference it is making**

Since October 2018 DIVERT has worked with over 1,169 people since and a further 300 people have been given information, advice and guidance. 786 are in training and education, and 160 have found employment.

The re-offending rate was approximately 21% less than the average reoffending rate. The number of individuals engaging with this intervention will increase significantly as DIVERT expands further.

DIVERT has received significant support and encouragement from the Met Police and the Home Office, featuring in the recently published Serious Violence Strategy. The ambition is to expand DIVERT into a Met Police wide programme. Several other forces have expressed an interest in the scheme and the unique model of working in partnership with football clubs means it could easily be replicated nationally or even internationally.



## **What advice would you give to others trying to develop a Transitional Safeguarding approach?**

Maintaining a tailored approach to the people you work with is crucial to ensuring that a consistent relationship is struck between a coach and that person. Having a wider network of partners and opportunities is paramount as the focus must be on achieving an outcome for that person as opposed to just signposting them to service.

New programmes and schemes take time to embed especially within statutory service. It is really important to explain from the outset what you are trying to achieve, look for champions to support and ensure that you feedback to your partners regularly about outcomes. This helps to gain wider support and advocacy.







## Southend-on-Sea Borough Council – Transitional approach to exploitation

### The context and rationale for this initiative

Following implementing an adolescent team to work with those children and young people identified as being at most risk of exploitation in 2017, we became acutely aware that work with this group needed to take a longer-term view. Building trusted professional relationships with young people who had been groomed and exploited takes time with consistent professionals involved and it quickly became apparent that children engaged with the team received a high level of support. This was sometimes daily, however when they became 18 years old the options for support and types of support available were vastly different. We noticed that adult systems did not necessarily fit nicely with this cohort, who in many ways, were still children except that they had now become 18 years old, though their needs had not changed. We trialled a panel process where this cohort could be linked into adult services.

However, we quickly found that they would not attend appointments without support and would quickly get closed by services. What we felt was missing was a single professional who knew that young person and could take them to appointments, help them navigate the various systems and to be their champion in the same way that support services worked for children.

### Brief description of the work undertaken

We decided to mirror our children's offer for adults. In our children's service, they are allocated both a social worker and an early help practitioner who stay with them and when their case can be de-escalated the early help practitioner keeps the child's case open so that they can sustain changes.

We recruited an adult social worker and adult support worker to work as part of the adolescent team and to jointly work with two cohorts of adults impacted by exploitation.

Firstly, the transitional cohort, so those hitting 18 years old or within the 18-25 years old age bracket and secondly the vulnerable adult cohort, which commonly meant those targeted by gangs and had their properties cuckooed etc.

The initial pilot year of the project had three stake holders, adult services, children's service and South Essex Homes (SEH housing ALMO), with adult services providing a social worker and SEH providing a housing officer to undertake the adult support worker role. After the initial pilot year, the adult support worker was employed directly by children's services to work within the adolescent team.



The two staff members work very closely with the children's team to plan transitions, however, they also receive a number of referrals from the police county lines team who are able to identify adults who are victims of exploitation and cuckooing. Housing also plays a huge part in the service as they again are a key stakeholder when identifying potentially vulnerable people at risk of exploitation.

### **What difference it is making?**

This change in practice means in essence, two cohorts of vulnerable adults receive a service that helps protect them from potential exploiters and provides them with valuable support services. The younger cohort benefit from a children's style, high challenge/high support approach, where consistence and persistence is maintained and cases are not closed if a set number of appointments are missed.

### **What advice would you give to others trying to develop a Transitional Safeguarding approach?**

Co-locating within a relevant children's team has distinct advantages, especially if it is exploitation focused. The ability to hear and contribute to office-based conversations about locations, county lines, missing episodes or gang landscapes provides staff with a good understanding of what is going on locally. However, this learning needs to be shared across wider adult services. Invite the adult workers to team meetings and undertake relevant training together.

Undertaking joint training early on, especially around exploitation and trauma-informed practice may support everyone working to the same principles.

We have found that housing is a real core to many of these cases, whether it be the transitional cohort requiring accommodation or the older cohort of adults requiring support and protection from cuckooing, the knowledge of civil orders and housing allocations and relevant processes has been a distinct advantage in this role.

Understand where these referrals are likely to come from and which services are likely to come across the adult cohort you are aiming to work with. Probation, housing (including local housing associations) and police are real key players and they need to know about the provision and referral pathways available.

A key learning point would be about trying to set some identifiable outcomes from the outset, setting KPIs for victims of exploitation is very difficult however some of our noticeable outputs include acquiring secure accommodation, re-engaging this cohort with education or employment, signposting to specialist services such as mental health or substance use, working closely with probation officers to support them to manage court orders and getting them away from their exploiters.

Getting partners on board and working with the same ethos is hugely important, for example if the police (or other key agencies) are viewing these individuals purely through a criminal eye and not as victims of exploitation then it would be very difficult. Fortunately, Essex Police and the partner organisations have viewed these people as victims of exploitation which has made the pathway easier to put into place as we have a shared partnership ethos.





## Newcastle City Council – Exploitation Hub and Transition Protocol

### The context and rationale for this initiative

Newcastle City Council began considering transitional safeguarding as part of our work within Operation Sanctuary (large scale police led investigation into Child Sexual Exploitation/Sexual Exploitation (CSE/SE)).

This work enabled us to strengthen links with children’s social care to consider the needs of young people who were or had been at risk/subjected to multiple layers of complex abuse. We were particularly focussed on how trauma, grooming, control and coercion impacted upon the person and how this may affect executive functioning. It was also very clear that perpetrators continued to target individuals beyond the age of 18. We utilised the existing skills of our workforce with regard to use of the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) and sought to ensure that Children’s Social Care (CSC) also consider this key area for those who are 16+.

We aim to tackle and disrupt the source of the abuse, this may mean action towards a place, environment or person. We have found this is key to not only risk management but also increasing confidence of people who disclose information to us. Prevention is a very important part of the work we do and a key element of prevention is raising awareness. We know that abuse continue into adulthood for many young people, and we ensure that our adult social care staff,

partners and commissioned services are aware of this and know what to do to report abuse.

We use our knowledge of the use of legal powers and inherent jurisdiction in close collaboration with our legal department to keep up-to-date with relevant case law. We have widely trained our workforce regarding exploitation, control, coercion, impact of trauma and the importance of MSP. We actively encourage professional curiosity and widely seek the views of our service users as part of the Joint Serious Case Review into Operation Sanctuary.





## **Brief description of the work undertaken**

We are part of a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary team (health, police, community and voluntary sector, and social care) working together to support and safeguard those at risk of, or who have experienced, sexual exploitation. The work of the team is reported through to the Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) and Children's Safeguarding Partnership (CSP). The funding is from existing budgets with the adult social worker being closely aligned to, and funded by, the adult Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). All of the partners are aware of the specific issues that moving into adulthood can mean.

We have an agreed transition protocol, joint training and close liaisons at a senior level which break down barriers, ensuring that we provide a person-centred seamless service. We have a joint approach to both strategic oversight and operational matters relating to sexual/criminal exploitation or modern slavery, with adult social care a key partner within this. Our overall aim is to ensure that young people are prepared for and supported into adulthood and that this does not feel like a transfer of care.

## **What difference it is making**

In keeping with MSP, outcomes are based on what the person defines and therefore are not always easy to quantify. As such, we place a very strong emphasis on flexibility, creativity, active listening and building relationships. To enable social workers to do this work well, they do not carry an allocated case load. We do not set timescales on intervention either, it can be short or long-term. We let social workers use their skills and support them through supervision. They are also offered clinical supervision from a specialist psychotherapist. The social workers in the Hub also provide guidance and support for colleagues working on similar cases.

We have a culture of professional curiosity within our Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and safeguarding adults enquiries, particularly in exploring if an adult has care and support needs. We are then able to identify additional vulnerabilities that may not have been identified by other professionals. As a team we have a focus on tenacity, understanding the barriers to engagement and considering engagement principles.



We have a flexible approach using MSP and Contextual Safeguarding. We look at the concern holistically: the adult at risk, the perpetrator, the environment, the area etc. We have good partnership working with other agencies and safeguarding leads which promotes quick information sharing and management of risk. We work with partner agencies to identify legal options relevant to them that can be used in risk plans. We take a 'whole council' approach, ensuring that we use all the powers, duties and resources we have as a local authority. Progress is reported to both SAB and CSP.

### **What advice would you give to others trying to develop a Transitional Safeguarding approach?**

Staff support is very important, pay attention to support given. Be patient and listen, not only to those we seek to support but with colleagues and the organisation.

Do not assume that a service can't or won't work with a person; there needs to be common understanding. Transition is not just an issue for social care, knowing how to influence others is key. Ensuring transition is an issue on risk registers and the SAB's strategic annual plan can help to provide a focus.

It is not always about resources or money. Often, we need to just listen and guide, help the person finds their way to what they need. Recognise and enable social workers' 'use of self', give staff the freedom to build relationships and enable tenacity. Any service must be underpinned by a clear vision that is trauma and complexity informed and not based on assumptions that they won't engage or don't meet the Care Act 2014.

Transition needs to be planned well in advance and we need to do to prepare, enable and actively listen from an early stage.

People do not consent to being abused. Our approach is clear, where we are told that there is an allegation of abuse and where a crime is alleged, we do not specifically ask for consent before accepting the safeguarding alert. We ensure that, working with others where appropriate, we share information and seek the views of the person. We have found that this is key when tackling complex abuse as often the person has little understanding of the fact that they have been or are being abused. We hear this very powerfully from the people we work with.

## 9

## REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

**a) For practitioners**

Reflecting on the key principles of Transitional Safeguarding (section 5), think about your practice and identify at least one demonstrable strength in relation to:

- taking a contextual/ecological approach to safeguarding and risk for young people
- enabling a more developmental approach, supporting a smoother transition into adulthood
- offering a trauma-informed response to young people experiencing harm.
- actively responding to issues of structural inequality, disproportionality and injustice
- treating young people as experts, engaging them in meaningful coproduction

**b) For leaders**

Consider the following questions from the point of view of your local children's and adults' safeguarding partnership/s:

- What do we really know about our local population of older adolescents, and their lives as they become young adults? How are we planning for their needs?
- What do/would young people and practitioners say about the needs we are not currently meeting? Who gets turned away?
- What learning is there (from CSPRs, SARs, DHRs,<sup>vi</sup> wider data, people's lived experience) around how our approach to safeguarding across transitions could be improved?
- What leadership behaviours do we demonstrate to enable courageous, creative and coherent practice and services for young people?

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vi CSPR = Child Safeguarding Practice Review, SAR = Safeguarding Adult Review, DHR = Domestic Homicide Review.



### c) For people working at all levels

What needs to stop happening, start happening or needs to be sustained, in order for your local area to offer a Transitional Safeguarding response?

In terms of...	Stop	Start	Sustain
Local policy, strategy and partnerships			
Practice or service structures			
Culture and attitudes			



## 10

## LINKS TO REGULATORY AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The BASW Code of Ethics for Social **Work** promotes ethical and practice principles that align with Transitional Safeguarding, including the promotion of human rights and self-determination, the engagement of social workers in challenging social injustice, assessing and intervening in situations of risk. The section on working holistically chimes particularly with the contextual/ecological focus in the Transitional Safeguarding key principles:

- Social workers should be concerned with the whole person, recognising the biological, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions of people's lives. They should seek to engage with the person and their wider social systems such as family, community, societal and natural environments.

The **Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) for social workers in England** is the framework for social work capabilities across all areas of practice in England. The PCF defines capabilities that closely align with the key principles of Transitional Safeguarding. Importantly, personalising practice to the particular circumstances and life stage of people runs through the PCF. All social workers are expected to have professional understanding and skills to support people through transitions in life stages and to use their 'whole person' and social/family and community system knowledge. This includes social workers in adult services understanding the transitional risks and issues for young people approaching and moving into adulthood.

Within the social worker level for the rights, justice and economic wellbeing domain of the PCF, the capabilities align with Transitional Safeguarding emphasis on equalities, diversity and inclusion:

- Promote strengths, agency, hope and self-determination in people using services, carers, families and communities and support them in raising their own challenges and finding solutions to inequality, social injustice and rights violations.

Similarly, within the social worker level for the knowledge domain of the PCF, the capabilities chime with Transitional Safeguarding key principles:

- Demonstrate and apply to practice a working knowledge of human growth and development throughout the life course.
- Recognise the short and long-term impact of psychological, socio-economic, environmental and physiological factors on people's lives, taking into account age and development and how this informs practice.

Understand the value of systemic approaches and how they can be used to understand and work with the person or family in their environment, social context and relationships, and inform my practice.



**Professional standards for social workers in England**, set by the statutory regulator, social work England, are minimum fitness to practice standards which all social workers in England must maintain. The key principles of Transitional Safeguarding, particularly the importance of using a participative, user-led approach align clearly with several of the professional standards.

Professional standard 1.2: respect and promote the human rights, views, wishes and feelings of the people I work with, balancing rights and risks and enabling access to advice, advocacy, support and services.

Professional standard 1.3: work in partnership with people to promote their well-being and achieve best outcomes, recognising them as experts in their own lives.

All social workers must upload a minimum amount of evidence of continuing professional development (CPD) each year. Following and recording evidence of applying the key principles will support evidence against CPD requirements. Resources are available from the [NWG new knowledge hub](#).

The **post qualifying standards: Knowledge and skills statements** for social workers in adult services relates to all social workers working with adults. Several of the statements for social work practitioners align with the key principles of Transitional Safeguarding, in particular:

- PQS 2: Understand the impact of poverty, inequality and diversity on social and economic opportunities and how these relate to people's health and wellbeing as well as the functioning of their families, particularly in connection with child protection, adult safeguarding and also empowering individuals who may lack mental capacity.
- PQS 4: Be able to recognise the risk indicators of different forms of abuse and neglect and their impact on individuals, their families or their support networks. Take an outcomes-focused, person-centred approach to safeguarding practice, recognising that people are experts in their own lives and working alongside them to identify person-centred solutions to risk and harm.



- PQS 6: Demonstrate a good understanding of personalisation, the social model of disability and of human development throughout life and demonstrate a holistic approach to the identification of needs, circumstances, rights, strengths and risks. In particular, social workers need to understand the impact of trauma, loss and abuse.
- PQS 7: Have a high level of skill in applying evidence-based, effective social work approaches to help service users and families handle change, especially where individuals and families are in transition, including young people moving to adulthood.
- PQS 8: Have a critical understanding of the difference between theory, research, evidence and expertise and the role of professional judgement. Use practice evidence and research to inform the complex judgements and decisions needed to support, empower and protect service users.

This briefing for strategic managers introduces the concept of Transitional Safeguarding and why it is needed: <https://www.researchinpractice.org.uk/all/publications/2018/august/transitional-safeguarding-adolescence-to-adulthood-strategic-briefing-2018/>

Making Safeguarding Personal Toolkit (2019) produced by the Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Adult Social Services: <https://www.local.gov.uk/msp-toolkit>

Myths and realities about Making Safeguarding Personal, produced by the Local Government Association and Association of Directors of Adult Social Services: <https://www.local.gov.uk/myths-and-realities-about-making-safeguarding-personal>

The Contextual Safeguarding website provides an overview of the Contextual Safeguarding research programme, including its current suite of projects, and key publications: <https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/>

To access policy and practice resources created through the Contextual Safeguarding programme, and hear from practitioners and decision-makers who are using the approach, see the Contextual Safeguarding practitioners' network: [www.csnetwork.org.uk](http://www.csnetwork.org.uk)

This briefing explains how Transitional, Contextual and Complex Safeguarding relate to each other: <https://www.researchinpractice.org.uk/children/publications/2019/january/safeguarding-during-adolescence-the-relationship-between-contextual-safeguarding-complex-safeguarding-and-transitional-safeguarding-2019/>

This language guide from Newcastle City Council is designed to support professionals working with adults affected by sexual/criminal exploitation: [Appropriate language: Child sexual and/or criminal exploitation guidance for professionals - Tackling Child Exploitation \(researchinpractice.org.uk\)](https://www.researchinpractice.org.uk/appropriate-language-child-sexual-and-or-criminal-exploitation-guidance-for-professionals-tackling-child-exploitation)



This language guide from Solihull Safeguarding Adults Board and Local Children's Safeguarding Partnership is designed to help professionals discuss and record their work with exploitation in a person-centred way: [https://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/assets/clients/6/Language%20%20Matters%20Doc%20v2\(1\)%20\(1\).pdf](https://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/assets/clients/6/Language%20%20Matters%20Doc%20v2(1)%20(1).pdf)

The British Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics for Social Workers: <https://www.basw.co.uk/resources/basw-code-ethics-social-work>


The Professional Capabilities Framework for Social Workers, hosted by BASW on behalf of the sector: <https://www.basw.co.uk/social-work-training/professional-capabilities-framework-pcf>

Professional Standards for social workers in England, set by the statutory regulator, Social Work England: <https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/standards/professional-standards/>

The Post Qualifying Standards: Knowledge and skills statements for social workers in adult services: [Social work post-qualifying standards: knowledge and skills statements - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612212/social-work-post-qualifying-standards-knowledge-and-skills-statements.pdf)

The NWG Exploitation Response Unit (formerly National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children and Young People) [NWG Network](https://www.nwg.org.uk/). The website offers a range of over 16,000 resources for members and non-members, a training calendar, latest news and blogs and sections for professionals, parents/carers/young people, and a service directory.

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