

Safeguarding (Children/Young People) - Detailed Guidance

1. INTRODUCTION

All statutory and voluntary agencies have a responsibility to ensure that children/young people are protected from abuse. The primary responsibility for the investigation, registration and planning of all safeguarding work currently rests with local authority social work departments who work alongside the police and other statutory and voluntary agencies. The procedures for such work are set out in the Department for Education 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018', and the Children Act 1989 and its Regulations and Guidance; as revised by the Children Act 2004. Under the revised Working Together to Safeguard Children, LSCB has now become Safeguarding Partners. The safeguarding partners (local authorities, chief officers of police, and clinical commissioning groups) will make arrangements to work together with relevant agencies to safeguard and protect the welfare of children in their area. Each service shall detail the key Safeguarding contacts within the local authority in the Safeguarding Policy. Normally the safeguarding procedures of the area where the child/young person currently resides will apply. Even so, this should be clarified upon the admission of a child/young person to a Together Trust service.

2. WELFARE OF THE CHILD/YOUNG PERSON

- 2.1. The primary duty of all staff, foster carers and volunteers is to ensure that the welfare of the child/young person is paramount. Although this is a complex issue to put into practice, the following sections outline important principles in relation to this.
- 2.2. In any work undertaken in relation to safeguarding, the child/young person should be seen in circumstances that allow them to express their views appropriate to their age and level of understanding. Staff and foster carers should pay particular attention to the child/young person's views about their safety, their needs and what has happened to them. The content of these discussions with the child/young person must be properly recorded. Where there are any communication difficulties or where children/young people have a learning disability or autism spectrum condition, staff and foster carers must ensure that the communication method is person specific.
- 2.3. Any decision, plan or deployment of Together Trust resources or services must place the needs and welfare of the child/young person above those of the parents or other carers.
- 2.4. Any work undertaken in investigating, assessing and planning in safeguarding should involve the appropriate local authorities, and wherever possible involve working in partnership with parents, family members or other carers so long as this does not place a child/young person at increased risk of significant harm.
- 2.5. All safeguarding work must take into account issues associated with gender, race, culture, religion, language and disability. Where necessary, use should be made of specialist advice in these areas.
- 2.6. Safeguarding work can only be effective when all agencies work together to an agreed and common aim for each child/young person. This requires a high standard of co-operation, communication and recording at each stage in the safeguarding process.
- 2.7. A common theme across Serious Case Reviews has evidenced that men can be overlooked by professionals, with the focus being on female carers. This is known as 'hidden men'. Two categories were seen. Firstly, men who posed a risk to the child/young person which resulted in them suffering harm and secondly, men, for example estranged fathers, who were capable of protecting and nurturing the child/young person being overlooked by professionals. It is important to give consideration to 'hidden men' when safeguarding children/young people.

3. ROLE OF THE TOGETHER TRUST

- 3.1. The Together Trust's primary responsibility is to keep children/young people safe in a way that ensures that their welfare is the paramount consideration. It is important that staff and foster carers know when they come across information of whatever kind that may indicate a safeguarding concern, that they discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead responsible within the service or in their absence a senior member of staff. Foster carers should discuss with their Supervising Social Worker / Duty Officer / Out of Hours Worker. As a result of this discussion, agreement must be reached as to what to do with this information.
- 3.2. In discharging these responsibilities, the Together Trust will co-operate with the investigating agencies and play its full part in planning and delivering services. The Together Trust's primary responsibility is in the first instance to:
 - Protect the child/young person from any further **immediate** harm
 - Take any emergency action if the child/young person is injured
 - Report concerns to the appropriate authority
 - Report concerns to Ofsted, or the Care Quality Commission (CQC), where applicable
 - Work co-operatively with the appropriate authorities both during investigations and on any subsequently agreed Safeguarding Plan.
- 3.3. The Together Trust does not have primary responsibility for investigating or co-ordinating safeguarding work.
- 3.4. Safeguarding concerns should be referred to the Safeguarding Team/Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for the area in which the home/service is situated. The Placing Authority should also be informed at the same time that this referral has been made. These referrals should be confirmed in writing.
- 3.5. Where a child/young person has been visiting a different area and the safeguarding concern arises from that visit, then the referral should be made to the Local Authority in whose area that visit took place. At the same time, this information must be passed to the Together Trust service's Local Safeguarding Team/LADO. It is the responsibility of these two local authorities to agree on how the investigation should proceed and these arrangements should be communicated to the Together Trust as soon as they are known. The referrals should be confirmed in writing. Please note that referrals to LADO are only made in connection with allegations against professionals i.e. staff in the Trust's employ or other organisation, agency workers, volunteers and foster carers.
- 3.6. All staff should be aware that incidents reported to the police and to other statutory regulatory bodies may need to be notified to the Charity Commission. The Chief Executive's office will be responsible for reporting these incidents to the Commission periodically or IMMEDIATELY depending on the seriousness in nature of the incident.

4. RECORDING

- 4.1. All evidence, every decision and each plan that involves the Together Trust must be properly recorded, signed and dated. It is important to note that any information recorded by Together Trust staff may be used in any criminal or civil proceedings.
- 4.2. Any recording or communication that Together Trust staff are responsible for in the safeguarding process must be based on evidence which has been properly and objectively evaluated. In particular this means writing in such a way that clearly distinguishes facts, observations and opinions.
- 4.3. As well as a record being made in the log books and other documents, the first member of Together Trust staff to become involved in a situation where there is a safeguarding concern must make entry in the incident book. Managers must report all safeguarding

concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Officer in the Together Trust (Service Director) and an internal Safeguarding Notification Form must be completed (alternative forms to be used only if authorised to do so). The relevant notification forms required for regulatory bodies (Ofsted/CQC) must be sent within the designated timescales.

5. STAGES IN SAFEGUARDING WORK

- 5.1. "Working Together to Safeguard Children" (2018) identifies safeguarding work as consisting of a number of stages. It is important that Together Trust staff know what these are:
- Referral and Recognition
 - Immediate Protection and Assessment
 - Strategy Discussion
 - S.47 Enquiries or S. 17 Assessment
 - Inter-Disciplinary Forum or Safeguarding Conference and Decision Making about the need for a child protection plan (CP) or Children In Need (CIN) plan
 - Formulating a Child Protection Plan or a Children in Need Plan
 - Completion of Core Assessment and formulating an Inter-Agency Plan.
- 5.2. "Working Together to Safeguard Children" (2018) is available in all establishments, and also via the service's Designated Safeguarding Lead, Head of Service/Senior Operations Manager and from the Learning and Development Department. Education services will also hold the latest version of "Keeping Children Safe in Education".
- 5.3. Together Trust staff may be involved in any of the above stages of work. However, Together Trust Procedures are focused on its responsibilities during 'Referral and Recognition' and 'Immediate Protection and Initial Assessment'.
- 5.4. From the Strategy discussion stage onwards, the investigation and planning process to be followed will be governed by the outcome of the first two stages. It is the responsibility of the Together Trust in these subsequent stages to follow the principles of good practice and work alongside and comply with the Investigating Authority's plans and decisions.
- 5.5. The Together Trust has the responsibility to inform and update Ofsted/CQC (refer to Notification of Significant Events Policy and Procedure). Individual Registered Managers also have a responsibility to notify the Designated Person (refer to Significant Events Policy and Procedure).

6. RECOGNITION

- 6.1. Safeguarding concerns often arise when staff notice a change in a child/young person's behaviour or physical/emotional state. Whilst what is described below is indicative of what might be found, **it is not the responsibility of staff to investigate any concerns that they may have, but to report them for action.**
- 6.2. When an individual staff member or foster carer discovers that a child/young person has an injury that may indicate abuse e.g. in the course of bathing or undressing a child/young person, it is important to acknowledge what you have seen. You should gently ask how it happened, make the child/young person comfortable and tell the child/young person in an age appropriate way that you need to tell somebody in order to think about what to do next. It is important not to indicate in any way that this can be kept a secret. Using age appropriate language the child/young person should be told that it is not acceptable for children/young people to be hurt. If you are unsure what to do in relation to the specific injury, then you must seek advice from a senior member of staff (in fostering always seek advice from your Supervising Social Worker/Duty Officer/ Out of Hours Worker).

6.3. Suspicion of, or evidence of safeguarding concerns may come:

- Directly from the child/young person reporting or alleging that they have been abused or injured non-accidentally
- Indirectly by observing the child/young person's unusual behaviour or by discussion with the child/young person about other matters
- With any new or unusual behaviour patterns
- From direct observations of an act by one person (child/young person or adult) against a child/young person which appears to be abusive whether this was intentional or non-intentional
- Directly or indirectly from an adult (professional, family member or member of the public) directly alleging or raising concerns that a child/young person may be currently or in the past abused.

6.4. The safeguarding concern may involve instances of:

Physical abuse

Possible indicators may include:

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls or rough games
- Medical attention not being sought for injuries
- Lack of participation in sports activities or a reluctance to change for PE, swimming etc..
- Bruises, bites, burns and fractures, for example, which do not have an accidental explanation.

Neglect

Possible indicators may include:

- Dirty skin, body odour, unwashed and uncombed hair, untreated lice, general unkempt appearance
- Inappropriate clothing for weather conditions, dirty clothing, clothing that is too big or too small
- Left unsupervised or alone
- Regular tiredness or hunger
- Regular diarrhoea
- Overeating
- Illnesses or injuries untreated, infections or physical complaints which are not being responded to.

Sexual abuse

Possible indicators may include:

- Allegations made by a child/young person
- Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters, use of sexual language and an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour for their age
- Sexual activity in play, words or drawing
- Urinary infections commonplace and/or unexplained stomach pain
- Severe sleep disturbance with fears, phobias, vivid dreams/nightmares
- Eating disorders.

Emotional abuse

Possible indicators may include:

- Depression, aggression, extreme anxiety, changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clingy
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden underachievement or lack of concentration
- Attention seeking from adults and not mixing with other children
- Being negative about self
- Going missing

- Stealing and lying
- Highly aggressive or cruel to others
- Extreme shyness or passivity
- Speech or sleep disorders.

See other forms of safeguarding concern in sections 16-21 below.

- 6.5. For looked after children who attend or wish to attend a club/local organisation (i.e. girl guides/scouts/sports coaching), staff should be aware that it is the responsibility of the organisation to ensure that they have the relevant policies in place and they have a named designated child protection/welfare officer.
- 6.6. Staff must be vigilant if they see unauthorised or unknown persons picking up children/young people, or making contact with or trying to make contact with a child/young person inside or outside of the home.
- 6.7. The abuse may appear to be alleged to have happened on one or more occasion/s.
- 6.8. The abuse may involve the child/young person appearing to have been abused by one person (child or adult) or a number of people (children/young people and adults).
- 6.9. It is not the role of Together Trust staff or foster carers to undertake any form of investigation into allegations of abuse. Children/young people must not be questioned regarding the detail of any allegation. A senior staff member must be informed at the earliest opportunity and appropriate action as regards referral taken.
- 6.10. The child/young person should be listened to and their views recorded without direct questions or interpretation.

7. EMERGENCY ACTION

- 7.1. In the event of a child/young person appearing to be in need of urgent medical attention, arrange either for an ambulance to be called or for them to be taken to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department.
- 7.2. You must inform the Manager/On-Call Manager (in fostering inform the Supervising Social Worker/Duty Officer/Out of Hours Worker) of any information that you do have and any action you have taken as soon as is possible. You must make a full record in the appropriate log book (for foster carers Daily Diary) and this must be brought to the attention of the service's Designated Safeguarding Lead/Head of Service or Senior Operations Manager as soon as possible.
- 7.3. The person with parental responsibility for the child/ young person must be informed of the incident and actions taken.

8. IMMEDIATE PROTECTION

- 8.1. In exceptional circumstances, where it appears to you that the child/young person is at immediate risk of further abuse:
 - From a parent or other adult who is visiting and either refuses to leave the premises or is threatening to remove the child/young person from the home/establishment
 - From a parent or adult who the child/young person has visited and is planning to return to
 - From a professional person against whom the child/young person has raised an allegation and to which the child/young person is planned to return e.g. residential home, school or club
 - From another child/young person either resident or visiting the home/establishment, who is still on the premises
 - Where a child/young person has admitted to being involved in sexual exploitation

- From radicalisation from extreme political, social, or religious groups
- Or any similar circumstance.

...appropriate action must be taken to secure the protection of the child/young person in consultation with the manager. Any such action must be consistent with the need to minimise the stress to the child/young person of unwarranted or hasty decision making or action.

- 8.2. If a parent or other person is threatening to remove the child/young person without authority and in a way that you believe will expose the child/young person to unacceptable risk, you must call the police if you cannot immediately secure the co-operation of the parent or person in leaving the child/young person.
- 8.3. In any event, you must inform the Manager/On-Call Manager (in fostering, the Supervising Social Worker/Duty Officer/Out of Hours Worker) about the incident and of any action you have taken as soon as is possible. You must also make a full record in the appropriate log book and this must be brought to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Head of Service or Senior Operations Manager as soon as possible.

9. RESPONDING TO SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

- 9.1. Many safeguarding concerns that arise within Together Trust services are unlikely to require emergency action. In these instances it will be possible to make a fuller assessment of the facts, evidence, information or allegations made. However, this does not mean that there can be any delay in reaching a decision on the need to refer the matter to the Local Authority Safeguarding Team/Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- 9.2. Even where the action does not warrant emergency action, there must not be any delay in making an initial plan to:
 - Properly safeguard the child/young person's welfare
 - Inform the Manager or other staff on duty
 - Where appropriate inform the Local Authority Children's Social Care Department of the concern
 - Record the information available.
- 9.3. In reaching these decisions and making any plan, it is not the responsibility of any Together Trust staff member to determine whether a child/young person has been abused or not or whether they continue to be at risk. This is the responsibility of the Investigating Authority and of any inter-disciplinary forum or case conference that they may convene. In many instances, it may be more appropriate to have a discussion with the Local Safeguarding Team to review the evidence before a formal report is made to them.
- 9.4. It is the responsibility of the Manager in consultation with the service's Designated Safeguarding Lead/Head of Service or Senior Operations Manager to decide whether the information available indicates a possible safeguarding concern and whether this should be passed on to the Safeguarding Team/LADO. **Any telephone referral MUST be confirmed in writing (this includes email). Check the required submission method as a number of local authorities, including Stockport have moved to online submission forms.**
- 9.5. Given the wide range of issues that may give rise to safeguarding concerns, it is not the responsibility of Together Trust staff to prematurely resolve issues where there is doubt or uncertainty. In these instances the matter should be referred to the Local Safeguarding Team for an informal discussion as to an appropriate course of action. In some instances where these concerns arise in the course of other discussions or work with the child/young person or child/young person's Social Worker, it may be more

appropriate in the first instance to have an informal discussion with the child's Social Worker.

- 9.6. Where a concern arises outside of normal office hours the night duty or weekend duty Social Worker should be contacted. Ofsted/CQC must be informed on the next working day.
- 9.7. A full record of the information/evidence and decisions and action taken must be made in the appropriate service specific recording system (i.e. Behaviour Watch, Clearcare, Onwards and Upwards, log books, for Foster Carers this will be the daily diary) and an action sheet started. This must be brought to the attention of the Manager as soon as is practicable. This record must include:
 - The actions taken by Together Trust staff/foster carer
 - The actions to be taken by staff in other agencies
 - The initial plan agreed.

10. REFERRAL

- 10.1. In making a referral to the Local Safeguarding Team, it is essential that the following information is available and passed to them:
 - The child/young person's name
 - Their age and date of birth
 - Their legal status
 - Their current physical and emotional condition
 - Full details of the allegation/evidence/information/circumstances
 - Any action taken to immediately protect the child/young person
 - Any other children/young people involved
 - Any information on the alleged perpetrator including their whereabouts.
- 10.2. In making a referral, Together Trust staff should agree with the Social Worker receiving the information on:
 - Any immediate action that should be taken by the Together Trust and the timescales of this
 - The next steps that the Social Worker will be taking and the timescale of this.

The outcome must be recorded.
- 10.3. Together Trust staff should be aware of the Investigating Authority's responsibility to decide on:
 - The need for a medical examination and/or treatment and the arrangements for this
 - The need for the child/young person to be formally interviewed and the practical arrangements for this
 - The practical and emotional support for the child/young person and Together Trust responsibilities in this
 - How other agencies will be involved in the investigative process
 - Who and how any parent or person with parental responsibility will be informed and involved.
- 10.4. Where a child/young person is subject to a safeguarding concern, consideration must always be given to the possibility of other children/young people such as siblings also being at risk from abuse.

- 10.5. Many of these decisions may be made at a Strategy Discussion (as defined in "Working Together to Safeguard Children") convened by the Local Authority. Although the precise objectives and process of these meetings can vary from Local Authority to Local

Authority, they normally have the purpose of planning the initial response to the concerns raised. Together Trust staff should expect to participate in these meetings and be a part of this planning process consistent with its responsibilities for the children/young people in its care, and/or receiving education.

- 10.6. Where a Children's Services Department decides that it is not proceeding with a safeguarding investigation, it will still be necessary to agree with the Local Safeguarding Team how the child/young person is to be appropriately supported and/or counselled and any other work to be carried out.

11. CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCES

- 11.1. When the Safeguarding Team/LADO have decided that the initial evidence warrants a formal safeguarding investigation, this usually will result in the Local Authority convening a Child Protection Conference.
- 11.2. The purpose of this conference is to provide a meeting where the following can be considered:
- The information collected through the investigation
 - The concerns that gave rise to the investigation
 - Ascertaining the level of risk to the child/young person by sharing and analysing the evidence and views of those participating.
- 11.3. The conference will also decide whether the criteria have been met for requiring inter-agency help and intervention.
- 11.4. If the Child Protection Conference decides that a child/young person is likely to suffer significant harm in the future, the child/young person will therefore require a formal Child Protection Plan. The primary purpose of this plan is to prevent the child/young person suffering harm or a recurrence of harm in the future and to promote the child/young person's welfare.
- 11.5. When this is the case, the conference will decide on the core group of professionals to implement the Child Protection Plan and nominates a Lead Social Worker.
- 11.6. Child protection conferences do not make a formal decision as to who has abused the child/young person. This is a matter for the police to investigate along with the Crown Prosecution Service and in those cases where there is sufficient evidence, in a criminal court of law.
- 11.7. People invited to the conference will usually be:
- The Investigating Safeguarding Team
 - Other professionals involved with the family such as teachers, doctors and health visitors
 - The child/young person's parents/carers
 - Other family members
 - In some instances, the child/young person
 - Other people who have a legitimate interest, for example foster carers.
- 11.8. In most cases staff from the Together Trust will be expected to attend Child Protection Conferences. In most cases the representative/s from the Together Trust will be expected to make both a written and verbal report of the information and evidence available and to participate in the discussions and decisions of the conference.
- 11.9. Following the conference, Together Trust staff will be required to discuss with senior staff, the decisions and plans made so that the Together Trust role can be properly identified, and the work duly allocated. In particular, it is essential that continuing close liaison is maintained with the core group of professionals responsible for

implementing the Child Protection Plan. It is also essential that the Together Trust keeps itself informed and involved in any review conferences on the child/young person.

- 11.10. In some cases, the conference may decide that as part of the plan, a Core Assessment should take place. This may follow the format of the Department of Health's publication "Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and Their Families". Where this is the case, it is essential that the role and contribution of the Together Trust is properly identified and co-ordinated with other work planned for the child/young person and/or the family.

12. COURT ATTENDANCE

- 12.1. Any safeguarding concerns may involve staff being required to attend court. This could be to secure emergency protection for children/young people or to secure court orders such as Interim or Full Care Orders. In some cases staff may be required to attend court where a parent or other adult has been charged with an offence against a child/young person. In none of these examples will Together Trust staff be primarily responsible for instigating or managing such action.
- 12.2. When a case requires court action, it is essential that staff involved, fully and properly discuss their role as witnesses, the evidence and information they have, the way this may be presented to the court and the processes usually to be found in court proceedings with a senior member of staff. In some cases, it may be necessary for staff to seek the advice of suitably qualified legal personnel from the Solicitors Children Panel. In this instance the Manager will arrange for such consultation and/or representation. The Manager will confer with the relevant Director.

13. THE CHILD/YOUNG PERSON - RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TOGETHER TRUST

Where a child/young person is subject to safeguarding concern:

- 13.1. They must be informed in a way that they can understand of any action that the Together Trust is going to take and what might happen next, unless it has been agreed with the Investigating Authority that this is not in their best interests.
- 13.2. Together Trust staff must avoid asking leading questions.
- 13.3. Together Trust staff must not reassure the child/young person in a way that is likely to mislead them. In particular the child/young person must not be promised that anything they say will be kept a secret.
- 13.4. The child/young person must be listened to carefully in relation to their safety or welfare and what they say must be treated with respect and seriousness. Their views must be taken into account in any decisions or plan made for them.
- 13.5. A child/young person must be given the opportunity to use the telephone in private if they express a wish to do so, unless either Together Trust staff or the Strategy Meeting believe that it might be putting them at risk to be in touch with specific persons at this point.

14. WHERE THE ALLEGATION/INFORMATION INDICATES THAT THE CHILD MAY HAVE BEEN ABUSED BY ANOTHER CHILD/YOUNG PERSON IN THE SAME SERVICE

- 14.1. All injuries of a non-accidental nature and all incidents of disclosure or allegations of abuse must be reported immediately to the Manager (in fostering, to the Supervising Social Worker, Duty Officer or Out of Hours Worker), who will, in consultation with the service's Designated Safeguarding Lead/Head of Service or Senior Operations Manager agree on any immediate steps that need to be taken. The matter must be reported within the stated timescales to Ofsted, or the Care Quality Commission (CQC), if required.

14.2. The necessary actions that must be undertaken are:

- Protect the child/young person involved in the allegation from further abuse
- Minimise the risk to other children/young people from the alleged perpetrator
- Refer the matter to the child/young person's Social Services Department and inform the Social Worker of any child/young person who may be involved whether as perpetrator or victim
- Record the matter fully in the appropriate log book/daily diary.

14.3. Abuse by children/young people may include physical or emotional, bullying and sexual activity. From April 2019, upskirting has become a criminal offence. This typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.

14.4. In an instance of non-accidental injury, the Manager (in fostering the Supervising Social Worker, Duty Officer or Out Of Hours Worker), in consultation with the service's Designated Safeguarding Lead/Head of Service or Senior Operations Manager must give consideration to the following factors in order to determine whether Safeguarding procedures are used or whether the matter should be dealt with through day to day procedures.

- The nature of the injury/accident
- The context in which it occurred, e.g. while playing or fighting: a minor injury, which is part of a series/pattern, or a major injury, which was not predicted
- Whether the incident/injury is seriously detrimental to the child/young person
- Whether there is professional concern
- Where professional judgement suggests a risk of repetition.

14.5. Allegations of sexual abuse or suspicion of sexualised activity must be explored with regard to the related concepts of true consent, power imbalance and exploitation. True consent is not necessarily the same as legal consent but should be thought of as being informed, not forced, in an equal relationship, without financial or other inducements, and free of any pressure to comply. Under new government proposals, all pupils will study compulsory health education as well as new reformed relationships education in primary school and relationships and sex education in secondary school from September 2020.

14.6. Staff should also refer to the Abuse of Trust Policy in Service Policies and Procedures.

15. WHERE THE ALLEGATION/INFORMATION INDICATES THAT THE CHILD/YOUNG PERSON MAY HAVE BEEN ABUSED BY A STAFF MEMBER (NB, for Fostering see also the Allegations Against Foster Carers Policy and Procedure)

15.1. The person with the information must immediately refer it to the service's Designated Safeguarding Lead or Manager (in fostering, to the Supervising Social Worker, Duty Officer or Out Of Hours Worker) who will contact the LADO. They and the Head of Service or Senior Operations Manager, agree on any immediate steps that need to be taken to protect the child/young person, who appears or is alleged to have been abused, from further abuse. If the allegation or suspicion of abuse involves the Manager or most senior person on duty, then the information must be immediately reported to the Trust's Designated Safeguarding Officer or Deputy DSO (please see table of contacts in the Safeguarding Policy). The DSL/Senior Operations Manager or Head of Service can be contacted in the first instance providing they are senior to the person who the allegation is made against. The Head of HR must be consulted on the action to be taken. For education services, staff should refer to Part 4 of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' for further information regarding Allegations of Abuse made against teachers and other staff.

- 15.2. It is essential to take action to minimise the risk to other children/young people from the alleged perpetrator. This must include consideration of whether that member of staff should:
- Be immediately removed from child care/educational duties
 - Remain on shift until the facts have been investigated
 - Be suspended from duty until the facts of the case are investigated.
- 15.3. The staff member against whom the allegation has been made must be informed of the nature of the allegation. They must be kept fully informed of any action likely to be taken unless it is agreed otherwise by the Chief Executive or an officer involved in the investigation. It is essential that attention is given to providing staff with appropriate support both during and after the investigation.
- 15.4. Ofsted, or the Care Quality Commission (CQC) must be informed without delay in line with the required timescales, and the matter subsequently confirmed in writing. The Local Safeguarding Team/LADO must also be informed without delay and the matter confirmed in writing. The LADO usually require completion of their internal Allegation Form (email or online) which must be completed and returned within the required timescales.
- 15.5. In either case, the welfare of the child/young person is the paramount consideration in any decision or plan made. Where disciplinary procedures are being considered these should be secondary to the child/young person's welfare.
- 15.6. Where it appears to a member of staff that any allegation or suspicion of abuse of a child/young person by a staff member has not been adequately investigated, and appropriately referred to the LADO, that member of staff must communicate their concern immediately to the service's Designated Safeguarding Lead/Head of Service/Senior Operations Manager or the Together Trust's Designated Safeguarding Officer (or in their absence the Chief Executive).
- 15.7. When disciplinary procedures are being considered but the safeguarding concern continues to be investigated, the service's Designated Safeguarding Lead/Head of Service or Senior Operations Manager will inform the Together Trust's Designated Safeguarding Officer, who will consult with an appropriate member of the HR team regarding what appropriate action can be taken in relation to the alleged perpetrator's employment status. Only after the investigation has been completed, should consideration be given to disciplinary proceedings, and/or a plan for supervision and/or training.
- 15.8. The Designated Safeguarding Officer will brief the Chief Executive and the Safeguarding Leads within the Trustee Board.

16. CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK OF AFFECTS FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

16.1. DEFINITION

The term 'domestic violence and abuse' is used to mean: any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or are family members. This includes: psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse. It also includes 'honour'-based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

16.2. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AFFECTED BY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

Children (aged under 16) and young people (aged 16 to 18) can experience domestic violence and abuse. This includes:

- fearing, hearing or seeing it within their families, or worrying about its effects on someone else

- within their own intimate relationships.

Young people may also perpetrate domestic violence and abuse in their own intimate relationships and on their parents or carers.

Children/young people may be involved in domestic violence and abuse in a number of ways. Children/young people are at increased risk of physical injury during an incident, either by accident or because they attempt to intervene. Even when not directly injured, children/young people are greatly distressed by witnessing the physical and emotional suffering of a parent/family member. Exposure to parental/family conflict, even where violence is not present, can lead to serious anxiety and distress which may express itself in many different ways. A child/young person may become withdrawn or extraverted and this may lead to them becoming involved in anti-social or criminal behaviour. There is potentially a direct risk of physical harm to the child/young person from the Domestic Violence and Abuse perpetrator and this should always be considered.

16.3. POSSIBLE INDICATORS

- The risk of physical injury may lead to symptoms of extreme anxiety and fear.
- School behaviour and academic attainment may be impaired
- Children may blame themselves for parental behaviour. Self-blame may result in low self-esteem
- Unplanned separations may cause distress and disrupt education and friendship patterns
- Embarrassment and fear of unpredictable parental behaviour may result in curtailed friendships
- Children may take on too much responsibility for self, parents and younger children.
- Coping with puberty without support
- Denying own needs and feelings
- An increased risk of psychological problems, behavioural disorders, suicidal behaviours and offending
- Low self-esteem
- Poor school attainment due to difficulties in concentrating
- Poor school attainment due to absence in order to protect parent or younger children
- Unacceptable behaviour resulting in a pattern of school exclusion
- Isolation caused by reluctance to disclose for fear of family disruption
- Stress related illnesses
- Confused and torn loyalties
- Lack of trust
- Unnaturally good behaviour
- Taking on the parenting role
- Acceptance of abuse as normal.

16.4. FORCED MARRIAGE

A forced marriage is one in which one or both spouses do not (or, in the case of some adults with learning or physical disabilities, cannot) consent to the marriage but are forced into it using physical, psychological, financial, sexual or emotional pressure. ('Handling cases of forced marriage', HM Government 2008). It is distinct from an arranged marriage that both partners enter into freely. Honour-based abuse can be a trigger for a forced marriage.

16.5. 'HONOUR'-BASED VIOLENCE OR 'HONOUR' VIOLENCE

A crime or incident committed (or possibly committed) to protect or defend the perceived 'honour' of a family or community. Often this term is enclosed in quote marks, or prefaced with 'so-called', to emphasise that the concept of honour in these cases is contested and that it is generally invoked as a means of power and control. Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage are examples of 'So called honour-based abuse'.

16.6. POSSIBLE INDICATORS OF FORCED MARRIAGE/HONOUR BASED VIOLENCE:

- Truancy/absence from school including extended holidays abroad
- Low motivation
- Lack of punctuality
- Isolation
- Eating disorders
- Brother/sisters forced to marry or reported missing
- Family disputes
- Runaways
- Domestic violence
- Symptoms of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, sleep disorders
- Suicidal tendencies or self-harming
- Self harm or suicide of siblings
- Alcohol or other substance use
- Surveillance by siblings or cousins at school
- Unreasonable restrictions e.g. kept at home by parents ("house arrest") and financial restrictions
- Being withdrawn from school by those with parental responsibility
- Sudden announcement of engagement to a stranger
- Prevented from going on to further/higher education
- Early/unwanted pregnancy
- Being raped
- Acid attacks
- Female genital mutilation
- Intrusive 'other person' in consultations including partner or husband, parent, grandparent or other family member.

16.7. FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

The World Health Organisation states that female genital mutilation:

"comprises of all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female organs for non-medical reasons"

FGM is also known as Female Circumcision (FC) and Female Genital Cutting (FGC). The reason for these alternative definitions is that it is better received in the communities that practice it, who do not see themselves as engaging in mutilation. FGM typically takes place between birth and around 15 years old; however, it is believed that the majority of cases happen between the ages of 5 and 8.

FGM is included within the revised (2013) definition of Domestic Violence and Abuse. The Female Genital Mutilation Act (2003) makes it an offence for UK nationals or permanent UK residents to carry out FGM abroad, or to aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad, even in countries where the practice is legal (HM Government 2006). The practice is illegal in the UK.

The Serious Crime Act 2015 sets out a duty on professionals (including teachers) to notify police when they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. This will usually come from a disclosure. Under no circumstances should school staff physically examine pupils. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, staff must take their concerns about FGM to the DSL, who will jointly make a referral to the police.

16.8. POSSIBLE INDICATORS:

- Family members/carers taking the child out of the country for a prolonged period
- A child/young person talking about a long holiday (usually within the school summer holiday) to their country of origin or another country where the practice is prevalent or to visit female elder from country of origin

- A member of staff hearing reference to FGM in conversation between the child/young person's peers
- Prolonged absence from school with noticeable behaviour changes on return
- Longer/frequent visits to the toilet particularly after a holiday abroad, or at any time
- Finding it difficult to sit still, walk or stand and appear uncomfortable or may complain of pain between their legs
- Conversation about 'something somebody did to them that they are not allowed to talk about'
- Staff hearing conversation with child/young person's peers about a 'special procedure' that took place when on holiday or child/young person confiding to staff that they are to have a 'special procedure' or attend a special occasion to celebrate becoming a woman
- Mother or sister who has undergone FGM
- Refusing to take part in PE regularly without a medical note
- Reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations
- Parents withdrawing children from learning about FGM
- Confiding in a professional without being explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear
- Recurrent Urinary Tract Infections (UTI) or complaints of abdominal pain.

17. CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK OF FABRICATED ILLNESS

17.1. DEFINITION

Fabricated or induced illness (FI) is a rare form of child abuse. It occurs when a parent or carer, usually the child's biological mother, exaggerates or deliberately causes symptoms of illness in the child.

FI is also known as Munchausen's syndrome by proxy. Munchausen's syndrome, also known as factitious disorder, is a condition where a person pretends to be ill or causes illness or injury to themselves.

However, healthcare professionals in the UK prefer to use the term fabricated or induced illness, or factitious disorder imposed on another. This is because the term Munchausen's syndrome by proxy places the emphasis on the person carrying out the abuse, rather than the victim.

The term Munchausen's syndrome by proxy is still widely used in other countries.

17.2. POSSIBLE INDICATORS:

- Parent/carer reporting symptoms and observed signs that are not explained by any known medical condition
- Parent/carer reporting to staff that a diagnosis has been made by another professional when this is not true, and giving conflicting information to different staff
- Increase in time out of school for medical appointments with GP or hospital or increased non-attendance due to sickness
- Child/young person showing a poor response or an intolerance to prescribed medication or other treatment
- Regular requests for child/young person to not take part in activities e.g. PE
- The use by the child/young person of seemingly unnecessary special aids
- Reported symptoms and found signs are not observed in the absence of the carer.

18. CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK OF RADICALISATION

18.1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The current threat from terrorism in the United Kingdom can involve the exploitation of vulnerable people, including children, young people and vulnerable adults to involve them in terrorism or activity in support of terrorism.

Violent extremism is defined by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) as:

“The demonstration of unacceptable behaviour by using any means to express views, which:

- Encourage, justify or glorify terrorist violence in furtherance of particular beliefs;
- Seek to provoke others to terrorists acts;
- Encourage other serious criminal activity or seek to provoke others to serious criminal acts;
- Foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence in the UK.

The Contest strategy was created by HM Government to protect the United Kingdom from international terrorism and is led by the Office for Security and Counter Terrorism at the Home Office. The strategy has four work streams - Pursue, Prevent, Protect and Prepare. The three objectives of the Prevent Strategy (2011) were to :

- Challenge the ideology that supports terrorism and those who promote it
- Prevent vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support
- Work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation.

The Prevent strategy defines ‘extremism’ as vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy , the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

As part of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, schools have a duty to ‘prevent people being drawn into terrorism’. This is known as the ‘Prevent Duty’. Staff should make themselves aware of the Prevent Duty 2015 and the Prevent Duty Departmental Advice issued in June 2015.

‘Channel’, which was first piloted in 2007 and rolled out across England and Wales in April 2012 is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Channel forms a key part of the Prevent Strategy. The programme uses a multi-agency approach to protect vulnerable people by :

- Identifying individuals at risk
- Assessing the nature and extent of that risk; and
- Developing the most appropriate support plan for the individuals concerned.

‘Channel’ may be appropriate for anyone who is vulnerable to being drawn into any form of terrorism. Channel is about ensuring that vulnerable children and adults of any faith, ethnicity or background receive support before their vulnerabilities are exploited by those that would want them to embrace terrorism, and before they become involved in criminal terrorist related activity.

18.2. INDICATORS OF POSSIBLE RADICALISATION

- Spending increasing time in the company of other suspected extremists
- Changing style of dress or personal appearance to accord with a group
- Day to day behaviour becoming increasingly centred around an extremist ideology, group or cause and advocating messages similar to illegal organisations or other extremist groups

- Loss of interest in other friends and activities not associated with the extremist ideology, group or cause
- Possession of material or symbols associated with an extremist cause (e.g. the swastika for far right groups)
- Attempts to recruit others to the group/cause/ideology
- Communications with others that suggest identification with a group/cause/ideology and attending extremist events or rallies
- Clearly identifying another group as threatening what they stand for and blaming that group for all social or political ills
- Using insulting or derogatory names or labels for another group
- Speaking about the imminence of harm from the other group and the importance of action now
- Expressing attitudes that justify offending on behalf of the group, cause or ideology
- Condoning or supporting violence or harm towards others
- Secretive behaviour
- Online searches or sharing extremist messages or social profiles
- Graffiti, artwork or writing that displays extremist themes
- Verbalising anti-Western or anti-British views
- Plotting or conspiring with others.

18.3. REFERRAL

The Trust's Prevent Lead is the Designated Safeguarding Officer, who will be responsible within the organisation for safeguarding in relation to protecting individuals from radicalisation and involvement in terrorism. Staff within services are trained to identify the potential risks and are expected to report information through to their DSL or Manager, who will report to the DSO and also will make a referral to the Prevent Lead within the Local Authority (where the child resides).

If, at any stage, it is felt that the child/young person poses immediate danger to themselves or any other person, the police must be called immediately.

19. CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

19.1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Sexual exploitation of children/young people is a hidden form of child abuse. However, over recent years there has been increasing awareness about the extent and scale of children/young people who have been sexually exploited.

The following is informed by the supplementary guidance to 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' - 'Child sexual exploitation: Definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation' February 2017.

As a companion to the supplementary guidance, the Government has published annexes covering important information on adolescent development in relation to child sexual exploitation:

[Child sexual exploitation: annexes to definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation \(PDF\)](#)

The definition of child sexual exploitation in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, is as follows:

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim

needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Child sexual exploitation is never the victim's fault, even if there is some form of exchange: all children and young people under the age of 18 have a right to be safe and should be protected from harm.

All services working with children/young people have a responsibility to be alert to signs of potential concern ranging from early identification of additional need through to the need to protect from significant harm. All agencies therefore have a responsibility to be alert to those at risk of, or suffering, sexual exploitation and to take action to ensure the child/young person is safeguarded.

If staff have concerns in respect to Child Sexual Exploitation they must contact their Line Manager to instigate the safeguarding procedure.

19.2. A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY AND INTEGRATED APPROACH

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children/young people in the context of sexual exploitation, like safeguarding more generally, depends on effective joint working between different agencies and professionals that work with children/young people. Involvement of their different roles and expertise is vital if children/young people are to be effectively supported and action taken against perpetrators of sexual exploitation. All agencies should be alert to the risks of sexual exploitation and able to take action.

19.3. THE RIGHTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

All professionals have a duty to safeguard children/young people from harm, including sexual exploitation. Action to support and safeguard children/young people needs to be carefully assessed and based on what is in their best interests.

19.4. THE NATURE OF CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Any child/young person may be at risk of sexual exploitation, regardless of their family background or other circumstances. This includes boys and young men as well as girls and young women. However, some groups are particularly vulnerable. These include children/young people who have a history of running away or of going missing from home, those with special needs, those in and leaving residential and foster care, migrant children/young people, unaccompanied asylum seeking children/young people, children/young people who have disengaged from education and children/young people who are abusing drugs and alcohol, and those involved in gangs.

Sexual exploitation can take many forms from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for attention, affection, accommodation or gifts, to serious organised crime and child trafficking. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power within the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim, increasing the dependence of the victim as the exploitative relationship develops. This section sets out some of the more common indicators found in cases of sexual exploitation.

Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from their peers to have sex, sexual bullying (including cyber bullying), and grooming for sexual activity. Technology can also play a part in sexual abuse, for example, through its use to record abuse and share it with other like-minded individuals or as a medium to access children/young people in order to groom them. A common factor in all cases is the lack of free economic or moral choice.

Many children/young people are groomed into sexually exploitative relationships but other forms of entry exist. Some children/young people are engaged in informal economies that

incorporate the exchange of sex for rewards such as drugs, alcohol, money or gifts. Others exchange sex for accommodation or money as a result of homelessness and experiences of poverty. Some children/young people have been bullied and threatened into sexual activities by peers or gangs which is then used against them as a form of extortion and to keep them compliant.

Although the predominant evidence is of men sexually abusing children/young people, both men and women have been known to sexually exploit young men and young women. There is a presumption that children/young people are sexually exploited by people they do not know. However, evidence shows that they are often abused by 'boyfriends' or people with whom they feel they have a relationship.

The perpetrators of sexual exploitation are often well organised and use sophisticated tactics. They are known to target areas where children/young people might gather without much adult supervision, such as shopping centres, cafes, takeaways, sports centres, cinemas, bus or train stations, local parks, playgrounds and taxi ranks, or sites on the internet used by children/young people. The process of grooming may also be visible in adult venues such as pubs and clubs. In some cases perpetrators are known to use younger men, women, boys or girls to build initial relationships and introduce them to others in the perpetrator networks.

However, children/young people can also be sexually exploited by informal and unorganised groups of people. Children/young people, who are themselves the victims of exploitation, may introduce other children/young people to their abusers. This may not be a deliberate attempt to groom others into sexual exploitation, but rather a way of ensuring that their abuser's attention is deflected away from themselves. These children/young people are themselves victims.

Similarly, children/young people may be groomed into 'party' lifestyles where they go to houses/flats with numerous men and other young women. These 'parties' often introduce children/young people to alcohol and drugs and offer a space to 'chill'. No single relationship is formed but a general network is created. Young men may be groomed through 'casual' social relationships formed at common meeting places with perpetrators introducing them to a 'macho' lifestyle of cafes/bars/arcades, etc. This may develop into socialising and making money from criminal activities such as shop lifting or car theft and be linked to other risky behaviours such as drinking and smoking. Many young men and boys who are being exploited will be secretive or ambiguous about their actual sexual orientation.

It is an offence under the Serious Crime Act 2015 for a person aged 18 or over to intentionally communicate with a child or a young person under 16 for the purposes of sexual gratification.

The majority of sexually exploited children/young people will be hidden from public view. Sexual exploitation is likely to take place in private premises. Children/young people are groomed to be secretive about their meetings, which are usually arranged over mobile phones or the internet, and the places and people they are meeting, so the activities are concealed from parents or carers.

19.5. PROFESSIONAL CONCERN ABOUT SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

All professionals who work with children/young people should be alert to signs of possible abuse or neglect including sexual exploitation in order to safeguard and promote their wellbeing.

Staff are in a good position to notice changes in behaviour and physical signs which may indicate involvement in sexual exploitation.

Staff need to be aware of the potential signs that a child/young person is being groomed for sexual exploitation and be able to identify these. They should know of local areas and locations which perpetrators tend to target, for instance, school entrances, local parks, playgrounds etc.

Careful consideration should be given to whether relationships which are presented as consensual by teenagers actually are, or whether exploitation is taking place. Staff should be alert to the ways in which perpetrators can operate especially where there is a large age-gap between the individuals involved. Barnardos suggest a gap of five years or more, where the child/young person is under the age of 18 years, although there can be concern with a smaller age gap depending on the nature of the relationship and the vulnerability of the child/young person.

The earlier that sexual exploitation, or a risk of sexual exploitation, can be identified, the more likely it is that harm to a child/young person can be minimised or prevented. In response, Together Trust staff receive training on the indicators of possible sexual exploitation and how to respond to concerns. There are CSE Champions within a number of the Trust's residential homes who will work collaboratively to ensure that information is shared on a multi-agency and inter-service level, proactively identifying potential issues, hotspots, perpetrators etc. Champions will also disseminate relevant information and guidance to the team and children/young people. Inscape House School and Ashcroft School also have staff members trained by CEOP (child exploitation on-line protection).

Staff should be aware that children/young people in residential care particularly may be targeted by abusers. Staff within residential establishments must monitor and report any pattern of behaviour or events which may indicate that children/young people are at risk to their Line Manager and these patterns should be reviewed on a continual basis and reported appropriately.

Staff are encouraged to complete a Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Risk Assessment Tool developed by Project Phoenix - <http://www.itsnotokay.co.uk/professionals/resources/>. Similar resources can be found on the NWG Network website. The CSE tools capture a number of vulnerabilities and indicators that may be present in a child/young person at risk of or experiencing CSE, and will enable staff to determine the potential level of risk being faced by the child/young person at that current time. It is vital that risk assessments are shared with managers and on a multi-agency level to identify required actions.

The indicators below are recognised indicators linked with cases of sexual exploitation. This should not be read as a definitive list and the indicators should not be taken, in themselves, as proof of involvement or as predictive of future involvement. They are intended as a guide which could be included in a wider assessment of the child/young person's needs and circumstances.

19.6. INDICATORS OF POSSIBLE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

19.6.1. PERSONAL INDICATORS

- Physical symptoms (bruising suggestive of either physical or sexual assault)
- A sexually transmitted infection
- Pregnancy and/or seeking an abortion
- Reports from reliable sources suggesting the likelihood of involvement in sexual exploitation.

19.6.2. BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS

- Child/young person known to be sexually active
- Evidence of drug, alcohol or substance misuse
- Leaving home/care setting in clothing unusual for the individual child/young person (inappropriate for age, borrowing clothing from older young people)
- Significantly older partner
- Accounts of social activities, particularly parties, with no plausible explanation of the source of necessary funding
- Possession of large amounts of money with no plausible explanation
- Acquisition of expensive clothes, mobile phones (having several SIM cards or frequent mobile top ups) or other possessions without plausible explanation

- Having keys to premises other than those known about
- Low self image, low self-esteem, self-harming behaviour: cutting, overdosing, eating disorder, promiscuity, mood swings
- Being unusually secretive about where they have been or who their friends are
- Truancy/disengagement with education
- Possible inappropriate use of the internet and forming relationships, particularly with adults, via the internet
- Sexually risky behaviour including 'sex-ting' and sending & receiving inappropriate images, contact with unknown individuals via MMS/instant messenger/Facebook etc.
- Excessive receipt of texts / phone calls.

19.6.3. SITUATIONAL INDICATORS

- Reports that the child/young person has been seen in places known to be used for sexual exploitation
- Adults loitering outside the child/young person's home
- Persistently missing, staying out overnight or returning late with no plausible explanation
- Returning after having been missing, looking well cared for in spite of having no known home base
- Missing for long periods, with no known home base
- Placement breakdown
- Entering or leaving in vehicles driven by unknown adults
- Going missing and being found in areas where the child/young person has no known links.

There are also family history factors which should be taken into consideration, and may increase the significance of other indicators. These are: history of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse; neglect; domestic violence; parental difficulties.

Sexual identity may also be an issue.

The fact that a young person is 16 or 17 years old should not be taken as a sign that they are no longer at risk of sexual exploitation. Young people of this age are still covered by statutory duties under the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 and they can still be subject to significant harm as a result of sexual exploitation. Their needs should not be ignored or de-prioritised simply because the young person may give the impression they are giving consent and feel in control.

19.7. ATTITUDES OF CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE

It is important to recognise that not all children/young people who are sexually exploited will see themselves as victims of sexual abuse; nor will they see their friend, boy/girlfriend or partner as an abuser. This is most likely to be the case for older teenagers. Although faced with limited choice, they may believe themselves to be acting voluntarily and often results in a reluctance to engage with services.

19.8. IMPACT OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION ON CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE

Sexual exploitation can have a serious impact on the life of the child/young person as follows:-

- It can lead to difficulties in forming relationships with others
- A lack of confidence or self-esteem
- It can affect their education and training and therefore future employment prospects
- Affects their mental and physical health

- It can put the child/young person at increased risk of sexually transmitted infections including HIV, unwanted pregnancy and abortion, as well as long term sexual and reproductive health problems
- It can also ultimately impact on their parenting capacity and relationship with their own children in the future
- Where children/young people manage to escape from sexual exploitation they will sometimes feel unable to stay in their home town because of the associations it holds for them, leading to family break-ups and isolation.

20. CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK OF EXPLOITATION - ORGANISED CRIME, MODERN SLAVERY

20.1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Vulnerable children/young people could be at risk of infiltration into street gangs or organised crime on a wider scale. A street gang engages in criminal activity and violence and may lay claim over a territory (geographical or illegal economic). It is likely that in order to join the gang, children/young people will have to prove their commitment by engaging in antisocial or criminal behaviour or by performing sex acts. Organised crime is generally led by a group of individuals, normally adults for whom involvement is for personal gain, usually financial. An example of this would be involving children/young people in the movement and selling of drugs and money across the country. This is known as 'county lines' because it extends across county boundaries. Perpetrators use intimidation to control their victims and are known to move children/young people from urban areas to the countryside or coastal areas to sell drugs, although victims may be trafficked closer to home and are moved in and around the local area. In addition to drug dealing, children/young people may be asked to carry out other forms of criminal activity such as arson, violent offences, storing firearms, holding money or criminal damage. Children/young people are unlikely to ever use the phrase 'gang' but instead refer to the gang as 'family', 'breddrin', 'crews', 'cuz', 'my boys' or 'the people I grew up with'.

Teenagers are particularly vulnerable for recruitment into gangs and over time may move from being a victim to a perpetrator, or both. A child/young person's background could put them more at risk if there was violence within the family, siblings involved in gangs, poor educational attainment or mental health issues. Gang involvement is likely to cause a child/young person significant risk of harm through physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

Gang injunctions - A gang injunction can be made by the courts if anyone 14 years and above have been engaged in, encouraged or assisted gang-related violence or drug dealing activity. The court would need to be satisfied that the injunction would prevent the person from further engagement or would protect them from gang related violence or drug taking activity.

Osman warning/Threat to life - When intelligence is received about a threat to life in relation to criminal acts of another. Any Osman warning must result in an automatic referral to Children's Social Care, the initiation of a Strategy discussion and consideration of the need for immediate safeguarding action, unless to do so would place the child/young person at greater risk.

20.2. INDICATORS

There are a number of similar signs and indications across all forms of exploitation and radicalisation. However, some specific gang related indicators could be :

- Starting to use new or unknown slang words
- Sudden change in appearance - similar to that of other young people they hang around with, or wearing a particular colour or uniform
- Having a new nickname
- Graffiti style 'tags' on personal items, school books or walls
- Breaking off with old friends to hang around with one group of people
- Adopting different way of talking, using hand signs which is common across the group of young people
- Expressing aggressive or intimidating views towards another group of people

- Being wary of unknown youths in the neighbourhood, or scared of being in a certain geographical area, which could be the territory of a rival gang.

Further reading :

'Preventing Gang and Youth Violence: Spotting Signals of Risk and Supporting Children and Young People' Home Office, 2015.

'County lines - Gang Violence Exploitation and Drug Supply' National Crime Agency 2016

20.3. MODERN SLAVERY

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 consolidates offences of trafficking and slavery and details the different forms of exploitation that a victim of trafficking may be forced into. The exploitation can take place in the following ways :

- Sexual exploitation - see section 19.
- Labour exploitation - working in restaurants, building sites, cleaning
- Criminal exploitation - begging and pickpocketing, cannabis cultivation, drug dealing
- Domestic Servitude - undertaking domestic chores, looking after young children
- Organ harvesting

Other reasons for trafficking children could be for benefit fraud, illegal adoption, forced marriage, female genital mutilation and sham marriages.

21. SERIOUS VIOLENCE

21.1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Introduced by government in 2018, the Serious Violence Strategy identifies offences such as homicides and knife and gun crime as key factors which account for around one percent of all recorded crime. It requires a multi-agency approach focussing on:

- Tackling county lines
- Early intervention and prevention
- Supporting communities and local partnerships
- Effective law enforcement and criminal justice response

21.2. INDICATORS

As detailed in previous sections. Another common indicator is making threats to use weapons, particularly knives and/or possession of weapons.

22. REFERRAL

Sections 16 to 21 above detail various safeguarding concerns which staff need to be aware of so that signs and symptoms can be recognised and reported. Information was taken from a variety of sources including Greater Manchester Safeguarding Policies and Procedures, Safe Network, HM Government, World Health Organisation and NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence).

If a child/young person is known or suspected to be involved in any of these particular forms of abuse, concerns must be reported immediately to the Manager (in fostering to the Supervising Social Worker, Duty Officer or Out Of Hours Worker), who will, in consultation with the service's Designated Safeguarding Lead/Head of Service or Senior Operations Manager, agree on immediate steps that need to be taken. These steps will include notification to the Local Safeguarding Team, social services, the family, statutory regulatory body and where appropriate, the police.

23. PRIVATE FOSTERING

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 years (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative, in their own home, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more.

A close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother or sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and step-parents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins.

Parents and private foster carers both have a legal duty to inform the relevant local authority at least six weeks before the arrangement is due to start; not to do so is a criminal offence.

Whilst most privately fostered children are appropriately supported and looked after, they are a potentially vulnerable group who should be monitored by the local authority, particularly when the child has come from another country. In some cases privately fostered children are affected by abuse and neglect, or have been involved in trafficking, child sexual exploitation or modern-day slavery.

Schools have a mandatory duty to report to the local authority where they are aware or suspect that a child is subject to a private fostering arrangement. Although schools have a duty to inform the local authority, there is no duty for anyone, including the private foster carer or social workers to inform the school. However, it should be clear to the school who has parental responsibility.

School staff and staff within community services must notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead when they become aware of private fostering arrangements. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will speak to the family of the child involved to check that they are aware of their duty to inform the Local Authority. The school itself has a duty to inform the Local Authority of the private fostering arrangements.

On admission to the school, steps will be taken to verify the relationship of the adults to the child who is being registered.

24. CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING

In any safeguarding matter, staff must treat all information as confidential and only communicate it to Together Trust staff or to officers of an authority authorised to undertake safeguarding investigations or other work on a 'need to know' basis. The welfare of the children/young people shall be paramount consideration in these matters. No person can promise confidentiality to a child/young person where a disclosure of abuse is made.

Information sharing is vital to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. A key factor in many serious case reviews has been a failure by practitioners to record information, to share it, to understand its significance and then take appropriate action. The most important consideration is whether sharing information is likely to safeguard and protect a child.

Consideration needs to be given to what information to share and how much information you need to release. Any information shared must be proportionate to the need and level of risk. No member of staff should assume that someone else will pass on information which may be critical to keeping a child/young person safe.

The Together Trust recommends that all staff should follow the government's guidance document 'Information Sharing - Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers'.