Safety Planning: Harmful Sexual Behaviour

The AIM2 manual provides detailed guidance around questions to ask and issues to consider when supporting parents/carers to ensure appropriate supervision for a child who has displayed harmful sexual behaviour. The following is intended as a summary for use in initial safety planning.

Home safety planning with parents and carers

Should include as a minimum:

* A realistic level of supervision that must be provided and how this will be achieved. Do not state that the child should be “fully supervised at all times”- this is likely to be unachievable. Consider, for example, whether the child can be alone in their own bedroom, play out in the garden, be left in a room with siblings/other children if the parent/carer is in the house. How will bedtimes/bathtimes/mealtimes be managed?
* Agreement that the living environment is free from confusing sexual behaviour and information i.e. internet, DVDs, magazines, language, behaviour
* Sleeping arrangements need to be considered, including how potential risks to other children in the house will be managed at night. If parents/carers do not feel able to manage the risks to other children, they may wish to consider making arrangements with extended family members to care for the child
* Clear rules on privacy (bedrooms, bathrooms etc)
* Guidelines on expectations for state of dress around the house
* Limitations on play fighting
* Exploration of the access the child has to technology (phones, internet etc), and the risk this may pose. What safeguards need to be in place and how will this be monitored?
* How will the parent/carer respond if the child does or says something sexually inappropriate? The child should be made aware that the behaviour is unacceptable/inappropriate, but the parent/carer should avoid blaming or shaming the child

Safety planning with the child

The child should be involved with the safety plan at a level appropriate to their age and understanding. Care should be taken to avoid stigmatising the child, however they should be made aware what the rules are, and that these are in place to ensure that they and their siblings are safe. . A significant number of children who display harmful sexual behaviour have some difficulties with communication, even if this is not immediately obvious, so advice should be sought from parents and education about how best to talk to the child in a way they will understand.

Community Safety Planning

* Where does the child go?
* Who do they see?
* What level of adult supervision do they have, and is this adequate?
* How do parents/carers know and check this?
* Is there anyone else who can monitor this?

Consider contacting the Community Safety Team for further support and advice

School safety planning

* Which staff members need to be aware of the concerns?
* What level of supervision is required: in class, and out of class (i.e. first thing, breaks, home time)
* Who will provide this supervision and how will this be done?

Assessment and Review

In some situations it may be necessary to impose high levels of supervision pending further assessment. In such situations, it may be necessary to have meetings outside of the usual TAF/CIN/CP/LAC process to discuss and review the level of supervision and safety plan. Parents/carers should always be invited to these meetings. The child should also be invited subject to their age and understanding.

Consideration of Deprivation of Liberty should be given to Looked After Children. Legal advice should be sought if the child is under “continuous control and supervision” and is not free to leave.