

## The Young Person's Plan (YPP) in Salford – Guidance

### *Safeguarding young people in vulnerable circumstances*

#### 1. Introduction

1.1 The vast majority of children and young people in the UK grow up to thrive and achieve their potential albeit with the usual teenage travails that are familiar to all parents and carers. But some young people can become vulnerable in a range of situations such as sexual exploitation, criminal gangs, trafficking, extremism and self harm.

1.2 Such vulnerability is sometimes, but not always, preceded by problems in the child's environment. This may include arguments and persistent conflict with or between parents/carers, abuse and neglect, or living with the effects of parental substance misuse, mental health problems, or domestic abuse.

1.3 In such circumstances there may be a high degree of concern by agencies, family members and the young person's friends about the welfare of the young person. For a younger child a child protection conference would be the best forum for discussing these concerns and a child protection plan may well be the best way then to address those concerns with its emphasis on the responsibility of the parents/carers to promote the child's welfare.

1.4 This guidance has been developed to underpin existing professional inter-agency working and to enhance the support already available to vulnerable young people with an increased emphasis upon relationship building that may require persistence in achieving engagement. The YPP shall only apply to young people who are at least 15 years old and below 18 years of age. The guidance does not seek to replace existing policies or procedures in place but aims to assist professionals in reducing the risk of harm to the young person by:

- identifying vulnerability at the earliest possible stage
- responding to the needs of the young person in positive dialogue wherever possible directly with the young person
- taking a planned and coordinated risk management and harm reduction approach to promote the young person's welfare with full account of the vulnerabilities relevant to their age and understanding

1.5 The approach is based in research (see appendix 1) and informed by models of collaborative risk assessment and action planning.

1.6 The purpose of this protocol is to provide multi-agency guidance for those working with young people considered to be at risk of harm, either through their own actions or the actions of others.

## **2. When should a Young Person's Plan be put in place?**

### 2.1 The YPP should be used:

- i. where the young person is deemed to be at risk of harm due to situations listed below
- ii. where extensive work with parents, often intensively applied, has resulted in no change for the young person and the risk of harm has not been reduced.
- iii. for all young people aged 15 and over that would otherwise meet the threshold for a Child Protection Plan. The YPP, rather than the Child Protection Plan, will be the most appropriate multi-agency framework
- iv. alongside Child Protection Plans, if required, for younger siblings in the family. However the YPP should be the subject of meetings separate from the CP planning meetings and associated core groups

### 2.2 The YPP should not be used where the following conditions exist:

- there is already good multi-agency planning in place (for example, Child Protection , Child in Need or Team around the Child plans where the young person and their carers are engaged and working with the support being provided)
- where the current risks of harm to the young person are primarily due to the ability of the parents/carers to respond appropriately to the risks
- the young person is under the age of 15
- the needs of the young person are being met adequately by a single agency with demonstrable impact on the outcomes for the young person

## **3. Situations that may lead to a Young Person being vulnerable**

### 3.1 the following situations may make the young person vulnerable to harm:

- Young people who are at risk of being sexually exploited or are involved in the exploitation of other young people
- Missing from home
- Missing from Education
- Misusing illicit substances and/or alcohol
- Involved in or at risk of becoming involved in gangs, organised crime or systematic criminal activity
- Young People with uncontrolled mental health difficulties and concerns about self harm or attempted suicide
- Young people who are on the edge of care or at risk of being homeless
- Young people who may be drawn into extremist activities
- Young people who are leaving secure accommodation or custody

## **4. How should a Young Person's Plan be put in place?**

4.1 There are 3 routes for requests for YPPs:

- i. Via a safeguarding consultation with a Child Protection Coordinator. This would usually follow the completion of a CAFASS by a social worker but may also follow an intervention and assessment by YOS for example, as a result of a Referral Order, a Youth Rehabilitation Order or a custodial sentence.
- ii. Via an Initial Child Protection Conference or Child Protection Review
- iii. A Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy meeting can make a recommendation for a YPP.

4.2 Once a YPP is agreed there should be an appropriate arrangement for transition from the DAT social worker to the new social worker and the ongoing professional group. Also at the earliest opportunity a joint session should take place by the new social worker/key professional and the YPP coordinator with the young person. This is especially important in building the trust that is essential in achieving an effective YPP.

4.3 Once a YPP is in place, it should be reviewed, ideally with the young person in attendance, by a meeting every 6 weeks. The meetings can be held more or less frequently if the risk assessment warrants this. However if the interval between meetings is more than every 2 months it raises the question of whether there is a need for a YPP as the conditions that result in vulnerability are likely to require a more frequent coordinated and concerted response to the situation. Please see Appendix 2 for a checklist of issues which may be discussed within the YPP.

4.4 The YPP has equivalence in Salford to the Child Protection Plan which is based upon legislation and government guidance. This equivalence is achieved by the entry routes set out above. The intention is that the YPP will carry the same level of authority as the CP Plan, including notification to all statutory agencies. For this purpose the YPP will be subject to governance by the Salford Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) in the same way that CP Plans are. This will ensure that there is multi-agency involvement in the development and implementation of YPPs.

## **5. The role of the Key Professional**

5.1 All vulnerable young people who require integrated support from more than one practitioner should experience a seamless and effective service where one practitioner takes the lead to ensure that this happens. This will be the responsibility of the Key Professional. The Key Professional should also ordinarily be the practitioner with the best working relationship with the young person, providing the best opportunities for sustaining a dialogue.

5.2 The Key Professional is responsible for co-ordinating the service response to the young person's situation but does not have to chair the YPP planning meeting. Chairing will be by the YPP coordinator who co-ordinates the plan. This is an important distinction in the two functions of co-ordination. The Key Professional is likely to also have individual responsibility for delivering a specific service to the young person but cannot be responsible for the delivery of all specific services. This responsibility remains with each individual practitioner/agency.

5.3 The Key Professional may change in the course of work with the young person but such changes should be minimised and should be made, where possible, with agreement from the YPP group.

5.4 Therefore, in summary the functions of the Key Professional are as follows:

- act as a single point of contact for the young person, who they can trust and who can engage them in making choices, navigating their way through the process and effecting change
- ensures the service delivery across all agencies is aligned to the needs of the young person.
- case manage the case with their line manager
- reduce overlap and inconsistency in the services received by the young person
- consult and liaise with the YPP Coordinator in doing the above

5.5 The YPP is most likely to be effective where there is the least stigma for the young person in receiving professional support. The Key Professional should be the person who has the best working relationship with the young person. This will enable the work to be 'young person centred', rather than focussing on the needs of the parents or carers. The Key Professional can also be from voluntary agencies, as research indicates that young people are more likely to engage with professionals from these agencies. It will not always be essential for there to be a social worker either working directly with the young person or involved in the YPP, although this will often be the case. The YPP aims to build processes around the young person and not fit the young person into existing processes.

## **6. Case Management and Recording**

6.1 The Key Professional should be supervised by their manager in their role in respect of the YPP. Where the Key Professional is a social worker the decision making and management oversight should be recorded on CareFirst and the information shared with the YPP team around the young person. Where the Key Professional is from an agency without access to CareFirst, the information on case management decision making and management oversight should be shared with the YPP Co-ordinator who will record the information on CareFirst via Documentum and will distribute the information to the YPP team around the young person.

6.2 The authorisation of the YPP on CareFirst will be by the Service Manager in the Safeguarding Unit.

## **7. Information Sharing**

7.1 As the threshold status of the Young Person's Plan is equivalent to the Child Protection Plan, the same information sharing protocols apply. See

[http://greatermanchesterscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p\\_info\\_sharing.html](http://greatermanchesterscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_info_sharing.html)

The GM guidance should be read in full but as a starting point to considering when to share information the following points can be made.

7.2 Wherever possible, you should seek consent or be open and honest with the individual (and/or their family, where appropriate) from the outset as to why, what, how and with whom, their information will be shared. You should seek consent where an individual may not expect their information to be passed on and they have a genuine choice about this.

7.3 It is possible to identify some circumstances in which sharing confidential information without consent will normally be justified in the public interest. These are:

- When there is evidence that the child is suffering or is at risk of suffering Significant Harm; or
- Where there is reasonable cause to believe that a child may be suffering or at risk of significant harm; or
- To prevent Significant Harm arising to children or serious harm to adults, including through the prevention, detection and prosecution of serious crime, i.e. any crime which causes or is likely to cause significant harm to a child or serious harm to an adult.

7.4 It is good practice when working with young people to explain these aspects of information sharing as soon as reasonably possible in working with the young person.

## **8. Timescales**

8.1 Within 5 working days of the decision for there to be a YPP, the Key Professional or referrer will discuss the case with the YPP Coordinator in preparation for engaging with the young person. Good practice is that the first meeting for a YPP will take place within 15 working days of the decision for there to be a YPP.

8.2 When the case originates in DAT and a meeting date is set for the first YPP, CP/CIN should allow the case to be placed on the transfer list, with the agreement that DAT complete the Single Assessment ahead of the first YPP meeting. This should include the sharing of the Single Assessment with the young person and, if appropriate, with their parents/carers.

8.3 If, following the completion of a YPP and closure of the case, a re-referral is made in respect of the same young person within 6 months, then the case will be allocated directly to the social worker/key professional/team that held the case prior to closure.

## **9. Chairing of the YPP meeting and ongoing consultation to support the YPP**

9.1 The YPP meetings should usually be chaired by an independent chair from the Safeguarding Unit who will be the YPP Coordinator. This will usually be a Child in Need Coordinator but could also be another member of the Safeguarding Unit such as a Child Protection Coordinator or Independent Reviewing Officer.

9.2 In exceptional circumstances the YPP meetings can be chaired by a Practice Manager who is not in direct line management of any practitioner involved in the case.

9.3 It is likely that once there is a YPP for a young person, the Key Professional may require the support and resource of consultation with the independent chair, especially if the Key Professional is not the social worker for the young person. This facility will be in place for the duration of the YPP.

9.4 The YPP coordinator coordinates the planning and in the absence of a social worker being involved with the young person also provides social work oversight of the service delivery.

The Key Professional ensures the service delivery across all agencies is aligned to the needs of the young person. This is an important distinction between the roles of the YPP Coordinator and the Key Professional.

## 10.Parallel Planning

- 10.1 There a small number of circumstances in which parallel planning may be appropriate but not in others.
- 10.2 **Looked After Children (LAC) s20 Children Act 1989** – when a young person is looked after by the local authority under s20 Children Act 1989, this is most often a time-limited event and if the young person is already subject to a YPP prior to the s20 event, or they have characteristics that would meet the criteria for a YPP whilst LAC, then a YPP can be in place in parallel with a Care Plan. This will promote permanency as well as maintain a focus on both stability and risk management/harm reduction.
- 10.3 In these circumstances, LAC review meetings would take precedence over YPP meetings. Thus when a LAC Review is held, the plan should include content relating to the YPP but it would not require a new YPP. Any changes would be recorded in YPP would at this stage be entered in observations on CareFirst.
- 10.4 YPP meetings usually happen at a greater frequency than LAC Reviews, so any YPP meetings in between LAC reviews will reference the Care Plan and if changes are recommended these will be subject to agreement by the IRO in discussion with the social worker.
- 10.5 The parallel YPP in these circumstances will prioritise for the purpose of the YPP a smaller number of goals than are likely to be in the Care Plan.
- 10.6 **Looked After Children (LAC) s31 Children Act 1989** – unlike s20, with a s31 Care order, the local authority gains parental responsibility. Usually with s31 cases the young person lives away from their family for a longer period of time. However if the plan is for the young person to return to live with family and for the Care order to be discharged then a YPP may be appropriate and could be commenced during the period of planning for discharge.
- 10.7 **Child Protection Plans (CP Plans)/Child in Need Plans (CIN Plans)/Team Around the Family (TAF) plan** – Without exception it should never be the case that a young person is subject to both a YPP and any of these plans. However it is possible that there may be one or more children in the family in which case one or more child may be on a CiN or CP plan whilst a sibling is subject to a YPP.
- 10.8 **Supervision Orders s31 Children Act 1989** – Any Supervision Order made by the courts to Salford City Council should have the benefit of multi-agency oversight from a Supervision Order Review meeting (SORM) with a Child in Need Coordinator appointed for this purpose. In such circumstances a YPP would not be appropriate because any escalation in concerns would be subject to the Legal Planning process.
- 10.9 **Youth Justice Orders** – where a young person has involvement from the Youth Offending Service – whether on the basis of an out of court disposal, prevention or a Youth Justice order (i.e. Referral Order, Youth Rehabilitation Order or a custodial sentence) – a YPP

can be requested to run in parallel to the involvement or to achieve a transition from an order or from custody. The threshold for the YPP to be initiated will be an ASSET assessment and a safeguarding consultation with a Child Protection Coordinator.

## **11. Completion of a YPP**

11.1 The completion of a YPP will be subject to recommendation from the multi-agency group and will be authorised by the Service Manager following consultation with the Managers of the Key Professional and the social worker. As with the Child Protection Plan, a case should not be closed to the social worker or Key Professional whilst a young person is subject to a YPP.

11.2 Upon closure, the YPP Coordinator will provide commentary in the form of an Outcome Statement, including the following information:

- i. Reason for completion of the Plan.
- ii. Risk of Harm to The Young Person: did this reduce or increase, if so how?
- iii. What risk factors remain, how these might be mitigated and what happens next, including contingencies?
- iv. Outcomes for The Young Person: Were these positive or negative, please explain?
- v. Participation: Level of the young person's participation i.e. attendance at meetings and did they meaningfully contribute/young person's views on their situation and YPP process.
- vi. Any other relevant information.

## **12. Transfer of YPP to another authority**

12.1 YPPs are currently only used in Salford. When transferring a case involving a young person subject to a YPP out to another local authority, the Salford social worker/Key professional should do this by following the procedure set out in the Greater Manchester Safeguarding procedures at [http://greatermanchesterscb.proceduresonline.com/pdfs/cpp\\_moving\\_across\\_la\\_pro\\_b.pdf](http://greatermanchesterscb.proceduresonline.com/pdfs/cpp_moving_across_la_pro_b.pdf)

## Appendix 1

### Research underpinning the YPP approach

- *“Pathways to harm and protection – Triennial Analysis of Serious Case Reviews 2011 to 2014”* (DfE, 2016) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/analysis-of-serious-case-reviews-2011-to-2014>
- *“Serious Case Review Report – Child N”* (Salford Safeguarding Children Board 2015) [http://www.partnersinsalford.org/sscb/documents/Salford\\_Child\\_N\\_Final\\_20\\_March\\_2015.pdf](http://www.partnersinsalford.org/sscb/documents/Salford_Child_N_Final_20_March_2015.pdf)
- *“Seriously Awkward – How vulnerable 16 and 17 year olds are falling through the cracks”* (Children’s Society, June 2015) <https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/resources-and-publications/seriously-awkward-how-vulnerable-16-and-17-year-olds-are>
- *“Signs of Safety® in England”* NSPCC 2013 <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/services-and-resources/research-and-resources/2013/signs-of-safety-model-england/>
- *“That Difficult Age: Developing a more effective response to risks in adolescence”* (Research in Practice 2014) <https://www.rip.org.uk/news-and-views/latest-news/evidence-scope-risks-in-adolescence/>
- *“Time to listen’ – a joined up response to child sexual exploitation and missing children”* Ofsted 2016 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-inspections-of-child-sexual-exploitation-and-missing-children-february-to-august-2016>



## Appendix 2

### Checklist of Issues to be discussed within the context of a Young Person's Plan

- Purpose & Objectives of meeting
- Analysis of historical information
- Incident(s)/cause for concern – risky behaviour
- Identify needs of young person:
  - o Health
  - o Education/training/employment
  - o Accommodation
  - o Recreation
- Family/social network/support
- Are there issues in respect of the young person's relationships
- Relevant police information
- Young person's view of concern
- Views of family/significant others
- Analysis of risk

### Action plan and outcomes to address:

- Emotional/mental health support
  - o Referrals to therapeutic social worker / CAMHS / Emerge
  - o Protect referral
- Other health needs e.g. substance misuse, sexual health
  - o Achieve YPS
- Family, social & community support
  - o Family Group Conference
- Support re ASB/offending behaviour
  - o Referrals to Young Person's Domestic Abuse Meeting (YPDAM) if appropriate / Step up Program
  - o Consider if Sexually Harmful Behaviour Meeting appropriate
- Accommodation
- Training/education/employment
  - o Are Connexions involved?
- Recreation
- Transition to adult services

### Action plan and outcomes to include who, will do what and by when

- Date of Review Meeting