

Understanding Exploitation Fact Sheet:

Complex Safeguarding, Contextual Safeguarding and Transitional Safeguarding – what's the difference?

Complex Safeguarding

Complex Safeguarding is an approach and term to describe a **different way of working** with children and families to address **non-traditional safeguarding issues**. It articulates the recognition that the current child protection system, legislation and practice does not adequately address the **extra-familial harm and risk** facing many young people. The definition of Complex Safeguarding is:

'Criminal activity (often organised), or behaviour associated to criminality, involving vulnerable children / young people, where there is exploitation and / or a clear or implied safeguarding concern'

The term Complex Safeguarding is used to describe a **range of safeguarding issues that adolescents face**, in particular those **related to criminality** and **exploitation**. This includes, but is not limited to, Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), County Lines, Modern Slavery including Trafficking and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

Contextual Safeguarding

Like complex safeguarding, contextual safeguarding recognises that as young people grow up and become more **independent of their families**, the **risks** that they face **change**. The different relationships that young people form in their **neighbourhoods, schools and online** can **feature violence and abuse**. **Contextual safeguarding** offers an approach for working with **contexts and communities** by understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of **significant harm beyond their families**. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of **extra-familial abuse** can **undermine parent-child relationships**.

Contextual Safeguarding, therefore, expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people are **vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts** and so provides a framework for local areas to develop an approach that engages with the **extra-familial dynamics of risk in adolescence**.

Transitional Safeguarding

Transitional Safeguarding is a term that has been used to highlight the **need to improve the safeguarding response to older teenagers and young adults** in a way that recognises their developmental needs. This argument is made in a briefing for local authorities, published in 2018, that draws on both Contextual Safeguarding and Complex Safeguarding as well as **emerging evidence that adolescence extends into the early/mid-twenties** (Sawyer et al, 2018).

In keeping with the notion of Transitional Safeguarding, some areas of Greater Manchester Complex Safeguarding teams are working with Adult Services to develop an **all-age response recognising that the risk to young people does not stop when they turn 18 years old**. These teams are in the early stages of development due to the challenges of having to navigate between the different legislative frameworks and thresholds for a service provision.

Recognising the importance of working to **safeguard young people across transitions** is a feature of both Complex Safeguarding and Contextual Safeguarding.

Exploitation of Adults (*a person aged 18 years+)

Some adults have additional care and support needs carried through from childhood (such as physical, learning or sensory disabilities and illnesses) that can mean they are more vulnerable and are unable to protect themselves from abuse or neglect. These adults are known as adults at risk and are at an increased risk of exploitation, particularly where there is a reduction in support from Children's social care and also if the person lives independently and so for example, exploitation may present itself through a vulnerable adults home being used for **cuckooing** (see *Cuckooing 7 Minute Briefing*).

Spot the signs of exploitation and abuse

- Do they suddenly have lots of new designer clothes, lots of money or more than one mobile phone?
- Are they receiving more calls than normal?
- Are they travelling alone to places far away from home?
- Are they carrying or selling drugs?
- Are they hanging out with someone that is older than them and controlling?
- Do they have any unexplained injuries?
- Do they seem very reserved and like they have something to hide?
- Are they going missing from home or school?

What should I do if I am worried that a Child or an Adult is being exploited?

If you are concerned that a child, young person or adult at risk is being exploited, or is at risk of exploitation, it is important that you tell someone about your concerns.

If you believe a person to be at immediate risk of harm or in need of emergency medical attention call the emergency services on 999, or for non-emergencies call the Police on 101.

Contact the Bridge on **0161 603 4500** if you are worried about a child and if you are worried about an adult, you can contact the Adult Contact Centre on **0161 631 4777** or email worriedaboutanadult@salford.gov.uk between 8.30am to 4.30pm.

Outside these hours, please call the Emergency Duty Team on **0161 794 8888**.

For more information:

<https://www.programmechallenger.co.uk/practitioner/resources/>

<https://www.programmechallenger.co.uk/practitioner/resources/cuckooing/>

<https://crimestoppers-uk.org/give-information>

<https://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org/report>

<https://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org/Teens/Spotlight>

<https://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org/information/stats>