

City of York Threshold Document

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INTRODUCTION

This threshold document sets out the local criteria for action and includes links to additional information which may assist with professional judgement in understanding, and subsequently meeting, a child and family's needs. This document supports the key principles underpinning [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#)¹ and practitioners are strongly advised to access this national guidance

Safeguarding training should be undertaken in line with your organisation's minimum requirement. (An advisory recommendation would be at least once every 3 years.) Details of face-to face and online training can be found on the [CYSCB website](#).

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: everyone who comes into contact with (children) has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

A child centred approach: Anyone working with children should see and speak to the child; listen to what they say; take their views seriously.

All organisations should have suitable supervisory or advisory arrangements for staff involved in identifying and supporting children and young people with additional needs and considering whether there are safeguarding concerns.

- Aim to consider the whole situation and all the related concerns.
- **THINK FAMILY** - always consider the **needs** of every child, young person or adult within the family and the impact of those needs on other family members.
- Share the concerns and options with families as a way to express and support ideas and interventions (unless sharing your concerns puts anyone at risk.) Seek advice when you are unsure.
- This advice could be from your line manager and/or your safeguarding lead; a Health Professional, the Police; the Children's Front Door; or from another specialist practitioner.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

ADDRESSING CONCERNS THROUGH 'CONVERSATIONS'

The best way to address a concern is through conversation with the family (as long as this does not increase the risk for the child or anyone else) and with the other practitioners involved. If you are uncertain about the level at which the concern needs addressing, the [Children's Front Door](http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/concerned-about-a-child-or-young-person.htm)² offers you the opportunity to talk it through with a qualified social worker to understand whether a social care assessment is needed or whether the case can be progressed at early help level. Also, via the Children's Front Door, [Local Area Team](http://www.yor-ok.org.uk/workforce2014/local-area-teams.htm)³ practitioners can advise you about early help assessments and processes.

Individual situations can be multifaceted and cannot necessarily be addressed via a simple checklist approach. Children and young people may require interventions at several levels. This means that a child may have interventions from a variety of services, from universal services to services to manage very complex needs, all at the same time. Sharing responsibility rather than discharging it up or down the 'thresholds' to a different service is the most effective way of addressing needs and concerns.

Communication and collaboration between practitioners, at all levels, and with the child and family, are the best way to understand the child's needs and to ascertain when those needs are not being met and when some other intervention is needed to improve outcomes. These communications lead to meaningful assessment and inform ongoing support, planning and review.

All communications, assessments, plans and reviews, whatever the outcome, should be **recorded appropriately** by all agencies in order to show that they took place, identify what was agreed and evaluate how effectively needs were met.

Resolving disagreements

Sometimes practitioners (and families) may not agree with each other. In such instances practitioners should seek support from their line manager, or agency child protection lead and, failing a satisfactory outcome to further discussions at this level, may implement the [resolution of disputes process](http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/resolution-of-disputes.htm)⁴

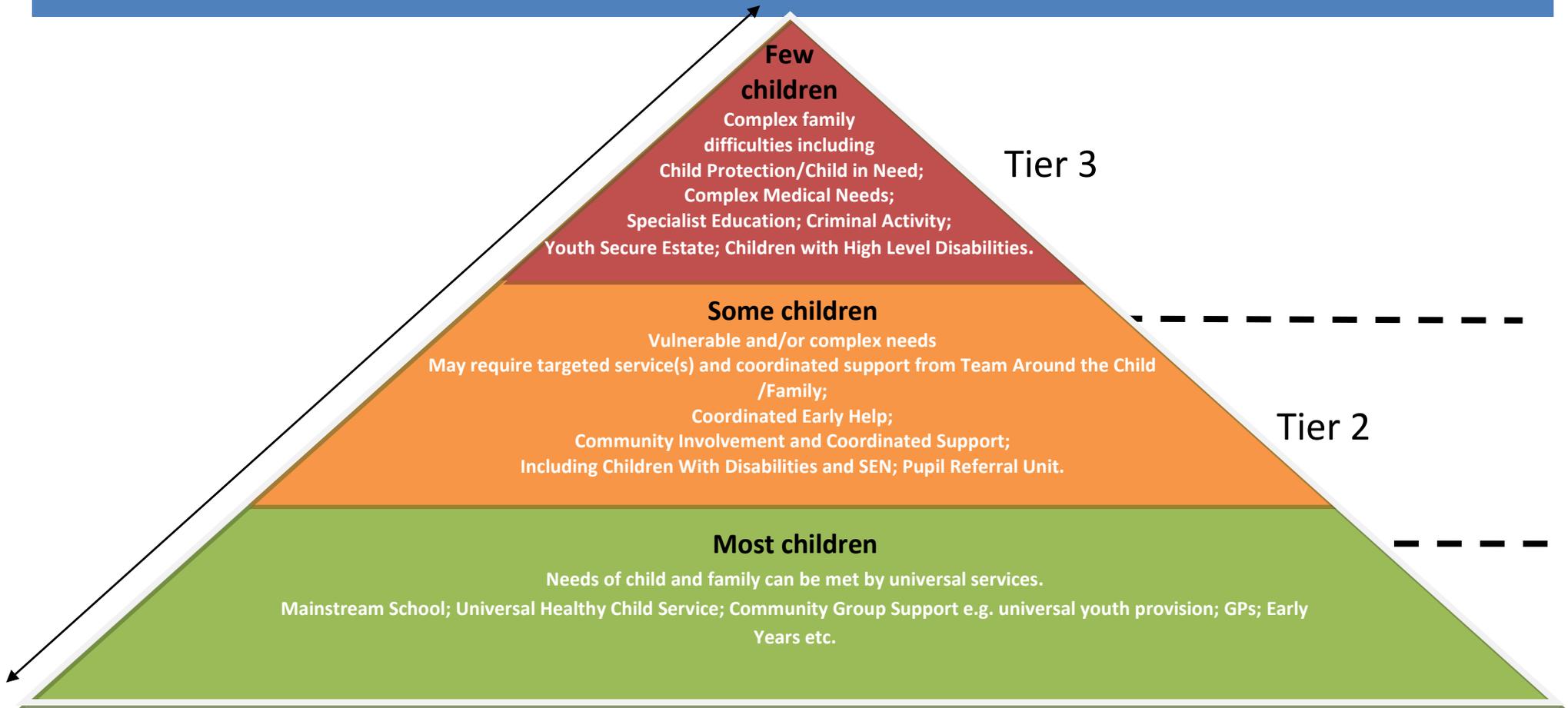
On the following page is the Pyramid of Need and Vulnerabilities which can help you decide the level at which your interventions and concerns lie.

² <http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/concerned-about-a-child-or-young-person.htm>

³ <http://www.yor-ok.org.uk/workforce2014/local-area-teams.htm>

⁴ <http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/resolution-of-disputes.htm>

PYRAMID OF NEED AND VULNERABILITY



The needs of children and families change, which means that children can move from one tier to another, sometimes very quickly. Universal and early help services (tier 1 and 2) aim to support a child early in order to prevent them from requiring complex or statutory involvement (tier 3).

| Universal (Tier 1) | Vulnerable (Tier 2) | Vulnerable and Complex (Tier 2) | Significant concerns (Tier 3) |
|--|--|---|---|
| The child's needs are being appropriately met by universal services and no additional services are required. | The child may have additional needs that cannot be met purely by universal services. Support from additional services and an early help plan should be considered. | The child has significant and complex needs. The child will benefit from a multi-agency early help plan. (Team Around the Child/Family) | The child needs support from specialist services (e.g. medical or educational) and/or the child is at risk of significant harm and an immediate multi-agency response is required to ensure the child is appropriately safeguarded. |

CONTACTING THE CHILDREN'S FRONT DOOR

Responsibility as to whether to make an enquiry to the **Children's Front Door**⁵ lies with the individual agency. Practitioners should make this decision in discussion with their line manager, their agency safeguarding lead and in line with their agency safeguarding policy and procedures. The decision will be based on a number of factors including the age of the child, family background, other circumstances and professional judgement.

If you need to make a **safeguarding referral** about a child or young person who has been or may be hurt or neglected, please use the **CSC referral form**⁵. Children's Social Care need you to use this form because you are best placed to provide the information that they must have to make a timely, proportionate and effective decision about what help and support the child and their parents or carers need.

Children's Social Care will accept **telephone referrals** (01904 551900) where there is ***an immediate risk to a child*** but when they do so, you will be asked to complete the referral form within 24 hours with written information confirming that provided by telephone. (It will help to have the referral form in front of you during your phone call to act as a guide for the information you will be asked to provide by the Social Worker.)

If you are uncertain about your concerns, you can call the Children's Front Door to seek advice from a qualified social worker. However you should first speak to the ***child protection lead in your agency***.

The duty social worker, supported by their line manager, will make a decision as to whether your enquiry needs a Children's Social Care Assessment i.e. whether it meets the threshold for statutory intervention. The information on page 6 explains the legal framework to which Children's Social Care works.

But, you may also contact the Children's Front Door to speak to the **Local Area Team** practitioners about early help assessments and interventions or to ask about information and support services for families. For families needing a bit of extra support or help, there are a range of other services that may be more suitable in the first instance.

⁵ <http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/concerned-about-a-child-or-young-person.htm>

Children's Front Door 01904 551900

Contacting us about children - Information for professionals



To ensure that you receive the best possible response, we have developed the following options to choose from when you call us.

Option 1

Information for families in York Local Area Team Information Service

Impartial information about the range of services available to families.

Information on –

- Childcare options
- Help with childcare costs
- Activities
- Financial support
- Mental health services
- SEN services
- Support services for children, young people and parents
- and many more

The Local Area Team information offer includes the information drop in at 30 Clarence Street for young people aged 16-25.

fis@york.gov.uk

Option 2

Early Help support and advice Local Area Team

Advice to practitioners about how they can support vulnerable children, young people and families through Early Help.

The LATs can –

- Check to see if any other concerns have been raised about a family
- Check to see if another agency is already working with a family
- Flag a concern
- Provide advice and support to practitioners around the Family Early Help Assessment (FEHA)
- Help identify an appropriate lead practitioner in an Early Help process

lat@york.gov.uk or
lat@york.gcsx.gov.uk

Option 3

Child in Need/Safeguarding Referral and Assessment Service

Contact the duty social worker:

If you know of a child who has significant vulnerabilities and therefore maybe a child in need.

Or

If you are worried about a child being hurt or neglected (at risk of significant harm) and therefore in need of safeguarding.

If you are uncertain about your concerns, you can call the Referral and Assessment Service to have a conversation with a qualified social worker. However you should first speak to the child protection lead in your agency.

childrenfrontdoor@york.gov.uk

Although as a professional it is usually helpful to let a family know you are contacting us, within a safeguarding context, and in some circumstances, you may decide it is not appropriate or safe to do so. If in doubt, you can contact the duty social worker for advice.

If a child is in immediate danger, please dial 999.

If you urgently need to speak to a social worker outside office hours, please contact the Emergency Duty Team: 01609 780780 or email edt@northyorks.gov.uk (Before 8.30am or after 5pm, at weekends and on public holidays).

What do you think? Your feedback is important to us, please tell us what you think of these arrangements at childrenservicefeedback@york.gov.uk

EARLY HELP AND FAMILY EARLY HELP ASSESSMENTS (FEHA)

'Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. Early help can also prevent further problems arising; for example, if it is provided as part of a support plan where a child has returned home to their family from care, or in families where there are emerging parental mental health issues or drug and alcohol misuse.' (Working Together 2018)

Early help assessments and interventions are for families, or individual children, who are displaying a combination of emerging or escalating needs who may benefit from a coordinated multi-agency response.

Interventions at this level require consent from the family.

[A Family Early Help Assessment \(FEHA\)](#)⁶ is a tool used to assess the needs of children, young people and families to determine the need for early help, and the actions to be taken to improve outcomes, based on a holistic view of the needs of the family. This tool takes you step-by-step through a clear process of information gathering, analysis and action planning

[Local Area Teams \(LAT\)](#)⁷ are a key part of York's early help response to working with children, young people and families from pregnancy through to adulthood (the 0-19yrs (25yrs for disability)).

You can contact the Local Area Teams, at the Children's Front Door, for advice and support with Early Help processes, Family Early Help Assessments and working with other agencies to support children, young people and their families - LAT@york.gov.uk 01904 551900.

⁶ <http://www.yor-ok.org.uk/workforce2014/feha.htm>

⁷ <http://www.yor-ok.org.uk/workforce2014/about-local-area-teams.htm>

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE (CSC)

Children's Social Care (CSC) sits in Tier 3 of the 'pyramid' meaning that it deals largely with children and families experiencing serious and complex difficulties including criminal or sexual exploitation. There may be other services which, with a coordinated response, might be helpful before this point. If an *enquiry* to Children's Social Care reaches the threshold for CSC assessment or intervention it becomes a *referral*. These thresholds are defined under the following sections of the Children Act 1989.

CHILD PROTECTION (SECTION 47)

A Section 47 Child Protection enquiry is one *where a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that a child (who lives or is found in their area) is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, it has a duty to make such enquiries as it considers necessary to decide whether to take any action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare. Such enquiries, supported by other organisations and agencies, as appropriate, should be initiated where there are concerns about all forms of abuse, neglect (Working Together 2018)*

Enquiries and referrals in this category do not need the consent of the family, although good practice would be to discuss your concerns with the family and your intention to contact CSC *if it does not put anyone at risk*.

The Duty Social Worker at the Children's Front Door can advise whether the concern reaches the threshold for S47/child protection intervention or not.

CHILD IN NEED (CIN) (SECTION 17)

A child in need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as:

A child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or their health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled.

An enquiry and referral for a CIN assessment should be made where there are complex needs *and* where the involvement of services other than social care, using coordinated and recorded early help multi-agency working processes, has not been able to impact on the situation.

An enquiry into children's social care for a social-worker-led **child in need (CIN) assessment** requires the consent of the family.

SECTION 20 AND SECTION 31 ORDERS

- **Section 20 (Duty to accommodate a child)**

Working Together 2018: *Some children in need may require accommodation because there is no one who has parental responsibility for them, because they are lost or abandoned, or because the person who has been caring for them is prevented from providing them with suitable accommodation or care. Under **Section 20** of the Children Act 1989, the local authority has a duty to accommodate such children in need in their area.* This accommodation – either in foster care, residential care or a kinship placement – can be long- or short-term, or does not necessarily involve the courts. The parent retains full parental responsibility.

- **Section 31 (Care and Supervision Orders)**

The local authority – Children's Social Care - may apply to the court for a Care or Supervision Order. The court can make a **Care Order**, placing a child in the care of the local authority, with parental responsibility being shared between the parents and the local authority. It can only be made if the court is satisfied that *'the harm, or likelihood of harm, is attributable to ... the care given to the child, or likely to be given ... if the order were not made, not being what it would be reasonable to expect a parent to give ... or the child being beyond parental control'* (Children Act 1989). The court may make an Interim Care Order to investigate a child's home circumstances.

The grounds for a **Supervision Order** are the same as for a Care Order. However, the local authority does not gain parental responsibility when a Supervision Order is granted. The supervisor has a duty to:

- advise, assist and befriend the supervised child;
- take such steps as are reasonably necessary to give effect to the order; and
 - where the order is not wholly complied with;
 - or the supervisor feels the order may no longer be necessary,
- to consider whether or not to apply to the court to vary or discharge the order.

OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES WITH WHICH CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE MAY INTERVENE

- **Section 7**

A court may ask the local authority for a welfare report when they are considering any private law application under the Children Act 1989.

- **Section 37**

When, during any private law proceedings under the Children Act 1989, a question arises about the welfare of the child, and it seems to the court that it might be appropriate for a Care Order or Supervision Order to be made, then it will direct a local authority to undertake an investigation of the child's circumstances and report to the Court its findings.

- **Private fostering (Section 44 of Children Act 2004)**

A **private fostering** situation is one in which a child under the age of 16 (under 18 if disabled) is cared for by someone other than their parent or 'close relative' for 28 days or more. Close relatives are defined as step-parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles or aunts (whether of full-blood, half-blood or marriage/affinity). ***It is an offence not to notify the local council (CSC) of a private fostering arrangement.*** If you hear about such an arrangement you should discuss it with your manager. CSC is legally required to make sure that all children that are privately fostered are cared for by a suitable carer in an appropriate environment. This is important so that CSC can make sure the child is safe and that their needs are being met.

- Children's Social Care also deal with **Fostering and Adoption Applications (including step-parent adoption)**

Children's Social Care (01904 551900) childrensfrontdoor@york.gov.uk

ALLEGATIONS ABOUT A PROFESSIONAL – THE LOCAL AUTHORITY DESIGNATED OFFICER (LADO)

If you have a **concern or allegation about a professional (including volunteers) who, or an organisation which, works with children and young people** and the way they have behaved towards a child, you will need to contact the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)**.

The role of the LADO is to coordinate all allegations and concerns made against a person who, or organisation which, works with children within the City of York and to:

- Provide advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations
- Liaise with the police and other agencies
- Monitor the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible consistent with a thorough and fair process.

LADO contact details: lado@york.gcsx.gov.uk If you do not have secure email please contact 01904 551783 to make your referral or to seek advice.

You can find a [LADO Referral Form](#) and details in the *Managing Allegations Practice Guidance* here: <http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/allegations-against-childcare-professionals-and-volunteers.htm>

NORTH YORKSHIRE POLICE

North Yorkshire Police Partnership Information Form

The [NYP Police/ Partnership Information Sharing Form](#)⁸ can be used if you think you have **information to share with the police** about situations in which children, young people or adults may be vulnerable to exploitation. This form is for sharing information and intelligence *only*. Email the completed form to: intelligence@northyorkshire.pnn.police.uk.

If someone is at risk of immediate harm you need to call the police on 999.

⁸ <http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/concerned-about-a-child-or-young-person.htm>

YOUNG PEOPLE IN CUSTODY (SECURE ESTATE) AND THE YOUTH OFFENDING TEAM (YOT)

Working Together 2018 states that: *'Each centre should work with their local safeguarding partners to agree how they will work together, and with the relevant YOT (Youth Offending Team) and placing authority (the Youth Custody Service), to make sure that the needs of individual children are met..*

The York YOT⁹ works with young people from the age of 10 years old into young adulthood, who are at risk of, or involved in offending behaviour.

In York the YOT responds to the needs of young people in Secure Estate (young offender institutions, secure children's homes and secure training centres) in a collaborative way, with an assessment (ASSET Plus) and plan jointly owned with the secure establishments. This ensures all live cases with sentence plans in place, can be accordingly adapted when there are safeguarding or risk of harm concerns identified.

If you have enquiries about youth offending or the Secure Estate you can contact YOT at: yot.admin@york.gov.uk or 01904 554565.

SAFEGUARDING DISABLED CHILDREN

Disabled children (physical, learning, mental or emotional disabilities) may be particularly vulnerable to abuse and neglect for a variety of reasons. In addition to increased risk factors, disabled children may have communication difficulties which make it difficult to tell others what is happening to them. Adults, including professionals assessing their needs and caring for them may concentrate on the child's special needs and overlook signs and symptoms which may suggest that the child is being maltreated. Concerns about a disabled child should be followed up in the same way as concerns about any child or young person as detailed in this Threshold Document. You can find more information about [safeguarding disabled children](#) here: <http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/safeguarding-disabled-children.htm> including the [City of York Safeguarding Disabled Children Storyboard](#) which gives information about how services in York work together to safeguard these children.

⁹ https://www.york.gov.uk/info/20089/youth_offenders/511/youth_offenders

SCREENING TOOLS

To help you make your decision about the nature and seriousness of your concern there are a number of screening tools available on the CYSCB website: <http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/concerned-about-a-child-or-young-person.htm> . These screening tools are for use by any practitioner. In addition to supporting with decision making, they provide valuable information to assist in contacting the Children's Front Door for a CSC referral or support with Early Help assessment and intervention. These are not full assessments of risk.

[CYSCB Child Sexual Exploitation Screening Tool](#)¹¹

[CYSCB Neglect Screening Tool](#)¹⁰

[Brook Traffic Light Tool](#)¹¹ - supports professionals working with children and young people by helping them to identify and respond appropriately to sexual behaviours <https://www.brook.org.uk/our-work/category/sexual-behaviours-traffic-light-tool>

CYSCB GUIDANCE AND PROCEDURES

[CYSCB guidance and procedures](#)¹² can help in decision making about what to do next. You will find a range of multi-agency guidance, procedures and strategies on the CYSCB website.

¹⁰ <http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/concerned-about-a-child-or-young-person.htm>

¹¹ <https://www.brook.org.uk/our-work/category/sexual-behaviours-traffic-light-tool>

¹² <http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/child-protection-procedures.htm>

LINKS TO FURTHER SAFEGUARDING INFORMATION

There is information on the CYSCB website about safeguarding issues and signs and symptoms plus links to further information and guidance both local and national. This includes:

Neglect - <http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/neglect.htm>

Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation - <http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/child-sexual-abuse-and-exploitation.htm>

Harmful Sexual Behaviour - <http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/harmful-sexual-behaviour.htm>

Children Missing from Home, Care or Education - <http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/missing-children.htm>

County Lines (criminal exploitation) [http://www.yor-ok.org.uk/Safer%20Children%20York%202014/bitesize-guides.htm/#County Lines](http://www.yor-ok.org.uk/Safer%20Children%20York%202014/bitesize-guides.htm/#County%20Lines)

Online Abuse <http://www.yor-ok.org.uk/Safer%20Children%20York%202014/bitesize-guides-m-.htm/#Online>

And **CYSCB Bitesize Guides** cover signs, symptoms and information on **over 60 more safeguarding children subjects** - <http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/bitesize-guides-menu.htm>

For more information, please visit www.yor-ok.org.uk or www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk.

If you wish to make a comment, complaint or a compliment, please contact City of York Council on 01904 554145 or haveyoursay@york.gov.uk or write to the Complaints Manager, West Offices, Station Rise, York, YO1 6GA.

This information can be provided in your own language.

我們也用您們的語言提供這個信息 (Cantonese)

Ta informacja może być dostarczona w twoim własnym języku. (Polish)

Bu bilgiyi kendi dilinizde almanız mümkündür. (Turkish)

☎ 01904 551550



If you would like this information in an accessible format (for example in large print, on CD or by email) or another language, please telephone 01904 551550.

