

# City of York

Safeguarding Children Partnership



City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership

## Adolescent Strategy

2020-2022



## Executive Summary

The City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership (CYSCP) has developed and is implementing this **Adolescent Strategy**.

This strategy will set out how we will work with children and young people and how we will include young people in decision making regarding their lives and the issues they are faced with.

This Adolescent Strategy is a multi- agency partnership document which the three safeguarding partners have agreed to.

The overarching vision of City of York Council is “**A better start for children and young people**” and we look to achieve this through our mission statement; “**every conversation starts with the child.**”

Through our practice, Social Workers have proposed and agreed to adhere to our values that ensure we can deliver positive outcomes:

- Everyone feels safe
- Risk is understood and managed well
- Practice is consistently good

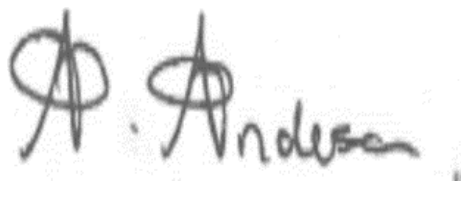
Our strategy builds on our commitment to purposeful engagement with children and young people.

The strategy sets out our ambition for our children and young people and care leavers and along with our corporate parenting responsibilities and strategic priorities in a way which puts children and young people and care leavers at the centre of improvements in the planning, delivery and evaluation of our services. To do this, the strategy outlines the areas we are going to work together on as a partnership to improve and why.

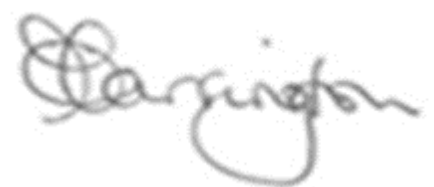
To make sure we deliver what we say we will do and know when we have been successful, the strategy will develop a partnership action plan.



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## Introduction

The strategy's overall scope is to improve outcomes for children in the adolescence stage of life. It recognises that for young people going through adolescence to do this effectively, a range of other vulnerabilities need to be better understood and interventions need to adapt, with partners, peers, families and communities being better placed to prevent and respond to the needs of young people in this time of increased vulnerability .

The strategy recognises the complexities of young people's lives and considers that the risk of abuse and exploitation can be exacerbated by a range of vulnerabilities with the impact of suffering such harm leading to life-long consequences unless effectively addressed.

The period of adolescence is one of huge change for the individual in relation to many aspects of their life - physiological, cognitive and social - and a time when the key goal becomes 'discovery of self' (Scannapieco and Connell-Carrick, 2005).

At the same time, the weight of research evidence suggests that not only do few young people suffer serious internal stress, or act out in challenging ways against parents or externalise their turmoil in other ways, but rather that it is parents themselves who become stressed during their child's adolescence (Steinberg, 2001).

## Definition of Adolescence for the City of York

Adolescence is generally defined as being from the onset of puberty to the time when a young person becomes independent from their parents, however it is recognised that adolescence is a period of change and can happen at different times for different young people (e.g. there is evidence that children may now be starting puberty earlier than in previous generations - e.g. see de Muinck Keizer-Schrama and Mul, 2001).

It is also important to recognise that the transition from adolescence to young adulthood is acknowledged to be difficult for all young people, but the problems facing those with a disability will tend to be greater (Hudson, 2003). Therefore, we have to recognise that young people with a disability may be more vulnerable to risk.

For the purposes of the CYSCP multi-agency Adolescent Strategy partners will consider children from the age of 10 to 18 and post 18 where services are remaining involved.

## National Context

Adolescence is a time of change it is a time when biological, psychological and social changes make adolescents more likely to engage in risk-taking behaviours than children or adults (Calkins, 2010).

As noted by Hanson and Holmes (2014) in their paper for the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS):

*“The range and nature of adolescent risks are different to those facing younger and older age groups... Adolescents are exposed to a wider range of risks than younger children. At age 14 they are most at risk of entering the realm of ‘polyvictimisation’ – i.e. being the victim of many different types of maltreatment. Ten per cent of 11 to 17-year-olds in the UK have experienced 12 or more forms of maltreatment during their lifetime.”*

Within the UK, the child protection system is underpinned by the Children Act 1989 and 2004; its guiding principle is ensuring the welfare of children is paramount. This child-centered approach provides emphasis on protecting those who are vulnerable or those who may be at risk of harm.

Some children are more vulnerable than others (Daniel, 2010), those who are can be vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their family and from individuals they come across in their day-to-day lives (Working Together, 2018).

There are many forms of risks to children including: abuse, neglect, exploitation i.e. by criminal gangs and organised crime groups or sexual exploitation, trafficking, online abuse, behavioural difficulties, school exclusions, special educational needs, children looked after, those who are missing, risk taking behaviours, radicalisation and those with physical or mental health issues.

For many children, this means that the adolescent period is a time of increased vulnerability and can also potentially cause Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES). 'ACES are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood (0-17 years) such as experiencing violence, abuse, or neglect; witnessing violence in the home; and having a family member attempt or die by suicide' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2019); these traumatic events can have lasting effects into adulthood.

In 2018, the Department of Education updated Working Together (2018) which provides more emphasis on working with adolescents who may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families i.e. Contextual Safeguarding.

Contextual Safeguarding is defined as 'an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families' (Firmin & Lloyd, 2020). It is important for professionals within the child protection system and the wider safeguarding partners to recognise that 'assessment of, and intervention with, these spaces are a critical part of safeguarding practices' (Firmin & Lloyd, 2020).

In March 2020, the Department of Education published the triennial analysis of Serious Case Reviews 2014-2017, a key area identified was learning from cases involving vulnerable adolescents. The report found that of the 368 serious case reviews considered:

- 31% of those cases involved children aged 11 and over
- Adolescents were identified as one of the main cohorts of children who 'represented the periods of greatest vulnerability to serious or fatal child maltreatment'
- The main vulnerabilities identified included Criminal Exploitation, Sexual Exploitation, Harmful Sexual Behavior, Trafficking, Missing and the use of Social Media.

'Understanding adolescents' experiences, including their family lives, local community and wider social networks, is necessary in understanding adolescent risk and harm' (Brandon et al, 2020). The recently published review by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel: '*It was hard to escape safeguarding children at risk from criminal exploitation*' (2020), understanding the nature and level of risk faced by all children (particularly adolescents) is key to determining what services should be provided and when.

## Regional Context

Within the Yorkshire and Humber region adolescents at risks and transition from Children's Services to Adult Services has been identified as an emerging trend. The Regional Managers and Chairs Meeting have agreed that they will consider this further and any learning or actions identified from the regional group will be taken forward by each Partnership.

## Local Context (City of York)

**Every conversation starts with a child.** Involving young people in this strategy is essential to facilitate a strategy that includes the views of young people and brings the story for young people in the City of York to the forefront.

The City of York is developing a strengths based practice model which is centered on systemic practice.

Systemic practice seeks to make sense of the world through relationships, focusing on the whole family system rather than individuals. Through a systemic approach, change can be achieved through exploring relationship patterns and how they impact on children.

The City of York have also strengthened their processes ensuring that children, young people and their families get the right level of support at the right time, these include:

- Introduction of the multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in July 2019 which replaced the Children's Front Door. The MASH is a multi-agency team made up of representatives from a range of services, including Social Care, Early Help, Police and local Health Professionals and is a single point of contact for all concerns about children.
- A multi-agency Child Exploitation Meeting (MACEM) process was established by Children's Social Care jointly with North Yorkshire Police. It is a monthly meeting focusing on all aspects of child exploitation and young people transitioning to adult services.
- Weekly intelligence sharing meetings take place between the Community Safety team, North Yorkshire Police and Children's Social Care involving only those staff who are police vetted. Membership will soon be extended to include Adult Social Care. This meeting is pivotal to the increase in speed at which the Community Safety Team are able to take enforcement action in order to disrupt local county lines activity and share any patterns or impact on children and young people.
- During 2019/2020, the focus on improving social work practice across the service identified that significant work was needed to strengthen the partnership responses to missing children and those vulnerable to exploitation. During early 2020 senior managers within the Council committed to creating a larger, more specialist resource to work with partners and engage directly with these children, aimed at reducing risk and increasing resilience.
- Additionally, the City of York Safeguarding Children Partnership has recently reviewed and updated their multi-agency Threshold Guidance and Child Exploitation Practice Guidance which provides a more aligned multi-agency framework for assessing and responding to need and risks of children.

## Vision, Purpose, Aims and Principles

Understanding the context in which children and young people live their lives is an essential feature of effective multi-agency intervention.

Young people require stability, continuity and persistence. Effective intervention takes time and building trusting relationships with young people is key to engagement and successful planning.

We know that frequent changes in living arrangements, carers, social workers, and schools will undermine progress and we will aim to ensure every child has a trusted and stable relationship with a person who is able to provide support.

The safety and welfare of children and young people is paramount.

It is imperative to understand that the experiences of abuse are often associated with the local community and public spaces in which children spend their time and as a partnership we will consider how young people are better protected and supported by a community response to safety.

Public environments also include those in the virtual world. In this respect, how young people are safeguarded in the context of their 'access to technology and their use of social media' needs to be incorporated into plans and service provision.

We will aim to understand the vulnerability factors that can impact on and increase the risk of a young person being exploited.

We will strive to understand about context, the root causes of vulnerabilities and where these arise. For example, managing a young person involved in county lines through a criminal justice response (where they are under significant duress from gang members and have a neglectful home environment) is unlikely to result in change for a young person.

We will ensure multi-agency partners work consistently with children, young people and their families, building their resilience and providing timely support to meet their needs.

We will ensure children are at the center and consider the impact on the young person in all contact, assessment, plans and interventions from universal, and targeted early help right through to all services provided to children from all agencies.

Support needs and plans by all agencies should be led by the child, and should involve children at every opportunity. They should be flexible and consider what support is available during weekends, and evenings for the young person.

We will consult with and respond to feedback from young people to ensure support, intervention and service provision is informed by what works well for young people.

## What do adolescents tell us in the City of York?

The voice of children and young people is very important to us, it is also a strategic priority for the CYSCP. As part of the development of this strategy it was important to understand what adolescents are telling us. Within the City of York there have been a number of consultations that have taken place with over 6,000 young people in the past year, these include:

- **Make Your Mark Survey** – consultation with 5,530 children and young people across 10 secondary schools, 6 primary schools and 1 college setting
- **U Matter Survey** – consultation with 83 care experiencing young people aged 11-21
- **12 Moves Project** – consultation with 471 children and young people with SEND aged 4-21
- Regular consultation with York's Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum.
- **CYSCP's Early Adopters Social Media project** – consultation with the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum
- The introduction and roll out of **'Mind of my own'**

Overwhelmingly, the key findings of what young people have told us about what is important to them is:

- Mental Health, including the risks and potential impact that social media can have on young people's mental health is important to them.
- Young people believe that there should be more education on life skills and preparing for adulthood to support their future.
- Children and young people should be listened to.
- It is important that there are good quality relationships between young people and professionals.
- Young people feel that more should be done to educate young people regarding keeping safe online.

We have ensured that their voice has been included within our key priority areas of this strategy and also how we as professionals continue to listen and promote their voice through the work we undertake with them.

## How we will ensure Young People have a voice in the City of York

- We will where possible promote supportive relationships between young people and their family and peers and between other young people and key practitioners.
- Ensure services are accessible and advertised and include consultation and evaluation by children and young people.
- Equip and support the partnership workforce to ensure everyone working with adolescents has an understanding of what children and young people tell us works well and how to ensure everyone works with children and young people and not do to them.

## Key Priorities

The CYSCP have identified the following key areas for the strategy:

### Transitional Safeguarding and Preparing for Adulthood

The Preparing for Adulthood (PFA) Service meets on a monthly basis to look at the young people who will be becoming 18 in the next couple of years. Depending on the young people who they are working alongside, they meet with colleagues from all across Children's Social Care as well as the Mental Health Social Work Team, Community Social Work Teams or Learning Disability Social Work Teams in Adult Social Care. It may also include CAMHS, Education, and Local Area Teams. This enables the service to begin to plan next steps and ensure timely referrals are made when needed. Our aspiration is to allocate at 16 ½ if appropriate and jointly work with the adult worker up until the person's 18th birthday.

We want young people to live their best safe life in their City. The Preparing for Adulthood team is a part of City of York's multi-agency response to supporting young people known to services, as they move into adulthood.

The prospect of increasing independence, keeping healthy, learning skills for employment and maintaining friends in our local communities are exciting for many of us and daunting for some. We want to ensure that young people have a clear pathway into their adulthood with our support when needed.

In terms of Preparing for Adulthood, colleagues from Adult Social Care attend MACEM (Multi-Agency Child Exploitation and Missing) meetings and as a safeguarding team, they have identified children aged 17 from this meeting. It is vital to attend these meetings to find out about the young people who we may know ahead of their 18th birthday. The service is currently developing a robust referral arrangement with Children's Social Care to ensure that we can exchange good quality valuable information as young people near their 18th birthday.

Adult Social Care Head of Service attends the CYSCP Business Group and the Missing from Home/CSA/CSE subgroup. Additionally, the Adult Social Care Head of Service attends the Systems Leadership Group and the Inter-Boards Chairs meeting which aligns multi-agency work and highlights the work being undertaken by other boards and partnerships.

We would expect that in the near future, all Preparing for Adulthood referrals come via a Preparing for Adulthood monthly forum and that any safeguarding concerns would also be highlighted there.



## Transitions Agreement between York and North Yorkshire Youth Justice Services and the Probation Service

York Youth Justice Service meets on a quarterly basis with the local Probation Service and Community Rehabilitation Company to discuss young people who are on statutory court orders and will become 18 years old during the length of the imposed sentence. There is a national agreement between Youth Justice Services and National Probation Services that any young person who is subject to a statutory court order can be transferred to Adult Criminal Justice Services in line with the *Joint National Protocol for Transitions in England (Youth Justice Board for England and Wales 2018)*.

When children reach their 18th birthday services in the City of York have developed their own working agreement which has been in place since the national pilot scheme ran in 2016. This has recently been broadened out to include inclusion of North Yorkshire Youth Justice Services, the local agreement has been updated and now forms the basis of decision making on whether a young person should remain with Youth Justice Services until the end of the order, or if it's appropriate for it to be taken over by Adult Criminal Services.

The process and agreement highlighted above considers the young persons assessed and presenting needs, and will include whether a young person has a well-established working relationship with their Youth Justice Worker. Whether they have significant safety and wellbeing concerns that would be better managed by Youth Justice Services, as well as the risk of serious harm they may pose to the public. An overriding factor that is considered is how long the actual order has to run after the young person's 18th birthday, and whether introducing new services is a worthwhile option.

A key factor in the process of transition arrangements means that through close joined up working between the services, that a young person can be introduced to a key worker from Adult Criminal Justice Services and start working with them as part of their order 3 months before their 18th birthday.

### Engagement with Education

Adolescents are best supported by a strong school offer leading to sustained outcomes and progression to education, employment and training.

Through a secure and safe school experience, the vast majority of young people are prepared for adult life academically and socially through the education providers in the City of York.

The first layer of support is from schools, this includes a broad and balanced curriculum offer and strong pastoral support. Schools in the City of York have developed over time to manage their populations through key posts supporting careers progression, emotional literacy, learning support, physical and mental health, safeguarding, attendance and school to school transitions.

The outcomes of this are seen through City of York's low NEET figures, low Fixed Term Exclusions, low Permanent Exclusions and strong academic outcomes.

Schools are supported through a range of Local Authority roles:

- School Wellbeing Team to support early mental health need prior to CAMHS
- Educational Psychologist Team to support the assessment and provision for additional SEN
- SENDOs to support children escalating through RSA to EHCP
- SENDIAS who provide independent advice to parents
- Inclusion Advisor to support in maintaining students in mainstream education and securing routes beyond this if needed, including the Fair Access Process and EHE register
- Specialist Teaching Team to provide support and advice for all SEN needs
- Local Area Teams and Early Help practitioners to provide support through the Family Early Help Assessment (FEHA) process prior to CSC
- Police Liaison Officer to provide direct support to schools
- Healthy Child Service to provide early support linked to Health
- School Safeguarding Advisor to provide guidance on safeguarding issues for whole cohorts and individual children
- School Attendance Officer to support work with poor attenders
- Home Tuition Team for students who are deemed to be unable to attend school medically
- Learning and Work Advisor Team to support careers progression
- Virtual School to provide support for CLA
- In addition, there are clear support routes through to CAMHS and CSC that schools are regularly involved in reviewing.

Support is also sought and utilised from the voluntary sector including:

- York Mind
- Changing Lives
- The Island

Strong pathways are developed for transition between settings at key transition points with good relationships evident between providers. To improve this further, engagement has been sought with Wwhole School SEND through NASEN to run transition projects improving transfer from Early Years Service to Primary and Primary to Secondary. This will lead to guidance and training to maximise the opportunities for this to be as strong as possible. Regular and well attended SENCO forums and Pastoral Leaders meetings occur at both primary and secondary phase to further support this process in year and to share good practice. Transition to Post 16 is strong and Further Education partners have good relationships with secondary settings supported by the LAWAs.

When students transfer between settings within year, these are managed by normal admissions routes unless a vulnerability exists and this is then supported through either the EHCP process or Fair Access. This ensures that students are placed quickly and successfully in schools.

Where students leave mainstream settings, this is managed solely through the EHCP and Fair Access process. The City of York offers specialist settings at Hob Moor Oaks, Applefields, Danesgate and at Haxby Road. At Post 16, this is widened to include York Learning, Blueberry Academy, Choose 2 and Ad Astra.

Developing a clear graduated response is essential in providing a clear structure for schools, parents and students to understand. New policies have been written in the 2019-20 academic year for EHE, Fair Access, Roll changes, Managed Moves and Reduced Timetables and are available publically.

By providing a strong school offer, relevant Local Authority support, specialist services and provisions and strong transitions towards adulthood, the City of York recognise the place that Education has in positively effecting Adolescents progression.

## **Mental Health**

Young people have access to tiered support through a range of routes within the City of York. These routes are signposted to by professionals in Education, Health and Social Care. These routes could arise from one off appointments and/or family meetings and also through a formal process including FEHAs, CSC referrals and CAMHS referrals.

The voluntary sector offer strong support through York Mind, IDAS and The Island in particular. Changing Lives offer specific input where students are involved with substance misuse. There is also a Suicide Prevention lead within the City of York Council.

Parents and schools can also access an active layer of support from independent drama and art therapists.

The tiered approach to support Mental Health is best thought of as follows:

### **1) The offer from schools and within the community**

- A school offer that provides safety and belonging and meets individuals needs well
- Training for school staff such as Mental Health First Aid, Trauma Informed, Safeguarding and SEN specific training linked to the Code of Practice
- A sense of purpose through quality careers programmes meeting Gatsby benchmarks
- A community offer from Youth Work to the Voluntary Sector to provide positive experiences for young people in York

### **2) First stage intervention for low level and emerging needs**

- Specifically trained school staff (EP)
- Specific voluntary organisations such as York Mind
- Independent Drama and Art therapists
- Online resources and counselling tools such as KOOTH
- Support from Local Area Teams
- Family Support from short breaks
- Advice and signposting from Health Professionals including the Healthy Child Service

### 3) Further intervention for embedded need

- A graduated school approach to SEN including knowledge and use of MySupportPlans and EHCP process
- Support from CYC SEN staff
- School Wellbeing Workers in each school
- Assessments by Educational Psychologists
- Support from the Specialist Teaching Team including Home Tuition
- Support from Specialist Education settings
- Assessment by CAMHS
- Referral to CSC
- Support from CIN
- Support and Assessment by CAMHS through the Single Point of Access
- Bespoke support from Health professionals including Hospital staff if needed

### 4) High end and crisis support for the highest need cases

- Use of specialist provision if required for Education
- Support through the EHCP process and CYC SEN team
- Support through CSC through child protection plan
- Intensive input from CAMHS including the crisis line and FIRST
- Suicide Prevention input from the Suicide Prevention Lead
- Appropriate input from Health professionals including Hospital staff

For students in care, the Virtual School and Placement team provide support and advice throughout these processes to families.

## Social Media

Social media plays an important part in young people's lives and offers many opportunities. It also provides many challenges by exposing young people to potential risk and negative interactions with peers which can impact on their mental wellbeing. A young people led project on social media and its effect on mental wellbeing was initiated by the CYSCP as part of the 'Early Adopters' project around engagement with schools. During the Early adopters project young people's social media use was identified as a key issue for schools, and other partners, particularly in the adolescent group once young people enter secondary school.

The young people's social media project aims are:

- To work with young people to identify the current social media use and the challenges and opportunities this offers
- To build the resilience of the young people of our city in managing negative interactions and events on social media
- To use young people across the city to design and campaign on a 'charter' of safe practices for social media use that young people agree to maximise its benefits and control its risks
- To run successful and high profile awareness campaigns about the risks of social media and how these can be managed to protect mental health and relationships with others
- To link in with national and local partners and expertise on this issue to inform and develop its strategy
- To develop educational resources and lesson plans, informed by young people's views in the city and the issues they have identified as part of the project.

## Sexual health

In 2019, there were 468,342 diagnoses of STIs made in England, a 5% increase since 2018. The impact of STIs remains greatest in young heterosexuals 15 to 24 years; black ethnic minorities; and gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (MSM, PHE, 2020)

A national approach to reduction in teenage pregnancies within the 10 year teenage pregnancy strategy alongside a shift in aspirations towards education has demonstrated a significant reduction in conception rates. The conception rate for women under 18 years decreased for the 11th year in a row, the longest continued decrease since records began". (ONS, March 2020).

An aspect of this that remains a concern is that areas of deprivation still have higher rates of teenage conception and the proportion that led to a legal abortion increased to its highest point since records began in 1990." (ONS, March 2020)

With a ward based consideration the Westfield area of York is noted as the most deprived with an acknowledgement to areas within the York outer ring road also having pockets of deprivation.

### Local provision

An integrated Sexual Health Service is commissioned by City of York Council to be delivered by York Hospital Foundation NHS Trust. YorSexualHealth(YSH) is a free confidential service that offers STI testing, STI treatment and a full range of contraception including long acting reversible contraception (LARC) to all residents of all ages/all sexualities and all genders. This is delivered within a main site at Monkgate and spoke sites in Acomb and York University.

A multi-faceted approach to STI testing and treatment within the City of York includes a provision of in clinic testing and treatment, online testing, pick up medication and postal treatment. Condoms are available to be ordered online and posted out for all over 16-year olds via the YSH website.

A full contraceptive offer for all options including the provision of long acting reversible contraception (LARC) within all clinics allows for greater patient choice.

With a recognition of the potential risk of CSE, all under 18 year olds and those with a learning disability under 25 have an assessment of their risks undertaken at each service contact or attendance. This is to identify concerns including ACES, Contextual Safeguarding, CSE risk, mental health issues and current CSC/professional involvement. This is to offer referral/support/sharing of information as needed whilst working within the parameters of the trust safeguarding policy and the best interests of the child.

A specific under 18 clinic operates within the Monkgate site on a Monday evening. This is a well-attended service with referrals from other professionals and self-referral attendances.

The Sexual Health Clinical Outreach Team (SCOT) aims to meet the sexual health clinical needs of young and vulnerable people, and to support colleagues and other professionals when providing sexual health care to these groups. SCOT work closely with partner agencies including but not limited to: HCT/schools/further & higher education/LD services/carers/drug & alcohol services/CSC/ Childrens home/hostels. Clinical care may include provision of contraception (including LARC), STI testing, sexual health vaccinations and treatment. This is supported within clinical services or as an outreach visit within a home or location appropriate for the young person. SCOT deliver in conjunction with Mesmac a trans/MSM clinical session within an outreach clinic in York for all ages.

The online referral process to SCOT for professionals is via the YSH website <https://www.yorsexualhealth.org.uk/yor-sexual-health-professionals/home/i-would-like-to-make-a-referral/the-specialist-clinical-outreach-team-scot/>

YorSexualHealth (YSH) runs a free and confidential counselling service for people of all ages living within York who wish to seek support around different aspects of sexual health. This can be accessed via self-referral or professional referral on the YSH website <https://www.yorsexualhealth.org.uk/self-referral-form/>

YSH has a referral process in place with the sexual assault referral service to facilitate those aged 13 and above into clinical services for ongoing testing, treatment, vaccinations, and emergency coil provision.

YSH has a close working relationship with Marie Stopes and BPAS the commissioned providers of abortions to support ongoing contraception including LARC as required.

Additionally YSH has developed a sexual health champions presentation that can be requested via the contact us section of the YSH website for any professionals working with young people to use within their area.

YSH subcontract and work closely with our partners Mesmac. They deliver the LGBT+ Youth peer support group (currently taking place weekly online). Within this there are a number of workshop based interventions on topics such as staying safe online, sexual health and risk for LGBT people, mental health strategies.

Mesmac also offer 1 to 1 support for LGBT+ young people but particularly MSM and trans. This may involve supporting them around sexuality/gender issues, but they also see a cohort of MSM aged 14-16 who are downloading Grindr and using it to meet men for sex (and often being exploited). Mesmac work specifically with these young men on risk reduction and staying safer -this is related to a small number of young people but as Grindr is easy to download and doesn't require any real age verification this is an increasing concern.

## Healthy Child Service

The Healthy Child Service School Nurses provide appropriate, easy to understand information on a range of sexual health issues including contraception, STIs, relationships and sexuality. They support young people in helping them to develop the confidence, skills and ability to make safe informed choices. School nurses will work with individuals or groups as appropriate. School Nurses will signpost young people to relevant agencies for further support, information and advice to young people.

The team also work with schools to advise and support sexual health education including access to resources and local service provision.

- [www.yor-ok.org.uk/young-people/wellbeing.htm](http://www.yor-ok.org.uk/young-people/wellbeing.htm)
- [www.yorsexualhealth.org.uk/](http://www.yorsexualhealth.org.uk/)

## Exploitation

This strategic priority focuses on identification of children and young people who are being coerced or exploited to engage in harmful and illegal behaviour and our shared ambition to provide rapid and effective protective multi-agency responses and support.

The aim of this strategic priority is to ensure that children and young people are effectively kept safe from exploitative adults, peers and groups through strong multi-agency partnerships that wrap around vulnerability to protect from harm. Child exploitation is a complex form of abuse which can make it difficult to identify. The challenge for the CYSCP is to ensure professionals have a good understanding of normal adolescent behaviours and the concept of consent.

**Exploitation:** occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child under the age of 18 into sexual or criminal activity either in exchange for something the exploited adolescent needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The exploited adolescent 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. (DfE, 2017)

**Grooming:** is when someone builds an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or trafficking. Children and adolescents can be groomed online or face-to-face, by a stranger or by someone they know - for example a family member, friend or professional.

**Contextual Safeguarding:** an approach to understanding and responding to adolescents' experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the relationships adolescents form in neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents have little influence over these contexts, and adolescent's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine child-parent relationships. Practitioners must engage with individuals and sectors that have influence within extra-familial contexts and recognise that working within these spaces is a critical part of safeguarding practice. Contextual Safeguarding expands child protection systems in recognition that adolescents are vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts. (Adapted from Firmin, 2017).

## Children who go missing from their home

Adolescents who are vulnerable need to be identified, safeguarded and supported for as long as they need to be. There is joined up working with partners in MASH and referral pathways to the Child Missing and Exploitation Team. Links are in place with the Youth Justice Service and the Community Safety Team.

Comprehensive multi-agency assessments identify risks within families, schools, peer groups and public spaces. Specifically, extra-familial relationships and environments that impact upon adolescent's safety are better understood. Each child who is adopted by the MACEM due to concerns of exploitation will have a risk and reduction assessment developed. This will be reviewed regularly by the multi-agency panel.

When a child goes missing or runs away they are at risk. Safeguarding children therefore includes protecting them from this risk. Children may run away from a problem or they may have been coerced to run away by someone else. Although looked after children are particularly vulnerable when they go missing, the majority of children who go missing are not looked after, and go missing from their family home.

The City of York has a joint approach with safeguarding partners, to protect children from the risks associated with going missing. In 2020, following a successful Return Home Interviews (RHI) and risk reduction planning, the majority of children reported as missing showed a reduction in the amount of missing/absent episodes. A small number were identified as being reported missing at the same time as being on the Children Missing Education list.

## Sharing information about adolescent risk and harm

It is essential for all practitioners working with children and young people that they understand the influence of wider contexts and contribute to sharing information.

Children and young people, especially those who are experiencing CSE or CCE, may not want to share information about their friends, associates or places they have been because it would put them at risk to do so. The young person will therefore need time and to build trust in order to share such details.

Young people with Special educational Needs and a Disability (SEND) may not be able to give or withhold consent for information sharing and although this presents an ethical issue where there are concerns as to whether it is right to seek consent from parents, safeguarding the child is paramount.

## Safeguarding adolescents is everyone's business

The Child Missing and Exploitation Team was formed to work alongside Police, Health, Education, Youth Justice Service and Community Safety Teams.

The team identify and work with those children most at risk of exploitation by multi-agency mapping activity, sharing and collating intelligence and developing approaches to the investigation of exploitation and vulnerability. In this way offenders are identified and young people are effectively safeguarded and supported.



This has involved a greater focus on relationship based direct work and engagement with young people and their families. There has been an increase in weekly multi-agency risk management meetings to complement the monthly MACEM meeting and ensure risk is managed in a timelier manner and ensure greater multi-agency working.

Carefully planned work, with persistent and skilled social workers who will engage with young people and their carers means their specific needs and strengths, as well as the impact of abuse and trauma are better understood. This work has ensured a review of risk assessments and CIN and CP plans with the young person to ensure that they are involved and actively part of the planning and intervention.

The City of York is developing a contextual safeguarding approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships young people form in their neighborhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse.

The Child Missing and Exploitation team is also using Trauma-Informed Practice to work with children. A strengths-based framework grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma, that emphasises physical, psychological, and emotional safety for everyone, and that creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment (Hopper et al., 2010)

For professionals working in a trauma-informed way – listening to young people carefully, helping them recognise how past experiences influence their ways of relating to the world today and offering a trustworthy relationship where they can try to build a safer life for themselves – might be the most important service we can offer them (Knight, 2015).

The Police analysts review information and intelligence gathered from partner agencies to build a profile of the pattern of incidents; the networks which connect victims and potential abusers and identify hotspot areas, so services can work together to both identify and prevent abuse. This gives a greater picture of the nature of risk/exploitation.

A safeguarding approach is in place that focuses upon changing public and social environments (including schools) where adolescents may encounter significant harm, rather than relocating them to remove them from harmful contexts.

Those who seek to harm or exploit children are identified, disrupted and convicted. Robust offender management post-conviction and/or effective intervention strategies reduce the risk presented by identified abusers.

Disruption tactics the continued commitment from the Police in North Yorkshire to tackling exploitation has been integral to the progress made to date. The Home Office's Disruption toolkit has been promoted with the intention of helping all safeguarding partners to understand and access existing legislative opportunities at their disposal and to target specific risks, ranging from warning notices to offence charges and care orders. The use of existing legislative powers, such as orders and injunctions, continue to be an essential part of the safeguarding process in the City of York.

North Yorkshire Police have been involved in a range of disruption activities such as the creation of information markers / flags to raise awareness to officers of the risks to identified young people. North Yorkshire Police actively investigate concerns when a child may be a victim of modern slavery or internally trafficked due to CSE. In partnership with North Yorkshire police, risk assessments are updated and cross referenced with intelligence on missing and victims/ perpetrators of CSE in relation to modern slavery and County Lines.

## The City of York funding for the Trusted Relationship Pilot

A reoccurring theme in research into the experience of children and young people who have been abused or exploited is that they lacked a consistent, trusted adult in their lives with whom they could share concerns about their safety and wellbeing. We know that in many cases this has compounded vulnerability and led to harm escalating. The trusted relationship pilot ensures that children have access to a trusted relationship to provide support and intervention.

### Commissioned Services

Families/carers, practitioners, and communities are supported to ensure vulnerable adolescents build resilience against harm. Commissioned providers from the Children's Society support statutory agencies to build trusted positive relationships in order to work to reduce the chance of future risks. PACE (parents against child exploitation) offers tailored support for parents as they often feel powerless and excluded.

### Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)

MAPPA stands for **Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements** and used by agencies such as the Police, the Prison Service and Probation to work together to protect the public by managing the risks posed by violent and sexual offenders living in the community. The aim of MAPPA is to manage the risks that violent and sexual offenders pose to the public by managing the risks associated with these categories of offenders. The various agencies share information about offenders under MAPPA to assess the level of risk they pose to the public.

### Radicalisation

Radicalisation and extremism 'Radicalisation', defined in the Prevent Duty (2015) as the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism while a radicaliser is an individual who encourages others to develop or adopt beliefs and views supportive of terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism.

Extremism has been defined as "the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also regard calls for the death of members of our armed forces as extremist." (Counter-Extremism Strategy, 2015). In the City of York we recognise that extreme views may not lead to wider harm or to radicalisation but we also recognise that some views can be divisive, fracture cohesion and lead to an environment where our communities become vulnerable to exploitation of all forms.

Adolescents can be vulnerable to radicalisation and extremism for all sorts of reasons; their circumstances, experiences or state of mind could have an influence. Risk factors can include:

- a need to dominate and control others
- a need for identity, meaning and belonging
- having a criminal history
- mental health issues
- having lost interest in friends or activities
- possessing materials or symbols associated with an extremist cause
- being influenced or controlled by a group
- feelings of injustice or having political grievances

Commonly, like with other vulnerable adolescents, those who are at risk of radicalisation may have low self-esteem, or be victims of bullying or discrimination. Radicalisers might target them both online and face-to-face. Radicalisers work by building on existing grievances or vulnerabilities, convincing people they can be part of something special. Later grooming them into cutting themselves off from their friends, family and support networks.

## **Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)**

Sexual behaviours expressed by children and adolescents under the age of 18 years old that are developmentally inappropriate, may be harmful towards self or others, or be abusive towards another child, adolescent or adult (Hackett, 2014).

The CYSCP commissioned NSPCC to complete a multi-agency audit of HSB practice in York. Following the launch event in November 2019, attended by over 50 professionals, 15 audits were submitted in January 2020. They were completed by all the key agencies working with children where HSB has been identified as well as voluntary and independent organisations. The findings will inform a multi-agency action plan aimed at raising awareness of HSB across the workforce and of the assessment tools that should be used where there are concerns about HSB, as well as improving policies, procedures and practice, developing referral pathways and service provision across the City of York and identifying training needs.

HSB is a term that describes a range of behaviours along a continuum that includes inappropriate, problematic, harmful and severe sexual behaviours. The CYSCP recognises the importance of a robust assessment, informed by the HSB Framework to determine the help, support and level of intervention that the child exhibiting HSB requires as well as considering the needs of the child who has been harmed. It is essential that relevant agencies work together to safeguard young people exhibiting HSB and recognise the potential for these children to have experienced some form of abuse or neglect or to be living with a range of risks and vulnerabilities that may have led to the HSB.

## Neglect

The Neglect subgroup has identified adolescent neglect as a priority, the group agreed to produce a multi-agency adolescent neglect strategy but has now been superseded by the decision to input into the multi-agency work on adolescent safeguarding, including neglect.

The Neglect sub-group will prioritise adolescent neglect using the '[Neglect Matters](#)' research undertaken by University of York which has been reviewed. Questions raised within this research will be looked at to provide a localised system support for adolescent neglect.

The priority will be for multi-agency partners to review the questions posed in this research and bring back to the Neglect sub-group examples of good practice to share and also identify any system wide gaps which will need addressing collaboratively and reviewing by the sub-group. Actions formulating from this work stream will be reviewed regularly at sub-group meetings and best practice shared via the CYSCP.

## Substance Misuse

The City of York Council have commissioned Changing Lives to deliver the Young Persons Drug and Alcohol Service. This is a free service which aims to reduce the harm drugs and alcohol can cause.

Support is given by the Young Person's Drug and Alcohol Team and includes:

- 1 to 1 support for under 18s using substances (drugs/alcohol).
- 1 to 1 support for 11 to 18 year olds who are affected by someone else's substance use.
- 1 to 1 support for those 18-21 using substances to support the transition to adult services (though there is flexibility up to 23 in certain circumstances)

York's Young Person's Drug and Alcohol Team offer support for young people in the community or a school, at a mutually convenient place and time. Referrals can be made by the Young People themselves, by family, friends and other professionals.

The only requirement is that the young person is aware the referral is being made and they are willing to meet.

## Making a Referral

Complete the [Young People's Substance Misuse Referral Form](#) and email completed forms to [york@changing-lives.org.uk](mailto:york@changing-lives.org.uk) or the secure email: [blossomstreet.admin@changinglives.cjsm.net](mailto:blossomstreet.admin@changinglives.cjsm.net)

## New Developments

The Young Person's Drug and Alcohol Team have qualified through Bath University to run M-PACT (Moving Parents & Children Together) a course developed to work with whole families, parents and children (over 8 years old) where substances have been an issue. It is envisaged that this course will be available from January 2021.

In addition, the team are also keen to develop the support they offer to young people affected by parental substance misuse.

## Training

Further drug and alcohol training is also available for Professionals, Schools, Colleges and University. Contact: [york@changing-lives.org.uk](mailto:york@changing-lives.org.uk) for further information.

## Domestic Abuse

The Government's definition of domestic abuse is:

“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 family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse: Psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional”

Controlling behaviour includes a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour includes an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used by perpetrators to harm, punish, or frighten their victim. This includes issues of concern to black and minority ethnic (BME) communities such as so-called honour based violence, forced or early marriage and female genital mutilation.

All forms of domestic abuse involve perpetrators seeking to exert power and control over their partners or family members and often incorporates a range and variety of different abusive behaviours.

The York and North Yorkshire Domestic Abuse strategy recognises that children and young people are affected by domestic abuse as: witnesses; experiencing abuse directly; and/or living within an abusive household. The strategy will ensure that we recognise the needs of and provide effective support for children and young people who are affected by domestic abuse and develop more preventative approaches through early interventions and awareness raising.

The multi-agency Domestic Abuse Joint Coordination Group ensures the delivery of effective community education to increase awareness and understanding of healthy relationships and domestic abuse in a way that engages with young people and adolescents. It is also increasing awareness and understanding of the signs and impacts of domestic abuse and the support services available amongst staff working with children, young people and families. The group is also developing an improved understanding of 'Young People using abuse' to inform effective response and intervention and expanding support services for young people who have experienced domestic abuse including those who may be at risk of becoming perpetrators.

## Healthy Relationships

Within the City of York there has been improvements to support services for young people who display abusive behaviours.

The Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner for North Yorkshire, North Yorkshire County Council and City of York Council recognise the negative impact that Domestic Abuse has on families, children and communities. They are committed to working together within the Domestic Abuse Joint Coordinating Group of the North Yorkshire Community Safety and Safer York Partnerships to provide effective and consistent support and interventions to meet the needs of those affected.

In order to achieve this vision, they have jointly commissioned a holistic support service to be delivered by Independent Domestic Abuse Services (IDAS) for young people aged 10-16yrs who are starting to show signs of abusive behaviour to help them to recognise and change their behaviour, re-building relationships with their family, and working with a young person's parents/guardians (where appropriate and relevant) to explore parenting skills and enable them to more effectively challenge unhealthy patterns of behaviour. The services will replace the current Respect Young People's Programme through an enhanced service offer which will also work with young people who are being abusive towards their intimate partner.

It is anticipated that greater value for money will be achieved by ensuring the total local investment collectively prioritises the most effective interventions and services, with an emphasis on early-intervention, thereby reducing demand on operational policing services and other related statutory services such as health, housing, children, young people and family prevention services as well as social care.

Support is available for young people aged 10 to 16 years who are demonstrating abusive behaviour towards their family members and/or within intimate relationships with other young people.

Support will also be offered to their parent/guardians.

Support is available for all genders and regardless of sexual orientation.

Referrals can be made by police officers and professionals working with young people and their families (with consent) as well as self/parent-referrals.

## Making a Referral

Referrals for young people and/or their families can continue to be made:

- Online at [www.idas.org.uk/contact/make-a-referral/](http://www.idas.org.uk/contact/make-a-referral/)
- Email to [respect.project@idas.cjsm.net](mailto:respect.project@idas.cjsm.net)
- Phone on 03000 110 110
- Live Chat web chat facility Monday to Friday early evenings via the IDAS website

All referrals will initially be reviewed by specialist domestic abuse staff in a centralised Referral Hub which will be the first point of contact with IDAS for all clients. This will ensure that everyone has access to consistent support; starting with a Hub assessment looking at risk and need, and then, where needed, referral to an appropriate follow-up support service most relevant to meet their needs. The Hub will also provide triage, immediate advice, support and safety planning as required.

For those that require further support, the Hub team will refer the young person and/or their parent/guardians on to the most appropriate support package to meet their needs delivered by specially trained Young People's Domestic Abuse Practitioners:

- Short-term telephone support for parents with a supporting information pack;
- The Respect Young People's Programme for suitable cases of Adolescent to Parent Violence & Abuse which offers a whole family approach;
- Specialist 1-2-1 programme for young perpetrators of abusive in intimate relationships with other young people; or
- Referral to an external agency.

### **What help can they offer?**

- Training for partner agencies with young people and their families on domestic abuse generally, adolescent to parent violence & abuse and safety planning
- Short-term telephone support for parent/guardians
- Parent Information Packs providing advice on safety planning, boundary setting and behaviour management
- Supported group work and peer support networks for Parents
- Respect Young People's Programme – addressing adolescent to parent violence & abuse
- Specialist Young Perpetrators Programme – addressing abuse within intimate relationships
- Support for primary victims, whether family members or other young people, through onward referral into the Victims Community-based Services
- Onward referrals and/or liaison with other support services as appropriate.

### **How we will monitor the effectiveness of the strategy**

The CYSCP will develop a multi-agency action plan which will monitor the effectiveness of the Adolescent Strategy and its priorities.

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## Appendices

### Children Safeguarding

If you have a concern that a child is vulnerable or at risk of significant harm please contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub in York.

The MASH is a multi-agency team made up of representatives from a range of services, including Social Care, Early Help, Police and Health Professionals and is a single point of contact for all concerns about children. This partnership approach will make it easier to get children, young people and families to get the right level of support as quickly as possible.

Phone: 01904 551900

Email: [MASH@york.gov.uk](mailto:MASH@york.gov.uk)

Post: MASH, West Offices, Station Rise, York, YO1 6GA

Outside office hours, at weekends and on public holidays contact the emergency duty team telephone: 01609 780780

If you would like to contact the early help team call 01904551900 or email [earlyhelp@york.gov.uk](mailto:earlyhelp@york.gov.uk)

### Useful Documents

Recently, the CYSCP have updated their Level of Needs document (Threshold document) which provides a more aligned multi-agency framework for assessing and responding to need and risks of children.

Other Multi-Agency CYSCP Documents which can be used within conjunction of the strategy include:

- CYSCP Harmful Sexual Behaviour Procedure
- CYSCP CSE Guidance
- CYSCP Criminal Exploitation Guidance
- CYSCP Missing From Home and Care Protocol
- CYSCP Neglect Strategy
- City of York and North Yorkshire Joint Domestic Abuse Strategy

All of the above documents can be accessed from the CYSCP website: <https://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/>

### Adult Safeguarding:

#### Key Legislation:

The Care Act, 2014

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted>

and specifically.

<https://www.scie.org.uk/care-act-2014/transition-from-childhood-to-adulthood/early-comprehensive-identification/>

The Mental Capacity Act

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/9/contents>