**Safety Panel for Care Leavers over 18 years**

**Terms of Reference.**

**Rationale**

Children in care/care leavers under the age of 18 years are robustly supported through child protection procedures, such as the use of strategy discussions and child protection conferences but once a young person turns 18 years there are less structures in place. It is also acknowledged that care leavers can face adversity and have specific vulnerabilities around exploitation and risky relationships because of their adverse childhood experiences (ACE). For that reason Derbyshire County Council Leaving Care Service hold a monthly safety panel meeting that will have multiagency representation and is intended to help reduce risk for those identified as being exposed to or at potential risk of significant harm, whether through their own actions or the actions of others.

The panel does not replace the Vulnerable Adults Risk Management process. Referrals can be made if a young person is already subject to a VARM but it still requires strategic, multi-agency oversight.

The leaving care worker (LCW) may refer their young person to the safety panel if they have concern for a young person over the age of 18 years where they are either potentially or are evidentially experiencing the following –

* Homelessness – potential street homelessness, frequent tenancy breakdowns, poor contingency options
* Exploitation – A separate Exploitation Indicator Form is required where there is a risk of exploitation.
* Significant mental health concerns – risky self-harm and any suicide risks.
* Self-neglect – poor hygiene, hoarding, dangerous living conditions due to poor maintenance.
* Risk of exploitation – including modern day slavery, trafficking, sexual and criminal exploitation, such as cuckooing, sex work.
* Risk of facing custodial time or due to be released from prison with potential risks.
* Risk of violence or abuse from others.
* Missing or refused communication with leaving care for more than 6 months.
* Significant risky substance misuse.
* Significant financial difficulties that have not been resolved through signposting or support.
* Young parents at risk of losing care of their child, i.e. through care proceedings.

The intention is that there is a strategic multiagency approach to disrupting risky situations faced by care leavers so that the risk is reduced to a satisfactory level. This will provide a holistic consideration to all of the needs of the young person and a collective responsibility to work towards a reduction of risk. There will be actions identified, which will be monitored and reviewed at the following Safety Panel until it is agreed that the panel discussion is no longer required for that specific young person.

This process is only for care leavers, not children in care where there are separate statutory and local responses in place.

**Referral Process**

* Leaving Care Worker to discuss with their line manager any concerns and a record of this should be recorded on case notes with clear rationale around the concerns and the potential risks faced by the young person.
* If the risk is increasing despite intervention from all relevant professionals and there is a significant concern for the welfare of the young person the worker will complete a referral form which is emailed to the Leaving Care Team Co-ordinator. This will include consideration to whether the young person has capacity and whether they agree to the meeting.
* If there is a new concern for the young person that meets the criteria the young person should be referred to the safety panel.
* **If there is an IMMEDIATE risk to the safety of the young person the VARM procedure should be still be followed.**
* The worker will inform the young person that a multi-agency meeting will be held to discuss the concerns. They will be given the opportunity to discuss their views regarding the meeting and to indicate whether they consent to the meeting being held.
* The young person will be given an opportunity to share their views through their worker prior to the meeting. They can choose to directly email information if they wish to. Workers will be creative in making sure the young person has their voice heard.
* The worker will also take the THINK family approach and with the consent of the young person will get any relevant information from key people to the young person, such as family members, close friends and anyone the young person may seek support from.

**Intended Panel Members.**

Strategic Lead for Leaving Care – James Hollingworth (Chair).

Team Coordinator to minute meetings.

Child Protection Manager – CRE

Adult Safeguarding Lead – social care and mental health representation

Police

Housing

Health – Named Nurse

Probation

Team Manager – Leaving Care

Derbyshire Children’s Services Commissioning Manager

Other agencies who are involved with young people will also be invited.

**Logistics.**

The safety panel will be held every 4 weeks. It will be the last Tuesday of each month, 9.30 – 11:30 pm.

The meetings will be conducted using Microsoft Teams.

All agencies will have a copy of the confidentiality expectations prior to the meeting, sent by the Team co-ordinator.

All members will be given data regarding the young person prior to the meeting so that they can research any information they hold and they will have the opportunity to consider whether it is information that should be shared on the day.

All members will be provided with written information regarding the young person at the meeting.

Minutes will be distributed by the Team co-ordinator no later than one week from the date the meeting was held.

There will be an expectation that if an organisation has a representative that they will filter the necessary information to the relevant person in their service to ensure there is no gap in the process.

**Possible Outcomes.**

* If VARM is agreed the young person will be referred within 2 working days by the leaving care worker and the young person will no longer be discussed at the safety panel.
* If VARM threshold is not crossed the young person will be discussed at each panel until the risk has reduced to a satisfactory level.
* There will be identified actions made at the safety panel, aimed to reduced/disrupt risky situations for the young person. This will form a safety plan for the young person and will be recorded in the work flow.
* There is an expectation that action will be taken by all involved services, as well as the young person and therefore actions will be shared out accordingly.
* Following each safety panel the leaving care worker will have a specific meeting with the young person to look at the actions, who is doing what and what responsibility the young person has to help resolve the concerns. They will be given their own copy of the safety plan to refer to.