

Children who are exploited- Safety planning

Complex Safeguarding is a term BCP use to describe children who have complex needs and vulnerabilities caused by exploitation. Exploitation consists of many different forms of abuse including physical, sexual and emotional harm. This is often described as poly-victimisation – where a child experiences more than one type of abuse. When children are exposed to or suffer from co-existing types of harm their needs and vulnerabilities are often complex.

Significant harm caused by care givers can and does result in a child/ren being made subject to a **Child Protection Plan**. The criteria for agreeing a multi-agency child protection plan through a Child Protection conference is that the harm suffered by the child is **directly attributed to the care given**. In cases where children are harmed through exploitation ,the harm and risks are, in most incidences, external to the family. In cases such as these child protection conferences often do not meet the needs of children or family as Conference is focused on reducing harm from within the family rather than a focus on the external factors causing the actual harm. This is also seen as punitive to parents and carers who are often fully supportive of the child and have fully exhausted their resources and emotional resilience in trying to keep their child/ren safe.

In recognising and responding to children and young people’s experiences of significant harm beyond their families, BCP has a dedicated team of social care staff who alongside partners work directly with exploited children and young people who are suffering or likely to suffer harm through exploitation.

As part of care planning for children with Complex Safeguarding needs we have developed a **parallel** response to that of the existing Child Protection Conference and Child Protection Plans which recognises that;

* Parents are not always responsible for the harm suffered by their children.
* Harm suffered through exploitation is often external to the family and occurs within the community and with peers.
* Planning and intervention considers the wider environmental factors present in a child’s life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare.
* Children who may be alleged perpetrators are also considered in order to understand the impact of contextual issues on their safety and welfare.
* Interventions focus on addressing wider environmental factors, which are likely to be a threat to the safety and welfare of a number of different children who may or may not be known to local authority children’s social care.
* The “My” in My Safety Planning emphasizes the importance of working in partnership with young people to recognise their vulnerability and help identify exit pathways to safer and better outcomes.

**My Safety Planning**

The Complex Safeguarding Team uses an approach: ETAC - Exploitation Team Around The Child Meeting to plan and monitor progress for children and young people they are working with . These meetings are held monthly to review and monitor plans, consider emerging risk. Although the focus is on meeting the individual needs of the child/young person; they also help map any common sources of exploitation and risk The intelligence gained from individual ETAC Meetings about risk individuals or locations should be collated to inform wider network mapping BCP Tactical Group .

There are occasions where risks continue to escalate despite parents’ and professionals’ full engagement and in these circumstances the ‘**My Safety Plan Meeting’** pathway is commenced. To trigger this pathway a strategy meeting is required; the strategy meeting and ‘My Safety Plan Meeting’ are chaired by an Independent Child Protection Chair at least one review is necessary prior to stepping down or case closure.

**My Safety Plan Meeting ;**

Plans are monitored and reviewed every 6 weeks until risk reduced or legal remedies to secure a child’s safeguarding needs are in place. These meetings will replace the usual ETAC until risks are reduced.

Minutes of the minutes will be taken, recorded, and distributed in the same way as those for Child Protection conferences

The recording of plans and meetings follow the same procedures which exist for Child Protection and/or CIN planning . The Plan format can be found at Appendix ! . This must be completed and distributed to all partners including the child and parents/carer and recorded on a child’s file .

Where there is a co-working arrangement in place between CST and field Social Workers, the CST social worker is responsible as lead professional for the plan and intervention unless there is a decision by respective team managers and the Independent Child Protection Chair . Where it is decided that another professional is best placed to act as lead professional the ICP Chair must clearly record this on a child’s file and within the minutes of the meeting.

A *my safety plan* can only cease through a **my safety plan meeting** and with agreement with the ICP Chair

**Role of the** Independent Child Protection Chair within Complex Safeguarding .

The role of the ICP Chair in this forum is the same in regards to accountability and responsibility for the Safety Plan drawn up by the *My Safety Plan Meeting* as when they chair conventional Child Protection Conferences In summary the ICP Chair MUST ;

* Have the requisite knowledge and understanding of complex safeguarding and have attended the trauma informed practice and Neuro-science training .
* Understand the model and approach when working with child and young people who are exploited.
* Ensure that effective plans are drawn up and agreed by professionals who understand the complex landscape of adolescent risk and vulnerability.
* Ensure that Plans are wherever possible drawn up in partnership with the young person and their parents/carers and address assessed needs as well as manage risk..
* Focus throughout on the child/young person views and that sufficient time is given for the contribution from parents, family and child during the meeting
* Ensure Recommendations are acted upon in a timely and effective way.
* Ensure Plans are reviewed and that any drift, delay or concerns regarding Working Together arrangements are escalated using existing processes is escalated .
* Where possible, the same ICP Chair should chair all subsequent meetings.

**Role of agencies**

Exploitation and reducing harm for children and young people who are exploited can not be achieved by one agency in isolation. Members of the ETAC and those directly involved in the planning and intervention MUST attend the safety meeting , where practically possible and ;

* Have researched and be prepared to share all relevant information held about the current circumstances, risk and needs of the child and family held by their agency where it is appropriate to do so
* Actively contribute to the planning and delivery of the agreed outcomes for the child and family where this is consistent with their role
* Monitor the effectiveness of the plan and escalate any concerns regarding plan directly, in the first instance to the Chair.

**Role of lead professional /social worker**

The role of the CST is to convene a My Safety Meeting as a result of a decision made at the Section 47 Strategy Meeting ;

* The timing of this should depend on the urgency of the case and respond to the needs of the child and the nature and severity of the harm they may be facing. However, the initial meeting should take place within 10 working days of a strategy discussion,
* Prepare a Report and present the information about the reason for the meeting. The Report should set out risk and vulnerability and analyse all the information known about the child/young person and quantify the increase in risk and harm. The Report MUST be completed with the parent/s-child concerned (See appendix 2 )
* ensure that the child/young person and their parents understand the purpose of the meeting and jointly with them agree, where possible who should attend and how any objections will be managed.
* help prepare the child/young person if they are attending or making representations through a trusted adult.
* If a co-working arrangement is in place, then both social workers and their managers MUST attend.

**Attendance at My Safety Planning Meetings.**

Agencies and members of the ETAC must attend and bring all relevant information to the meeting in order to facilitate sound and evidenced based decisions which may include disruption activity or legal action against adults and other children/peers. Remember the arrangements for the meeting MUST centre around the needs of the child and family not that of professionals. The child/young person MUST be consulted in regards to location, venue, timing attendance and order of the meeting . The agenda must be set based on the child’s/young person views. For example, a young person may not want a parent to attend the meeting and there must be very valid reasons why this wish would be put aside.

**Escalation process.**

Where there is a dispute regarding decision making , progress or working together arrangements the existing escalation process must be used and can be found at <https://pandorsetscb.proceduresonline.com/p_escalation.html>

 **My Safety Plan**

Safety Plan

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| Safety Goal | Action | Who |
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When we will meet again

People to ring if we are worried