

**My Safety Plan**

**Safeguarding**

**Young People in**

**Vulnerable Circumstances**

## April 2021

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## Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide multi-agency guidance for those working with young people considered to be at risk of harm, either through their own actions or the actions of others. It has been developed to underpin existing professional inter-agency working and to enhance the support already available to vulnerable young people, with an increased emphasis upon relationship building, persistence and engagement, in line with restorative practices. This guidance applies to agencies working directly or indirectly with children, young people and families.

## Background

Dudley Safeguarding Procedures are clear that an Initial Child Protection Conference should be convened when it is believed that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm that is attributable to parental care. In these circumstances, a Child Protection Conference would be the forum for discussing these concerns. It therefore follows that a Child Protection Plan would be the best way then to address those concerns, with its emphasis on the responsibility of the parents/carers to promote the child’s welfare plan. However, professionals working with young people are increasingly encountering those who are at risk within their communities (e.g. serious youth violence, exploitation, drug and alcohol use), and this risk is not caused by the care they are receiving from their parents or carers. In these circumstances, there may be a high degree of concern by agencies, family members and the young person’s friends about the welfare of the young person. The My Safety Plan framework has been developed to acknowledge, share, manage and review these concerns in partnership with the parent/carer, the young person, and the professional network. The My Safety Plan is an integrated, multi-agency plan with measurable outcomes that reduce the risk to the young person, with timescales and reviewing processes in place.

It will be the responsibility of the Contextual Safeguarding Hub to oversee and support the implementation and delivery of My Safety Plan, in partnership with the relevant service area. The allocated Social Worker will be responsible for the co-ordination of services. This will allow for integration and consistency across the safeguarding partnership, and utilises the networking and peer mapping opportunities in relation to exploitation themes and issues.

1. **Different Routes to My Safety Plan**

There are 4 potential routes to My Safety Plan:

1. Where there are complex needs and the child is deemed to be a Child in Need under Section 17 Children Act 1989. The My Safety Plan will be followed in place of Child in Need Plans, where the My Safety Plan will be the alternative.
2. Following a Strategy Meeting and enquiries under Section 47 Children Act 1989, where concerns of significant harm are substantiated and the child is judged to be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, **but the primary harm is outside the family home.** For example, if a young person’s parents/carers are taking all appropriate steps to care for their child but that child continues to experience extra-familial threats in their community, peer group or school, then the My Safety Plan process should be adopted. As per current child protection procedures, a discussion should be held with the duty Independent Reviewing Officer (Safeguarding and Review Service) to ensure the My Safety Plan is the most effective approach to be taken, which recognises the context of the risk for the young person.
3. Following Youth Offending service intervention, for example, as a step down from a Referral Order, a Youth Rehabilitation Order or a custodial sentence.
4. A child or family would benefit from co-ordinated support from more than one organisation or agency through the provision of Early Help services leading to a My Safety Plan.

My Safety Plan can be used alongside Child Protection Plans or Child in Need Plans, if required, for younger siblings in the family. However, theMy Safety Plan should be the subject of meetings separate from the Child Protection meetings or Child in Need meetings.

## Framework

The proposed Safety Plan Framework has been developed and adapted from best-practice evidence and evaluated models, in particular the Contextual Safeguarding Network Approach Model (University of Bedfordshire, Hackney, Carlene Firmin et al), and Research in Practice Core Principles. Models used by other Local Authorities, particularly, Devon, Salford and Norfolk have also been considered when developing this proposed framework.

Using evidence drawn from effective international and local practice, the Research in Practice evidence scope [**‘*That Difficult Age’***](https://www.researchinpractice.org.uk/children/publications/2014/november/that-difficult-age-developing-a-more-effective-response-to-risks-in-adolescence-evidence-scope-2014/) sets out a set of principles upon which to build a distinctive and adolescent-centred approach and improve responses to adolescent risk:

* Work with adolescent development - for example, identity formation, friendship attachments, risk-taking;
* Work with young people as assets and resources;
* Promote supportive relationships between young people and their family and peers (where possible);
* Prioritise supportive relationships between young people and key practitioner(s) within the system response;
* Take a holistic approach to young people and the risks they face;
* Ensure services are accessible and available;
* Equip and support the workforce, through high quality learning opportunities and regular supportive supervision.

This guidance does not seek to replace existing policies or procedures, but aims to assist professionals in reducing the risk of harm to the young person by:

* Identifying vulnerability at the earliest possible stage;
* Responding to the needs of the young person in positive dialogue wherever possible directly with the young person;
* Taking a planned and coordinated risk management and harm reduction approach to promote the young person’s welfare with full account of the vulnerabilities relevant to their age and understanding.
1. **Situations that may lead to a young person being vulnerable**

The following situations may make the young person vulnerable to harm:

* Young people who are at risk of being sexually exploited or are involved in the exploitation of other young people;
* Missing from home;
* Missing from education;
* Misusing illicit substances and/or alcohol;
* Involved in or at risk of becoming involved in gangs, organised crime or systematic criminal activity;
* Young people who are on the edge of care or at risk of being homeless;
* Young people who may be drawn into extremist activities and who may be considered under the Prevent agenda;
* Young people who are leaving secure accommodation or custody.
1. **The My Safety Plan Process and Flow Chart**

Following referral into the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), the young person’s case will be allocated to a Social Worker within the relevant service area, generally the Duty and Assessment Service. A Child and Young Person’s Assessment will be initiated, and the Social Worker will be required to complete a **Contextual Safeguarding Screening Tool** alongside the Child and Young Person’s Assessment. The Contextual Safeguarding Screening Tool is available within Liquid Logic.

Once the Screening Tool has been completed, it will be sent to the Contextual Safeguarding Hub Work Tray.

The Social Worker should consult with the Contextual Safeguarding Hub Team Manager upon completion of the Contextual Safeguarding Screening Tool, and prior to the Child and Young Person’s Assessment being completed. The purpose of this consultation is to decide whether the young person would benefit from a My Safety Plan, and whether this is the appropriate process to follow. The Social Worker should also consult with the child or young person when completing the Screening Tool and Child and Young Person’s Assessment.

Following the Child and Young Person’s Assessment, if the Social Worker and Team Manager are satisfied that the concerns identified would be managed at a level of intervention equivalent to Child in Need - Section 17 Children Act 1989, then the My Safety Plan will be initiated.

In circumstances where the Social Worker and the Team Manager are satisfied that there is threshold to initiate child protection procedures, then as with current child protection procedures (for guidance on Child Protection Processes please see the [**CPP Child Protection Processes and Practice Requirements Guidance**](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms1/media/10499/child-protection-processes-and-practice-requirements-guidance.pdf)), a discussion should be held between the Team Manager and the duty Independent Reviewing Officer to decide whether the My Safety Planis a more effective approach than a Child Protection Plan, which recognises the context of the risk for the young person.

Where the young person lives with siblings or other children, consideration should always be given to the individual needs assessment and plans of those children, and child-led decisions made about the most appropriate level of service. In all cases, relevant information about connected children should be considered during assessment, planning and decision-making.

**Please see flow chart below.**

1. **The Role of the Social Worker, the Key Professional, and Visits**

In the My Safety Plan, a Key Professional should be identified to act as a single point of contact for the young person. The Key Professional should be the practitioner with the best working relationship with the young person, providing the best opportunities for sustaining a dialogue and communication. This is somebody the young person can trust and can engage in making choices, navigating through the process and effecting change. The Social Worker does not have to be the Key Professional, however the Social Worker should work with the young person and their family to identify who the Key Professional should be. The Key Professional can be from a voluntary agencies, Education or Health providers, Youth Workers, Mentoring Services, Early Help or Youth Offending Services. The Social Worker will still be responsible for co-ordinating the service response to the young person’s situation.

My Safety Planvisits will be carried out by the Key Professional, and the frequency of the visits will be determined by the identifiable risks. The Social Worker, if not the Key Professional, will visit the young person as a minimum every 4 weeks. Visits to the young person will be recorded on Liquid Logic by the Social Worker. Any additional visits, including those visits made by the Key Professional (if not the Social Worker), should be shared with the allocated Social Worker, who will update the young person’s record.

1. **My Safety Plan Initial Meetings, My Safety Plan Progress Checks, and My Safety Plan Reviews**

***My Safety Plan Initial Meetings***

My Safety Plan Initial Meetings are to be held;

* Within **10 working days** of the Child and Young Person’s Assessment being completed, if the My Safety Plan is in place at a level of intervention equivalent to Child in Need;
* Within **15 working days** of the Section 47 Enquiry being completed, if the My Safety Plan is in place where there are concerns which give rise to Significant Harm (Child Protection).

My Safety Plan Initial Meetings will be chaired by the Team Manager from the Contextual Safeguarding Hub. For those young people within the Youth Offending Service and Early Help, the My Safety Plan Initial Meetings will be chaired by the Service Leads in these areas, with consultation and information sharing from the Contextual Safeguarding Hub.

The template for the Initial Meeting is available in Appendix 1. The allocated Social Worker is responsible for uploading the completed document onto the young person’s file.

***My Safety Plan Progress Checks***

The allocated Social Worker, the Key Professional, or in some instances the Young Person, will be responsible for chairing the My Safety Plan Progress Checks. The Progress Checks are an opportunity for the young person, family, and professionals involved to check the progress of the My Safety Plan between reviews.

The frequency of these progress checks will be dependent upon the identifiable risk, and the allocated Social Worker will record the meeting on the relevant template in Appendix 1. The allocated Social Worker will be responsible for uploading the completed document onto the young person’s file.

***My Safety Plan Reviews***

**The first My Safety Plan Review will be held 3 months from the My Safety Plan Initial Meeting, and will be chaired by Contextual Safeguarding Hub Team Manager.** The frequency of subsequent My Safety Plan Reviews will be agreed at this meeting, and the Team Manager may decide that these subsequent reviews can be chaired by the Social Worker or the Key Professional, dependent upon the identifiable risk.

For those young people within the Youth Offending Service or Early Help, My Safety Plan Reviews will be chaired by the Service Leads in these areas, with consultation and information sharing from the Contextual Safeguarding Hub.

The template for the My Safety Plan Review is available in Appendix 1. The allocated Social Worker will be responsible for uploading the completed document onto the young person’s file.

**Please see flow chart below:**

**Appendix 1**

**Meeting Format and Proposed Agenda for My Safety Plan Initial Meetings, Progress Checks, and My Safety Plan Reviews**

It is proposed that the Initial My Safety Plan Initial Meetings, Progress Checks, and My Safety Plan Reviews follow an outline agenda.

 **1**. **Introductions**

The meeting is confidential - as is the record of the discussion which should not be shared with anyone not invited to the meeting without permission.

 **2. The meeting will consider**

* What concerns do we have?
* What is going well, what strengths are there and how can these help to improve safety?
* What do we need to see change and what disruption activity is required?
* What will the plan be, who will be responsible for each part of the plan and when will they do things?

**3. Information Sharing**

At the initial My Safety Plan Meeting*,* the Social Worker provides the background information that has led to the Child and Young Person Assessment’s and the current situation.

At My Safety Plan Reviews and My Safety Plan Progress Check Meetings, thekey professional outlines the key events since the last meeting and updates on the progress of the plan. The meeting participants give their view of what they are worried about / what is going well, starting with the young person.

**4. The Plan**

All attendees should leave the meeting with a clear, SMART My Safety Plan*.* For guidance on SMART planning please see [**CPP SMART Planning Guidance**](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms1/media/7515/smart-planning-guidance.pdf). The meeting should agree the improved outcomes (the safety destination) for the child which the plan needs to aim for and how this will be brought about, by whom and by when. The format for this will be based upon the plan of a page template for children aged 13 plus. (see Appendix 3)

**5. Contingency Planning**

The meeting should clarify what an increase in risk may look like and contingency plans may be outlined if the ‘bottom lines’ are transgressed, and professionals feel the child or young person is at increased risk. On these occasions, the Team Manager of the allocated Social Worker will notify the Service Manager for the Contextual Safeguarding Hub to consider the young people, their circumstances and what further safety measures may be required.

**6. Decision Making** **and Reviews**

The meeting will need to consider whether the child is continuing to be at risk of contextual safeguarding concerns, and in doing so the views of the child or young person, and parents, should be ascertained along with those of professionals.

If a Safety plan is agreed or continuing, the date and time of the Review Meeting will be agreed (in line with the minimum Early Help, Child In Need requirements), and the Chair should confirm members who will contribute to the My Safety Plan Progress Check and date of the first Progress Check.

Following the My Safety Plan meeting, any contextual issues or thematic concerns (links across multiple referrals) should be shared with the Contextual Safeguarding Hub and feedback provided to the multi-agency exploitation forum (currently Child Exploitation and Missing Operational Group - CMOG) so attention can be given to victim, offender and location

**Contextual Safeguarding and My Safety Plan Flowchart**

**Exploitation Risks, Indicators and Vulnerability**

**MASH**

**MARF Received**

**Referral assessed alongside the Contextual Safeguarding Hub**

**At Risk of**

**Exploitation**

**MEDIUM risk of Exploitation**

**HIGH risk of Exploitation**

**My Safety Plan**

**Discussion regarding possible routes onto a My Safety Plan**

1. **Alternative to Child In Need**
2. **Alternative to Child Protection**
3. **Following Youth Offending Service intervention**
4. **Part of Early Help intervention**

**Contextual Safeguarding Hub notified and consultation within assessment framework**

**Contextual Safeguarding Hub & Independent Reviewing Officer jointly screen referrals from route 2 to agree thresholds for My Safety Plan**

**REFERRAL TO EARLY HELP**

1. **Provide work to educate about risk, consent & abuse**
2. **Share intelligence with police as appropriate**
3. **Contextual Safeguarding risks to be addressed as part of Early Help Safety plan**

**Contextual Safeguarding Hub**

**Contextual Safeguarding Screening Tool to be completed as part of CYPA and sent to the Contextual Safeguarding Hub to screen & determine Safety plan routes and thresholds for MACE (Medium and High Risk)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| My Safety Plan: At Risk of Exploitation | A child or family would benefit from co-ordinated support from more than one organisation or agency through the provision of Early Help services |
| My Safety Plan: Medium Risk of Exploitation | Where there are more complex needs and the child is deemed to be a Child in Need under Section 17 Children Act, 1989Following Youth Offending Service intervention for example, as a result of a Referral Order, a Youth Rehabilitation Order or a custodial sentence |
| My Safety Plan: High Risk of Exploitation | Following a Strategy meeting and enquiries under Section 47 Children Act 1989, when concerns of significant harm are substantiated **but the primary harm is outside the family home**As part of an YOS intervention for example, as a result of a Referral Order, a Youth Rehabilitation Order or a custodial sentence |

**My Safety Plan Review**

**My Safety Plan Progress Checks**

**My Safety Plan Initial Meeting**

|  |
| --- |
| **What I want the team to do for me** |

**My Safety Plan**

|  |
| --- |
| **What do I think has been going well?** |

|  |
| --- |
| Free Roadmap Cliparts, Download Free Clip Art, Free Clip Art on Clipart  Library**What we are aiming to achieve in the next 3 months?** |

**My Safety Plan: 1**

Name: ………….…………………

Date:…………………………….

|  |
| --- |
| Face Screaming in Fear Emoji (U+1F631)**What do I think people are worried about?** |

|  |
| --- |
| Dreams Clipart Thought Cloud - Dream Bubble Png PNG Image | Transparent PNG  Free Download on SeekPNG**What are my dreams for the future? How can I be supported to achieve these?** |

|  |
| --- |
| Transparent Caution Sign Clipart - Clipart Danger, HD Png Download ,  Transparent Png Image - PNGitem**If I feel unsafe I will….****My Key Professional is…** |

|  |
| --- |
| Key Emoji Png - Key Emoji High Res, Transparent Png - kindpng**My Key Professional is…**  |

**My Safety Plan**

**Start Date: Review Date:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Needs, Strengths and Difficulties | Actions | Person / Agency Responsible | Target date for Completion | Outcome | Action Complete? | If No, please explain why |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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