

3.4.1 Risk Assessment Process for Young People Aged 16 Plus



This new chapter was added in August 2015.

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1. Introduction

Walsall commissioned a diagnostic report from the National Care Advisory Service in February 2014. Part of this report raised concerns about Walsall's approach to risk assessment and risk management. Their recommendation was:

'Young people who are at risk, leading dangerous lifestyles or making unwise choices, should have a risk assessment. There should be a clear format designed with multi agency input and regular review and updates from managers.'

NCAS were clear in their recommendations for Walsall and noted that Walsall should agree definitions for risk assessment and that all current cases where young people are looked after and aged 16 or over or are care leavers should be subject to an assessment of risk. This would provide Walsall with an ability to clearly evidence the knowledge that the workforce has about the risks facing young people and provide a collective approach to assessing and owning risks which are presented by our young people.

2. Purpose and Aim

The purpose of this document is to outline the process regarding the assessment and management of risk for Looked After young people aged 16 plus and those who are over 18 and have left the care of the local authority but are still in receipt of services and support by the Transition and Leaving Care Team.

3. Process

In considering our approach to assessing and managing risk we have looked at other agencies approach to risk management and have looked across services within Walsall.

See Appendix 6 Risk Assessment Process Chart

As a result of this research we have developed the following four part framework:

- **Screening Tool;**
- **Risk analysis tool;**
- **Safety plan;**
- **Risk register.**

Screening tool: There were a range of aspects that were important to the development of our risk management approach. Firstly a definition of what would be seen as high risk behaviour/ activity and secondly that we located this assessment of risk in the domains of the pathway plan. (See **Appendix 1: Screening Tool**).

The screening tool expects workers in conjunction with their manager to score each domain of the pathway plan and attribute a score the area from 1 -10 dependent upon how worried they are about a particular area. This allows the worker and manager to consider each domain of the pathway plan in its own right. As well as identifying areas of concern it also allows an appreciation of which domain/s can provide protective factors for the young person.

Appendix 2: Screening Tool Guidance provides detailed guidance in interpreting the factors in the Screening Tool.

Risk Analysis Tool: The risk analysis tool allows for a more detailed and reflective discussion about the specific risks to the young person or any risks that the young person presents to others. It takes the team around the child or young person on a journey through which the broader context of the

young person's circumstances are considered focussing the discussion on what is happening for the young person at a given time and what factors increase the risk, or support the young person's resilience in managing any risk. Through the process the risk analysis tool allows the team to identify actions which could support the team and the young person to manage this risk. (See **Appendix 3: Risk Analysis Tool**).

Safety Plan: The safety plan draws together the actions into a coordinated plan which can then be reviewed regularly. It identifies what actions are required, who will carry out the actions, when they will be completed by and what the anticipated outcomes will be. (See **Appendix 4: Safety Plan**).

Risk register: The risk register gives an overarching view of young people for whom there are significant concerns, current levels of risk and how this is being managed. The risk register is used as a reporting tool to Walsall Safeguarding Children's Partnership, Corporate Parenting Board and Senior Managers to ensure a shared awareness of current worries and risks associated with the children and young people for whom we are corporate parents. (see **Appendix 5: Risk Register**).

All young people require an initial screening of risk which should then be reviewed when there is a significant change or at every review of the Pathway Plan, whichever comes first.

Screening Tool Guidance

Family and social relationships

At risk or having serious concerns could be associated with issues around contact with family, domestic violence between young person and partner or witnessing DV between family members. It could also include the young person having difficulties with their own children for example being at risk of losing their children

Questions to think about are:

- Are they involved with gangs, at risk of CSE, forced marriage or honour based violence?
- Are they secure in their friendships, relationships and who they see as their family?
- Are past experiences of family and relationships still affecting them?

In scoring it would be about not just the risk, but also how much the area presents as a worry.

Education, Employment and Training

At risk or serious concern is not necessarily about not being in Education, employment and training.

It could be about the reasons for the young person not attending Education, employment and Training i.e. bullying as opposed to an active choice not to engage. Consider, is there a risk of them losing their place, and what are the reasons for losing their place? Are there conditions within the college/ school/ Education, Employment and Training that have had led to issues or are there issues outside which impact on their full participation.

Accommodation

At risk or serious concern is not necessarily about being homeless if the young person is resilient enough to manage inconsistent housing.

Consider the impact their housing situation is having on their functioning; is the young person constantly moving between inappropriate addresses and/or between inappropriate friends. Are there difficulties in their current arrangements which could result in summary eviction? Are the conditions within the accommodation poor i.e. damp, landlord not addressing complaints, anti social behaviour and how is this impacting on their physical, social and emotional health?

Emotional and Behavioural Development

At risk or serious concern will relate to concerns regarding mental health, worries about their emotional development, self harming, levels of anxiety, being at risk of exploitation. It could also include behavioural development in relation to propensity to violence, difficulties in attachments and ability to manage their behaviour and relationships. Consider the extent to which the day to day activity of the young person is affected by emotional and behavioural issues. Are they known to Police/ YOT/ Probation? Is there an existing order? Are they at risk of imprisonment/ arrest?

Health

- Is the young person accessing all the health services they need to meet identified needs?
- Are they able to use these services in ways that promote positive health?
- Are they using substances/ alcohol in a chaotic way?
- Is there a diagnosable condition for which they are receiving treatment?
- How is their physical health?
- Are the range of health issues sufficient to warrant our concern that we need to support them?

Self care and presentation

Focussing on independence skills and the young person's capacity to present to their worker a sense that they are able to care for themselves in a manner which we feel reassured that they are managing effectively. Are they presenting as clean? Are they presenting as able to manage their home by keeping it clean and tidy?

Identity

How confident is the young person in their understanding of their past and their journey to this point in their lives. Are they confident and comfortable in themselves? What is their understanding of their culture, traditions, religion and what would they want in terms of their identity in the future.

Is their understanding or level of understanding affecting their ability to function on a day to day basis? Are they in a position to plan for their future because they are secure in their understanding of whom they are and where they are from?

Finance

What is their income level and where does this come from? How capable is the young person of managing money, what is their understanding of money. Do they have debts or fines, are they in arrears, do they have loans or are they at risk from debt collectors. Does this impact on their day to day functioning, management of self or their accommodation. Are they being financially exploited?