What happens if my child turns eighteen whilst open to VEMT?

In Redcar and Cleveland, children can remain on VEMT even after they turn eighteen years of age. At this point, a child is recognised by services as an adult and they are able to decide for themselves who they want to work with.

The VEMT Group will help to manage what is called a 'transition period' for your child. This will start from seventeen and a half years of age. All of the children's services working with your child will get them ready to move on to similar services for adults. This might include making early referrals into adult services, and introducing your child to their new worker.

Although your child can choose not to engage with services once they turn eighteen, the transition period should prepare them for the move into adult services, and how to make the best decisions about their own care.

When will my child no longer be discussed at VEMT?

You will be informed by the lead professional when the concerns about your child have reduced and they no longer need to be discussed at VEMT.

The chair may also write to your child to congratulate them for their hard work.

Services working with your child will continue to support them even after they are closed to VEMT.

Who can I contact for further information?

If you are concerned about your child's immediate safety whilst open to VEMT, you should contact the police on 999. If you have concerns for your child, but they are not immediate, you can report them to the police by calling 111.

You can also contact Children's Social Care for more advice and support.

If you have questions about what is happening for your child through VEMT, please discuss this with the lead professional who brough you this leaflet.

LEAD PROFESSIONAL:

South Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership

The VEMT Practitioner's Group:

A guide for parents and carers

What is the VEMT Practitioner's Group?

Vulnerable, Exploited, Missing and Trafficked (VEMT) Practitioner Meetings are held every month by the local authority. Professionals from different services meet to discuss those children who are either at risk of or have been exploited. This includes:

- Children's Social Care and Early Help Services
- Cleveland Police
- Education (including schools)
- Health (including health visiting, sexual health services and hospitals)
- Drug and alcohol services
- Youth Offending Service

The professionals share information about each child, and work together to decide how they can help to reduce the level of concern. In some cases the police will also investigate the situation.

The concerns for a child will continue to be reviewed during meetings until professionals are satisfied that the child is safe and no longer needs to be on the VEMT agenda.

Why has my child been referred to VEMT?

VEMT meetings are used to discuss those children who are at risk of or who have been exploited. *All children* are at risk of being exploited — both boys and girls, and no matter their age. A child may be referred to VEMT if they:

- Are at risk of or have been **sexually exploited**

  Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is when a child is coerced, manipulated or forced to take part in a sexual act. This can include incidents that happen online, on computers or mobile phones, such as the sharing of sexual images.

- Are at risk of or have been **criminally exploited**

  Child criminal exploitation (CCE) is when a child is coerced, manipulated or forced to take part in criminal activities. This can include being coerced to move drugs or money, or forced to shoplift or "steal to order".

- Have been going **missing**

  If a child is regularly going missing they may be at risk of being exploited. They might be going to a risky place, or meeting with people who might place them at risk. These children are discussed at VEMT to see if there are any signs they are being exploited whilst they are away from home or care.

- Have been or are believed to have been **trafficked**

  Trafficking is the movement of a child, by force, deception or manipulation, with the aim of exploiting the child. It can occur over large distances, such as across the country, or within a very small area, such as the child being moved from one room in a house to another, as long as the purpose of the movement is to exploit the child.

What do I need to do?

The lead professional, or the professional who has the best working relationship with a child, will be invited to VEMT meetings to talk about the plan to keep your child safe. The lead professional should then keep you up to date with any new concerns or changes to the plan following the meetings.

You may be approached by professionals from new services, who will be asking for permission to work with your child. These services will have been suggested during the VEMT meeting, as they might be able to help your child with something they are struggling with.

You may be asked to share any names or places that your child is associated with, or registration details if your child is getting into vehicles. This is to help professionals, such as the police, decide if there are any risks for your child.

If your child is going missing, you must ensure that you report each incident as it happens to the police.

Parents and carers are welcome to submit any comments to the VEMT meetings. You should give these to a worker, so they can be shared with the chair and other professionals.