



# Safeguarding Transitions Protocol

---

Northumberland Children and Adults  
Safeguarding Partnership

Updated July 2022

## Version control

Version	Group/person	Date	Comments
1	Karen Wright	May 2021	
2	Karen Wright		Rebranded and refreshed under new Safeguarding Partnership arrangements Updated Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures links added

Issue date	July 2022
Review date	July 2023

## CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>4-5</b>
<b>2. Purpose</b>	<b>5-6</b>
<b>3. Protocol</b>	<b>6-7</b>
<b>4. Mental Capacity</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>5. Young people transitioning from Children's to Adult Social Care</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>6. Young people who may pose a risk to others</b>	<b>8-9</b>
<b>7. Further suggested reading</b>	<b>9</b>

## 1. Introduction

This protocol sets out the arrangements for young people aged 17 years and above, whose circumstances may mean that Safeguarding Adults procedures would apply when they are 18.<sup>1</sup> This would be young people who would meet the definition of an 'adult at risk' when they turn 18.

The aim of the protocol is to promote robust transitional arrangements, and ensure effective and timely referrals between Children's and Adult Services in Northumberland. It recognises that harm is likely to continue post 18, and that abusers target vulnerability irrespective of age.

Transition to adulthood can be a particularly challenging and vulnerable time for some young people. Learning from Safeguarding Adult Reviews and Serious Case Reviews has highlighted how ineffective transitional planning can contribute to young adults 'slipping through the net' or facing a 'cliff edge', often with tragic consequences.<sup>2</sup> It is vital to share information between services in a proportionate and timely way so that young people approaching 18 receive access to guidance, information and advice they will need as adults. The young person should be fully involved in decision about information sharing. It is important to note that transition into adulthood is a partnership and not only a social care issue. Multi agency partners need to be involved and support this work.

Young people experiencing, or who have experienced abuse or harm may often require ongoing support beyond the age of 18. This may be because the harm continues into adulthood or because they need support to recover from the impact of harm and/or trauma. Research has demonstrated that unresolved trauma can increase risks later in adulthood. It is also evidenced that not responding to harm in early adulthood may lead to more extensive support being required later in life.

There are several reasons why a transitional safeguarding approach is needed. It is recognised that adolescents may experience a range of distinct risks and harms, and therefore may require a distinctive safeguarding response. Harm and its effects do not stop at the age of 18, and many of the factors that increase a child's vulnerability persist into adulthood, often resulting in unmet needs and costly later interventions. It is also acknowledged that Children's and Adults' safeguarding systems are conceptually and procedurally different, and are governed by different statutory frameworks, which can make the transition to adulthood difficult for young people facing ongoing risk. This can be exacerbated by the notable differences between thresholds and the eligibility criteria of Children's and Adults' safeguarding. There needs to be a common culture and understanding across children's and adults, which includes the use of language.

In recent years, the complexities of safeguarding children and adults have become increasingly challenging practice with an increased focus on criminal and sexual exploitation

---

<sup>1</sup> Acknowledgment/thanks to Newcastle Safeguarding Adults Board & Newcastle Safeguarding Children Board – Safeguarding Transitional Protocol (Revised April 2017)

<sup>2</sup> Holmes D & Smale E. (2018). *Transitional safeguarding - adolescence to adulthood: Strategic Briefing (2018)*. Dartington: Research in Practice.

requiring services to adapt in how they safeguard young people and adults. Key to this is aligning safeguarding systems and services for children and adults, to ensure they are more fluid and responsive to the changing needs of adolescents and young adults. Understanding adolescence as a distinct development phase, and recognising the impact of trauma, are fundamental to supporting transitions. There is a need for close collaboration between Safeguarding Children and Adults Boards, and for very early communication with and involvement from Adults Services.

NICE guidance<sup>3</sup> sets out some overarching principles to consider when supporting young people through any transition from children's to adult's services. A recently published Transitional Safeguarding briefing<sup>4</sup> focuses on sexual and criminal exploitation and is designed with a particular focus on social work with adults. This briefing draws upon best practice, research and knowledge from local area, and provides key information to improve adult social work professional knowledge and skills in working with young people transitioning to adulthood.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this protocol is to

- Provide clear referral guidance to use in those situations where it may not be clear which Safeguarding Procedures (Adults or Children's) apply.
- Ensure effective and timely referrals are made between Children's and Adult services.
- Develop and improve joint working practices across all services.

Safeguarding Adults arrangements apply to adults age 18 or over whom:

- a) Have needs for care and support (whether or not those needs are being met); and
- b) are experiencing, or are at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- c) as a result of those needs are unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

(Care Act, 2014)

Further information can be found in the [Northumberland Safeguarding Adults Board Multi-Agency policies and procedures](#).

The Care and Support Statutory Guidance (2014) states that people "should not limit their view of what constitutes abuse or neglect, as they can take many forms and the

---

<sup>3</sup> Transition from children's to adults' services for young people using health or social care services. NICE guideline (NG43) 24 February 2016

<sup>4</sup> Bridging the Gap: Transitional Safeguarding and the role of social work with adults. DHSC, Research in Practice, LGA, BASW, ADASS, NWG. 3 June 2021

circumstances of the individual case should always be considered". Abuse could be physical, financial, emotional, sexual or neglect. It also includes domestic abuse, organisational abuse, modern slavery, discriminatory and self-neglect.

Under Safeguarding Adult Procedures, an adult requiring a safeguarding response does not need to meet the adult social care eligibility threshold. Also those who self-fund their care and those receiving individual budgets or direct payments, have the right to be safeguarded/protected under the Safeguarding Adult Procedures.

This is a collaborative protocol which outlines the transition arrangements supported and overseen by the Northumberland Children and Adults Safeguarding Partnership (NCASP). This should be read in conjunction with any specific protocols and procedures relevant to the circumstances. These are available from the following:

- [Northumberland Safeguarding Children website](#)
- [Northumberland Safeguarding Adults website](#)

### 3. Protocol

If you have concerns regarding a young person (aged under 18) who is at risk of harm, exploitation or abuse, a referral should be made to Children's Social Care via Onecall. Please consult the [Safeguarding Partnership Procedures Manual](#) for further details. Children's Social Care can work with young people under a number of safeguarding frameworks that include:

- **Child Protection**
- **Child in Need**
- **Complex Abuse meeting**
- **MSET - Missing, Slavery, Exploitation and Trafficking**

If the young person is subject to any of the above processes and is aged 17 years or over, a Safeguarding Adults Manager (Enquiry team) should be invited to the meeting. The Safeguarding Adults Manager will attend, or identify an alternative Adult Social Care representative to attend any future meetings, up to the age of 18, to consider the transition process from Children's social care to Adult services.

The Safeguarding Adults Manager has the responsibility to make the decision to implement the Safeguarding Adults procedures or not, once the young person reaches 18. If this is proposed at a meeting held under Safeguarding Children's procedures, then the Safeguarding Adults Manager must have attended and agreed with this proposal.

The Safeguarding Adults meeting will be the forum for collaboration and early joint working to share information, from the age of 18. This meeting will be chaired by a Safeguarding Adults Manager. It will be essential that services who are working with (or that did work with) the young person attend this initial Safeguarding Adults meeting. Consideration will need to be given to how the young person will be involved in the Safeguarding Adults meeting and whether they will need any support.

From this point onwards, Safeguarding Adult's procedures will continue as per the multi-agency policy and procedure.

#### **Guidance Notes:**

- In accordance with the Care Act (2014) where someone is aged 18 years and over and a safeguarding concern is raised, this must be dealt with as a matter of law under Safeguarding Adults procedures. For example, where a 19 year old receiving a service from a children's/young people's service is identified as being at risk of harm. A Safeguarding Adults referral must be raised and multi-agency procedures followed. It would not be appropriate for this to be dealt with under Safeguarding Children procedures.
- The protocol outlined above sets out good practice guidelines to ensure timely referral and involvement from Adult Services. However it is important to note that learning from SARs, SCRs and research has highlighted the inflexibility of current Children's and Adult safeguarding systems, and the markedly different approaches and thresholds for access to services. Therefore there may be a need to apply some discretion and adapt our systems and responses depending upon the needs and circumstances of the young person. The key to this is early communication and negotiation between Children's and Adult Services to ensure young people receive a flexible and coordinated response to their needs, and avoid experiencing a "cliff-edge" support.
- Making Safeguarding Personal is a central focus of Safeguarding Adults, with an emphasis on person-led support, risk enablement and choice and control. Therefore it is important that young adults are fully involved in Safeguarding Adults decisions and activity, unless there are concerns regarding their mental capacity, or where there may be risks to others.
- Where a young person is at risk of, or is being exploited and transition planning should start as soon as possible. This is particularly important for young people who may have limited eligibility for adult services or may face other challenges such as moving from one Local Authority area to another. Consideration should be given as to how information should be shared effectively with other relevant professionals to ensure the young person experiences a seamless transition that supports them to reduce their risk of exploitation.
- Joint working, including joint visits between Children's services and Adult services should commence prior to the young person's 18th birthday, to support a seamless transition and reduce the risk of disengagement. It is recognised that some young people may decline further interventions once they turn 18.

Advice on Safeguarding Adults procedures can be sought from the Safeguarding Adults Enquiry Team:

- Tel: 01670 536400
- [safeguardingadults@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:safeguardingadults@northumberland.gov.uk)

## 4. Mental Capacity

If there is a need to consider the mental capacity of a vulnerable young person to make a decision, and they are **aged 16 years and over**, then a capacity assessment under the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (MCA) must be considered for each specific decision. It is important to recognise that mental capacity can be affected by a number of factors, including the abusive situation the person is in, and by any threats or coercion.

A mental capacity assessment must be carried out whenever:

- a. There are doubts about the ability of any person from the age of 16 to make a particular decision at a particular time; and
- b. There is a belief that the reason the person may be unable to make their own decision is because of, an impairment of, or a disturbance in the functioning of the mind or brain.

Under the Act, mental capacity is both, 'decision specific' and 'time specific'. This means that the principles of the Act must be applied each time that a decision needs to be made

Where there is a concern about mental capacity, this must be recorded.

Capacity and consent also need to be considered in the context of control and coercion, which is central to all forms of exploitation.

If a young person is assessed as lacking capacity, then decisions can be made on their behalf using the principle that the decision made must be in the young person's Best Interests as set out in the Act.

For more information see [The Mental Capacity Act \(2005\) Resource and Toolkit and Practice Toolkit](#).

Advice on MCA can be sought from Adult Social Care and/or the Safeguarding Adults Enquiry Team.

## 5. Young people transitioning from Children's to Adult Social Care

The Northumberland Transitions Policy for Children's and Adults Social Care's supports the systematic and consistent delivery of positive 'outcomes' for young people in transition in Northumberland. It provides an operational framework for both children's and adults social care workers who are working with children and young people who may be eligible for adult social care. This policy outlines the key elements of transitions work and the responsibilities of both Children's and Adults Social Work Teams in planning the transition to adult services. This framework includes Transitions Planning Panel Meetings involving Adult social care, Commissioners and Children Social Care, regarding young people who are 14 plus who may need some form of support post 18. These meetings provide an opportunity to identify the most appropriate pathway for the young person post 18, facilitate joint working, and ensure appropriate referrals and signposting take place in a timely manner.



The MSET (Missing, Slavery, Exploitation and Trafficking) process also provides added value to existing Children's Safeguarding frameworks. Young people discussed in the MSET Operational Group will have a parallel Child in Need or Child Protection plan already in place. Where there is a concern about a young person who is aged 17 or above, an adult safeguarding representative will be invited to attend the MSET Panel. They will take responsibility for making a Safeguarding Adults referral based on information shared in the MSET meeting which they will discuss with the Safeguarding Adults Manager for progression.

If any concerns about the abuse or risk of abuse of individual young people are identified during this process a Safeguarding Adults referral should be made.

## 6. Young people who may pose a risk to others

Where there is a concern about a young person who is aged 17 years and above posing a risk to others, information should be shared appropriately with professionals with professionals and agencies who may work with the young person when they reach adulthood. Multi-agency forums where these issues may be discussed include:

- Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and Potentially Dangerous Person (PDP) Procedures. MAPPA considers offenders assessed as posing a high or very high risk of causing serious harm and where the risk posed requires management at a senior level through a multi-agency collaboration. Referral into PDP occurs when person who is not eligible for management under MAPPA but whose behaviour gives reasonable grounds for believing that there is a present likelihood of them committing an offence or offences that will cause serious harm.
- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). MARAC considers high risks victims of domestic violence, and includes perpetrators aged 16 and over.
- Channel Procedures – Channel is a process to identify a person who would benefit from early intervention and support away from the threat of radicalisation. The focus is on identifying those at risk, assessing the nature and extent of the risks, and identifying the most appropriate support plan. This includes children and adults.
- Safeguarding Adults or Children's procedures. Where the risk posed is to other children or adults at risk. This includes where the child or adult may pose a risk to themselves e.g. self-neglect.

If it is felt that none of the above applies then a multi-agency risk management meeting should be considered. The need to refer into the statutory processes should be revisited should further information suggest they would apply.

## 7. Further suggested reading

- Holmes, D. and Smale, E. (2018) 'Mind the Gap: Transitional Safeguarding – Adolescence to Adulthood.'

<https://www.researchinpractice.org.uk/all/publications/2018/august/transitional-safeguarding-adolescence-to-adulthood-strategic-briefing-2018>

- 'Bridging the Gap: Transitional Safeguarding and the role of social work with adults. DHSC, Research in Practice, LGA, BASW, ADASS, NWG.  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/990426/dhsc\\_transitional\\_safeguarding\\_report\\_bridging\\_the\\_gap\\_web.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/990426/dhsc_transitional_safeguarding_report_bridging_the_gap_web.pdf)
- NICE guidelines 'Transition from children's to adults' services for young people using health or social care services'  
<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng43/chapter/recommendations>