



FACT SHEET: Sexual, physical and emotional abuse by Children and Young People of other children and vulnerable adults

Children can cause harm to other children, young people or adults, particularly vulnerable adults. This harmful behaviour may be: sexually harmful behaviour, serious non-sexual violence or serious emotional abuse and may be carried out by an individual or as a part of group, which includes gang or weapons related violence. Children who harm others are likely to have additional and complex needs and while they should be held responsible for their behaviour, they should also be safeguarded and their welfare should be promoted.

Making a referral

When there are concerns about risks of significant harm a referral must be made to Children's Social Care and followed up in writing within 24 hours. All agencies must consider their responsibilities to both the victim and the alleged abuser and, working in collaboration, share information to meet the needs of all the children and young people involved. Safeguarding action may need to be implemented to protect other children and/or vulnerable adults from further harm.

Strategy Discussion / Meeting

Children's Social Care, the Police and other relevant agencies like Schools and Health professionals must be involved in determining whether a Child Protection investigation (Section 47 Enquiry) should take place. A Youth Offending Service representative should be involved if the child is aged eight or over. The meeting should take place within 24 hours, if possible, but no more than 48 hours and will be chaired by a Children's Social Care manager where the victim lives.

Section 47 Enquiry/Core Assessment

The victim and the alleged abuser should be allocated to different social workers to ensure that they have their needs assessed and met individually. Interviews in accordance with Achieving Best Evidence guidance may take place as well as medical assessments if relevant. The Enquiry and Core Assessment should consider among other issues:

- The ages of victims and alleged abusers
- The seriousness of the incident/s
- The safety of and risk to all children or other vulnerable people
- The attitudes of the parents/carers and alleged abuser/s to the incidents.

Outcome of Section 47 Enquiries

A range of outcomes may apply as the needs of the victim and the alleged abuser are assessed:

- A Child Protection Conference for the victim/s
- A Child Protection Conference for the alleged abuser
- A Multi Agency Planning Meeting
- A Family Group Conference

Criminal investigations and Therapy for Child Witnesses may be taking place in parallel with Safeguarding services and multi agency collaboration will be essential.

Initial Child Protection Conference

In addition to assessing the needs of the individual children in the ICPC, the risks of significant harm must be analysed carefully including all settings where the alleged abuser might be in contact with vulnerable others. If it is decided that a Child Protection Plan is not required a Multi Agency Planning Meeting must be arranged to ensure that the risks in relation to the alleged abuser are managed by all agencies.

Multi Agency Planning Meeting

This group will arrange specialist assessments of the needs of both the victim/s and alleged abuser/s and will produce a Risk Management Plan to coordinate the identified interventions. The risk of future offending must be considered alongside any triggers of the harmful behaviour.

Risk Assessment and MAPPAs

Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPAs) have been put in place to protect the community from known potentially dangerous offenders. This includes young people who meet the MAPPAs criteria. The YOS worker should refer the child / young person to MAPPAs. This includes when a young person is released following conviction of sexual or serious violent offences. Risk assessment will be undertaken by the MAPPAs.