

# Children who harm other children: multi-agency joint working protocol



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## 1 Purpose and scope

Some children exhibit harmful and abusive behaviours that could put other children at risk of serious harm. The behaviour can take the form of physical, emotional or sexual abuse that is deliberately directed at another child. The incidents may happen between peers in community settings such as schools or children's homes, but may also occur at home between siblings.

Evidence strongly suggests that children who harm other children are likely to be victims of abuse or have considerable needs themselves, and may be suffering significant harm.

All professionals in the children's workforce have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. In the context of harmful behaviour, this means ensuring a balanced response that considers the needs of the victim and the perpetrator whilst ensuring the safety of all children.

This protocol sets out the framework for a multi-agency strategy that:

- protects the victim and other children from harm
- meets the needs of the victim and the perpetrator
- helps the perpetrator take responsibility for their behaviour
- establishes whether the perpetrator is also a victim of abuse.

The protocol sets out the roles and responsibilities of agencies and the responses and services that will be put in place in order to meet the needs of victims and perpetrators.

## 2 Policy framework

*Working together to safeguard children* states that incidents where children harm other children must be dealt with as a child protection concern in the first instance. Camden will deal with incidents in line with the London Safeguarding Children Board child protection procedures.

[London Safeguarding Children Board](#)

## 3 Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 Family Services and Social Work (FSSW)

- FSSW has lead responsibility for providing safeguarding and child protection responses in relation to the victim and the perpetrator and for providing services for all children under the age of 18 who are defined as children in need under the Children Act 1989.
- FSSW will respond to all allegations involving harmful behaviour in order to ensure the safety of and provide support to victims and perpetrators on an individual basis.

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- Cases will be dealt with initially via the child protection system in order to establish levels of harm, and interventions and services will be provided under the Children Act 1989.

### **3.2 Youth Offending Service (YOS)**

- YOS has lead responsibility for working with young people who exhibit anti-social or offending behaviour of a harmful nature in order to reduce the risk of re-offending and ensure general community safety. YOS also has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of perpetrators by making appropriate referrals to FSSW.
- Where a young person who exhibits harmful behaviour comes to the attention of the police, or is charged with an offence and enters the criminal justice system, the police will refer them to YOS.
- Under this protocol, YOS work with children from the age of 10 years to 18 years.

### **3.3 Multi-agency Liaison Team (MALT)**

- MALT is responsible for co-ordinating any therapeutic input needed by the child who harms to help them address the issues that cause their harmful behaviour.
- On referral, MALT will advise on what services are required to assess risk and provide appropriate intervention and will make appropriate referrals to resources.

### **3.4 Police**

Police responsibilities are:

- investigating and assisting in prosecutions where an offence has taken place and providing support to victims, particularly where no prosecution is possible
- gathering and sharing intelligence with agencies on perpetrators who may pose a risk to the wider community
- making appropriate MERLIN referrals to FSSW and YOS.

### **3.5 Schools**

- Schools have a duty to safeguard the welfare of pupils by keeping them safe from harm and creating a safe learning environment. Schools should have a prevention strategy in place that is linked with their behaviour anti-bullying policy and helps children to keep themselves safe.

- School staff need to be able to recognise harmful behaviour and make appropriate referrals to FSSW. Guidance on harmful behaviours and indicators can be found in the appendices to this protocol.
- Schools may also be asked to undertake a role in monitoring children and young people for whom there are concerns regarding their harmful behaviour under this protocol, for example, if the young person is subject to a child protection plan.

## **4 Safeguarding and child protection referrals**

### **4.1 Problematic behaviour**

Some behaviour exhibited by children may be problematic but not harmful to other children. These behaviours will not meet child protection thresholds but may be indicative of other needs. In these cases, the child can be referred to FSSW for a child in need service with the consent of their parents and following a CAF assessment.

### **4.2 Harmful behaviour**

Abusive behaviour that is directed at other children and likely to place them at risk of significant harm must be referred to FSSW under child protection procedures. The following factors should be taken into consideration when deciding on whether the behaviour is harmful:

- there is a significant difference between the age or developmental stage of the victim and perpetrator, suggesting that the behaviour is more likely to be defined as abusive;
- the alleged perpetrator is supported or joined by other children;
- the perpetrator appears to have more power or authority over the victim, for example related to age, race, gender or physical, emotional or intellectual development; for sexual abuse, this could allow them to force the victim to consent;
- the behaviour, both physical and verbal, involves a degree of physical aggression, intimidation or bribery;
- the behaviour is not age appropriate;
- the perpetrator has attempted to prevent the victim from reporting the incident or tried to ensure secrecy;
- the behaviour has taken place on a number of occasions where there is a single victim or there is a developing pattern of behaviour in relation to multiple harmful behaviours;
- the perpetrator shows a pattern that seems to focus on a particular type of victim based on common features such as age, gender or vulnerability;
- there are concerns about the perpetrator's health, emotional development or attachments or historical neglect and abuse;
- the victim and the perpetrator live in the same household or have regular contact, for example at school;

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- the victim's experience of the behaviour and the impact it is having on their routines and lifestyle (e.g. not attending school)
- the perpetrator and their parents do not take the concerns seriously.

For sexually harmful behaviour, the following should also be considered:

- the victim clearly states that they had not consented and had not wanted to take part in the activity;
- the behaviour involves a high level of adult sexual knowledge or motivation;
- there are concerns about other aspects of the perpetrator's sexuality or lifestyle, for example use of pornography or inappropriate sexual comments;
- the behaviour was discovered in a manner or location that suggests it was inappropriate.

### **4.3 Procedures for referral**

- Any decision to make a referral to FSSW should be discussed with the designated person within the agency who is responsible for child protection in the first instance. Agencies may also contact the duty social worker at the relevant FSSW office for advice (see appendix 2 for contact details).
- YOS should contact the duty social worker in the relevant FSSW office to discuss the case and decide on referral or any other appropriate action.
- A referral must be made for both the victim and the perpetrator.
- All referrals to FSSW should be made via an e-CAF and should contain as much information as possible. Urgent child protection referrals can be made by telephone but must be followed up in writing within 48 hours. Referrals should be made to the relevant FSSW office depending on the child's home address.
- If a child lives in another local authority area, the referral should be made to the home authority but Camden should be notified of the referral.

## **5 Police referrals**

The police will send a MERLIN notification to YOS and FSSW when the young person comes to their attention because of their harmful behaviour or is arrested for a criminal offence.

On receiving the police MERLIN, the YOS worker will contact the FSSW duty and assessment worker to:

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- ensure they have received the police MERLIN
- find out if the family are known to FSSW
- decide what action needs to be taken, including whether to make a referral to FSSW.

Generally, YOS will make a referral to FSSW where:

- there are concerns about the safety and welfare of younger siblings living in the perpetrator's household and/or:
- there are concerns that the perpetrator may be a victim of abuse themselves.

## **6 FSSW assessment and action**

### **6.1 Assessment**

FSSW will carry out an initial assessment within 7 days of receiving a referral. The victim and perpetrator will be allocated to different social workers, even if they live in the same household, in order to ensure they are both fully supported during the on-going enquiry and their individual needs are met.

### **6.2 Strategy discussion/meeting**

Where the threshold of risk of significant harm is met, a strategy discussion or meeting will be convened as outlined in the London Safeguarding Children Board child protection procedures. Normally, strategy discussions or meetings will be held within 3 days of receiving the referral.

However, if there are serious child protection concerns or forensic evidence of abuse requiring an emergency response in order to protect the victim, a discussion will take place immediately between the social worker, the police Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT) and the referring agency.

The purpose of the discussion/meeting is to share information and decide what action should be taken to safeguard and promote the welfare of both the victim and the perpetrator.

In terms of the victim, the discussion/meeting will:

- decide whether the threshold for carrying out a child protection investigation under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 has been reached
- identify any children who may be at risk and look at any immediate action needed to protect them
- plan any criminal investigation; where there is a suspicion that the child is both a perpetrator and a victim of abuse, the strategy discussion/meeting will decide the order in which any interviews take place.

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In terms of the perpetrator, the meeting will consider whether:

- they may pose a significant risk of harm to their siblings or other children
- they appear to have considerable needs themselves
- they may also be or have been the victim of abuse and in need of protection; if this is the case, a separate strategy meeting will be convened to investigate these concerns.

When the children concerned are resident in a different local authority area, each local authority area will be represented at the strategy discussion/meeting which will usually be convened and chaired by the local authority children's social work department where the victim lives.

Strategy meetings will be chaired by a Child Protection Officer and attended by:

- both children's social worker and their line managers
- the police
- a representative from the referring agency
- a representative from MALT
- where the perpetrator is aged 10 years or over, a representative from YOS
- a representative from the school (particularly if the concerns suggest that other children in the school setting have been or may be at risk of being abused)
- where relevant, a medical professional such as a school nurse
- where the child or young person is looked after, the fostering link worker or a representative from the Fostering Service or Resource team

If the strategy meeting indicates that either the victim or the perpetrator is at risk of suffering significant harm, a section 47 investigation will be carried out and an initial child protection case conference convened.

Where necessary, a review strategy meeting may be held. If the information gathered in the course of the section 47 enquiry suggests that the perpetrator is also a victim or potential victim of abuse or neglect, a separate conference will be convened.

### **6.3 Child protection conference**

The purpose of a child protection conference is to decide whether a child is at risk of suffering significant harm and whether a child protection plan is needed to reduce the risk of harm and meet their identified needs.

Where a conference is convened in relation to a perpetrator, their needs as an abuser must be addressed. Where there are concerns about possible



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offending behaviour, a representative from YOS Early Intervention team should be invited to attend.

Therapeutic interventions that help the perpetrator to address issues causing their harmful behaviour will be part of any child protection plan agreed at the conference.

### **6.4 Child in need multi-agency meeting**

Where there are no grounds to hold a child protection conference, or a child is no longer subject to a child protection plan but concerns remain regarding the impact of the incident on the victim or the perpetrator still exhibits harmful behaviour, they will be children in need.

A multi-agency planning meeting will be held to develop their child in need plan. Consideration should be given to inviting the following:

- participants of the strategy meeting/discussion
- health representatives
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- the school
- any other professionals with relevant knowledge of the child and their parents.

For the victim, the plan will look at how they can be kept safe and deal with any issues arising from the incident or other identified needs.

For the perpetrator, the meeting will gather information on the level of risk the child poses to any siblings, extended family members or children in school or the wider community. The meeting should also consider the likelihood of current behaviour becoming more serious over time.

If information shared at the meeting indicates possible significant harm to the victim or perpetrator, an outcome may be to convene a strategy meeting and use child protection procedures as appropriate.

### **6.5 Looked after children**

Unless the strategy meeting establishes that there are child protection concerns requiring a child protection conference, all planning for the child will take place within the Looked After Children care planning process, including their statutory review.

### **6.6 Outcomes**

Any agreed actions taken to safeguard the victim or provide help and support for perpetrators to address their behaviour will be detailed in their child protection, child in need or care plan. The following actions should be considered for all cases of harmful behaviour:

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- referral to MALT to provide consultation on any necessary risk assessment or therapeutic intervention and referral on to relevant agencies
- agreed strategies for schools to monitor the victim or perpetrator and reduce risk within the school environment
- any services and support needed to address other identified needs
- referral to YOS for a specific AIM 2 assessment (see section ?)
- referral to other forums for monitoring or services.

## 7 YOS assessment and action

On receiving a police MERLIN notification, YOS will await the outcome of the CPS decision on whether or not to charge the young person.

The YOS Early Intervention Team (EIT) will provide a service for young people who have been reprimanded, given a final warning or a triage outcome.

- Triage1 applies where a young person is arrested for the first time, admits to the offence and the offence has a gravity score of 1 or 2.
- Triage 2 applies where:
  - a young person is arrested and admits to an offence which has a gravity score of 3 **or**:
  - has already received a reprimand or final warning **or**:
  - the police and YOS have concerns about the offence and the risk the young person's behaviour poses to themselves and others.

**However, it is rare for a young person who has committed a sexual offence or serious violent offence to be dealt with under the triage system** due to the lack of risk assessment. It is more likely they will be dealt with via the criminal justice system.

If a young person is charged and either found guilty or pleads guilty, they will be referred to the Reduction team where a pre-sentence report and an ASSET assessment will be carried out.

Additionally sexually harming young people will be assessed using a specialist AIM 2 assessment. AIM 2 can be undertaken with young men who have also not been charged/convicted/prosecuted but have been known to have sexually abused. These young men would engage on a voluntary basis. If the young person is to appear at Court for sentencing the YOS will work with the Court for an adjournment period that allows for the completion of the AIM 2 assessment.

This assessment links with both the core assessment and ASSET and can help practitioners to identify relevant factors that will be of significant use in planning a young person's programme of intervention and recognising

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concerning and protective factors on which to base the particular focus of work. It offers an initial, brief evidence based tool which can be used to determine the level of supervision a young person requires and also the developmental and intervention needs.

The AIM2 model is designed to assist early stage assessments and can only be undertaken with young men:

- aged between 12 – 18 years old
- who have been designated “mainstream ability” by the educational system
- whose educational problems were due to behaviour in school/college.

It has not been designed or tested for application to females, under 12's and those with learning difficulties.

AIM 2 assessments are carried out by YOS workers in partnership with FSSW social workers to ensure all relevant information is taken into account, with YOS taking the lead.

## **8 Interventions**

Referrals to the following can be made by FSSW as part of a child protection or child in need plan.

### **8.1 Referral to the YOS High Risk Panel**

YOS case managers can make a referral to the YOS internal high risk panel. Contributing factors are if a young person's assessed behaviour poses a serious risk to the community and there is a high or very high risk of harm being caused.

The management of the individual requires a robust multi-agency response in order to manage and reduce this risk. The High Risk Panel also oversees the registration requirements for offenders under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 and where relevant will liaise with MAPP (see below).

### **8.2 Referral to MALT**

All cases of harmful behaviour will be referred to MALT to provide consultation and make recommendations regarding referrals to other agencies, including CAMHS. The FSSW social worker may contact MALT to discuss the case before the strategy meeting and ensure MALT attendance at the meeting.

Following a strategy or CIN meeting by FSSW, the social worker will make a referral to MALT. At least an initial assessment must have been carried out prior to any referral.

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A referral meeting will be held between FSSW and MALT (and any other relevant professionals) to discuss the case and look at what action should be taken. Possible outcomes are:

- immediate referral to a specialist provision
- further assessment of the young person carried out jointly by FSSW and MALT with a possible referral to a specialist provision
- advice on actions to manage risk and/or meet the individual needs of the child.

All advice provided by MALT and any decisions taken at meetings will be recorded in a memo from MALT to the FSSW social worker.

### **8.3 Referral to Camden's Gangs strategy group**

Violent conduct and sexual violence may be linked to gang activity; in these cases the matter will be dealt with under this protocol and under Camden's gang activity and serious youth violence strategy.

YOS will refer the young person to the Bronze Group within the gangs strategy framework; this is a multi-agency operational meeting that focuses on reducing risk through the management of individuals most at risk of gang activity and serious youth violence. Through the Bronze Group, an individualised intervention plan can be put in place to address the risk factors and allocate resources.

Incidents that are particularly serious, and require a response from senior management regarding actions and resources will be dealt with as an Incident of Note. This will involve an immediate police led and referral to Silver Group in order to formulate a more strategic response. A Gold Group meeting will be called to respond to a critical incident such as murder or serious sexual assault such as rape cases.

### **8.4 Referral to MAPPAs and registration**

Camden's Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPAs) are designed to protect the public from the most dangerous offenders by ensuring a Risk Management Plan is in place that closely monitors their whereabouts and behaviour and provides the basis of multi-agency intervention to help manage and reduce risk to the public.

MAPPAs covers any offenders who have been convicted of certain violent or sexual offences and who are about to be released from prison on licence. This includes young offenders with whom YOS work.

There are 3 categories of offenders who are managed via MAPPAs:

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- Category 1: Registered Sex Offenders who are required to notify the police of their name, address and personal details. Registration can be between 12 months to life.
- Category 2: other violent offenders who have been sentenced to 12 months custody or more, including some sexual offenders, for as long as their licence runs.
- Category 3: other dangerous offenders who might have been previously managed under MAPPA or are assessed as causing a risk of serious harm to the public.

Monitoring and risk management take place at multi-agency MAPP meetings which enable agencies to share information in order to assess risk and make sure a risk management plan is in place.

Where the offender is under 18, YOS will be responsible for completing an internal screening and risk assessment and referring them on to MAPPA where a decision is taken on the level of management required to reduce risk. Individual young people will be discussed at the High Risk Panel and a decision taken on referral to MAPPA.

Young people who are subject to MAPPA will have a risk management plan that is regularly reviewed in MAPPA meetings. YOS is responsible for the implementation of this plan and monitoring the young person's compliance.

YOS has a nominated worker who is responsible for co-ordinating the link between YOS and MAPPA by attending MAPPA meetings and ensuring that all relevant information is provided to MAPPA in time for both screening and review meetings.

This is done within 3 days of a 12 month plus sentence being imposed or six months prior to release. The nominated worker will attend the MAPP meetings to share information and input into any ongoing risk assessment plan and review.

An individual's MAPPA status is highly confidential and can only be disclosed to third parties under very specific circumstances in order to reduce risk to the public or individuals who are known to be at a high risk from the offender or to help implement the risk management plan. Decisions on what information can be shared and with whom may only be made at a MAPPA meeting.

## **9 Release from custody**

If a young person has received a custodial sentence for an offence linked to their harmful behaviour and is about to be released into the community, and the YOS worker believes that the young person continues to pose a risk, the young person's release should be managed under this protocol and a referral will need to be made to FSSW for a strategy meeting to be convened.

YOS will hold a pre-release meeting 10 days before the young person is released, and if there are any concerns, YOS may request a FSSW social

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worker to attend so that a joint risk assessment can be carried out and a decision made on convening a strategy meeting under this protocol.

A referral should be made to FSSW where there is a risk of significant harm to other siblings in the household or other children within the community

The strategy discussion should:

- look closely at predictors of future behaviour
- consider carrying out an AIM 2 assessment jointly between FSSW and YOS where sexual offending is involved
- consider what multi-agency strategies need to be in place to manage risk
- look at whether any immediate action needs to be taken to protect siblings and other children, for example if the young person should return to live in the family home.

YOS will carry out any risk of serious harm assessment and develop risk management plans and will make referrals to MAPPA for management of the offender on their release where that threshold is met in accordance with national standards.

These procedures will also apply where a young person with a known history of harmful or abusive behaviour moves into the borough and Camden YOS agrees to work with the young person on a temporary basis.

## 10 Joint working

*“Working together to safeguard children”* emphasises the need for co-ordinated, multi-agency responses and joint working is an essential part of this response.

### 10.1 Confidentiality and info sharing

The Children Act 2004 requires agencies to share information in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and support multi-agency working, but this needs to be balanced against the professional duty of confidentiality, the Data Protection Act 1998, and the Human Rights Act 1998 which place limits on sharing information.

Personal information about children **cannot** be shared with third parties unless:

- the child or their parent has consented to disclosure

Generally, where a child is under 12 years old, parents must consent to disclosure. Young people aged between 12 and 15 years old may be able to give their own consent if they are able to understand the issues and make an informed decision; otherwise, their parents must be asked to give consent.

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Young people aged over 16 are legally able to give consent to disclosure.

- information must be shared in order to safeguarding a child's welfare or stop the commission of a crime

Information can be disclosed without consent in child protection cases where there is reasonable cause to believe that the child is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm. In cases where sexual abuse is suspected, it may be necessary to forgo seeking consent from parents as this may in itself place the child at further risk.

Before sharing any information, professionals should consider the proportionality of disclosure against non-disclosure; is the duty of confidentiality overridden by the need to safeguard the child?

- disclosure is required under a court order or other legal obligation.

When sharing information, professionals should only disclose relevant information to those professionals who need to know and for the purpose it is needed. Recipients should be reminded that the information is confidential and only to be used for the stated purpose.

If the perpetrator is being dealt with under Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), decisions on information sharing will be made by this forum on a "need to know" basis only (see section 11.5).

Within schools, information sharing should be limited to the head teacher and the designated child protection teacher although it may be necessary for schools to notify the designated school governor for safeguarding.

No other member of staff should be party to any disclosure unless they need to know in order to implement the risk management plan or monitor the young person's behaviour. Decisions on disclosure should be made by the head teacher on a case by case basis.

### **10.2 Information to be shared**

- Schools and other agencies will notify FSSW and YOS of any incidents of harmful behaviour and report on any monitoring that is being undertaken on a child. Schools will also notify other agencies if a child is to be excluded due to their behaviour.
- FSSW will notify other agencies when the service becomes involved with the victim or perpetrator, and any interventions taken under the Children Act 1989, for example, convening a child protection case conference or applying for a care order.
- The police will notify FSSW and YOS of any incidents or arrests via the MERLIN system.

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- YOS will notify other agencies when they become involved with the perpetrator and any court decisions in relation to the perpetrator.

### **10.3 Joint assessment**

Joint assessment is a key part of ensuring the needs of victims and perpetrators are met. The principles to be followed are:

- each agency will contribute information to all FSSW and YOS assessments that are carried out
- strategy meetings and other multi-agency meetings held in relation to either child will be used to plan assessments and delegate tasks to agencies.
- all assessments will incorporate an assessment of the level of risk posed to other children
- assessments carried out by individual agencies will be shared.

### **10.4 Attending meetings**

All agencies involved with the victim and perpetrator will ensure that a representative will attend any strategy or other multi-agency meetings to share information and to be part of the planning and decision-making process. Where an agency is unable to attend, a written report will be made available for the meeting. Minutes of all meetings will be shared with all agencies.

### **10.5 Inter-agency contact**

Agencies will maintain regular contact, particularly where there is a high level of risk to children and where an individual child's behaviour is being monitored as part of a child protection plan or court ordered intervention.

### **10.6 Working with parents**

When working with parents, professionals will ensure that they remain sensitive at all times. Many parents are likely to be shocked on hearing about the allegations, but it is important that they are involved in any agreed strategies for monitoring their child's behaviour and in ensuring appropriate boundaries are set at home. Parents may also be a useful source of information regarding the child's behaviour and development.

However, professionals also need to be aware of the possibility that parents may be implicated in the abusive behaviours. Where this is thought to be the case, professionals should discuss the matter with the duty social worker to decide whether parents should be notified of any referral.



### **10.7 Working with victims**

As part of their statutory role, YOS will undertake some work in relation to assessing the needs of the victims. The YOS police will help victims to engage with the criminal justice system so that they can make their views known.

YOS will work in partnership with police to help the young person to come to some understanding about the impact on the victim and help them to take responsibility for their actions. This will include reparation towards the victim.

### **10.8 Dispute resolution**

Any disputes arising from the operation of this protocol will be dealt with at management level between the agencies involved in the first instance and a resolution agreed within a reasonable timescale. If this is not possible, the matter will be referred to senior managers for resolution.

If the dispute involves child protection concerns, the matter will be referred to Camden's Child Protection Co-ordinator based in the Quality Assurance Unit of FSSW.

### **10.9 Review**

This protocol will be reviewed on a 12 monthly basis by representatives of the "Staying Safe" sub-group of the Camden Safeguarding Children Board

## Appendix 1: Sexually harmful behaviour

### Definition

Dealing with children and young people's sexual behaviour can be difficult for professionals as they need to be able to differentiate between age-appropriate sexual development and sexually harmful behaviour in order to respond appropriately. Children's attitudes and values regarding sex can be described as healthy, problematic or abusive; the table below sets out the key indicators.

Sexually harmful or abusive behaviour is defined by the Department of Health in the guidance "*The needs and effective treatment of young people who sexually abuse*" (2006) as:

"...any sexual interaction with persons of any age that is perpetrated

- i) against the victim's will
- ii) without consent, or
- iii) in an aggressive, exploitative or threatening manner".

Problematic sexual behaviour is defined as sexual behaviour that is not age appropriate and gives cause for concern. Whilst some problematic behaviour traits may not be sexually harmful to others, it can be an indicator that the perpetrator has other underlying problems. It is important that at this level, interventions are timely in order to avoid escalation of these behaviours.

Some problematic and all abusive sexual behaviour will pose a risk of serious harm to victims and may indicate the possible onset of deep-rooted behaviours that will carry forward into the perpetrator's adult life. It is important that at this level, action is taken to reduce the wider risk and address the underlying factors driving the perpetrator's behaviour.

### Sexually harmful behaviour online

Some sexually harmful behaviour may happen online; any form of cyber bullying that involves a sexual element may be abusive, for example sending harassing or bullying messages of a sexual nature, using webcam links to facilitate sexual abuse or sending indecent images. Activities such as downloading porn may be indicative of problematic sexual behaviour.

These incidents will be dealt with under this protocol, but professionals should also refer to Camden's e-safety policies for guidance on what specific measures should be taken to record the incident and ensure ICT systems and procedures are safe so that the risk of incidents is lessened.

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## **Prevention**

Children and young people need guidance and boundaries as a safe mechanism for exploring their sexuality and developing healthy attitudes and values towards sex.

Schools have a duty to safeguard the welfare of pupils and this includes keeping them safe from all forms of bullying, and prevention of sexually harmful behaviour will form part of the school's anti-bullying strategy.

Schools will also promote this agenda through Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) lessons around sex and relationships so that children and young people can access age-appropriate information. This will help them develop healthy sexual behaviours and make informed choices around their sexual activity. Guidance for schools on preventing sexual bullying can be found in the link below.

<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/DCSF-01136-2009.pdf>

Schools may also be asked to undertake a role in monitoring the behaviour of children and young people for whom there are concerns regarding their sexually harmful behaviour, for example, if the young person is subject to a child protection plan or is subject to this protocol.

Camden's Integrated Youth Service also provides workshops in educational and youth settings around sexual behaviour and healthy sexual relationships, focussing on issues such as consent.

**Indicators of children and young people’s sexual development**

<b>Primary age</b>	<b>Healthy</b>	<b>Problematic</b>	<b>Abusive</b>
	Age-appropriate, mutual exploration that is open and spontaneous with children freely engaging with their peers; sexual play and behaviour is not their main focus and they may feel some embarrassment	Signs of developed adult knowledge; children involved feel uncomfortable and perpetrator may appear in control; behaviour is intermittent but recurring and child shows some shame	Adult sexual activity where behaviours are secretive and planned with an element of coercion; children involved are anxious and fearful with some power differentials due to age or ability; sexual focus to child’s behaviour who appears angry, aggressive and lacks empathy
<b>Secondary age</b>	Takes part in sexual discussions with peers and engages in mutually consented activity; comfortable but embarrassed; sexuality is not main focus and has healthy relationships with peers	Seems pre-occupied with and anxious about sex which is out of balance with other aspects of their life; behaviour is based on isolated incidents and the young person shows shame and remorse; other children involved appear uncomfortable; young person may show some control but may be seeking to relate to peers; exhibits poor sexual boundaries and difficulties coping with emotions; parents may exhibit anger or lack of empathy for victim	Young person’s sexual behaviour is compulsive, aggressive, and may involve younger children; exhibits obsessive pre-occupation re: sex; behaviour is planned and secretive with element of force or threat; shows lack of empathy or responsibility; other young people involved are fearful or avoidant; young person shows poor social skills and may have conduct disorder, mental health or history of cruelty to animals; family life may show discontinuity of care or history of abuse and neglect

## Appendix 2: Fire setting

### Definition

Fire setting describes the deliberate starting of fires and the behaviour is most common in boys aged between 5 and 17. However, there are different motivations for fire setting that range in seriousness and consequential levels of harm to others and require a differing response.

<p><b>Curious fire setters</b></p>	<p>These are children aged about 5 to 10 years who set fires out of fascination. Typically, their behaviour is not calculated to cause harm and normally they would not understand the possible consequences of their actions.</p> <p>Children this young are likely to be unable to control a fire once set or try to hide it and are at serious harm of burns as a result.</p> <p>Generally, this group will out-grow their behaviour and may only require fire safety education in order to address the problem.</p> <p>However, fire play at this age may be a pre-cursor of more serious fire setting behaviour later in life if coupled with parenting and welfare concerns.</p>
<p><b>Crisis fire setters</b></p>	<p>These are children who set fires in response to emotional problems or stressful situations, such as bereavement, divorce or abuse.</p> <p>Their fire setting behaviour may be unpredictable and they may target specific items or sites in an attempt to gain control over their situation.</p> <p>Their actions can be seen as a cry for help or as a coping strategy and may continue if they do not receive adequate input from services to address issues. They are likely to be children in need.</p>
<p><b>Delinquent fire setters</b></p>	<p>These are young people who are normally aged between 11 and 15 years who set fires out of boredom, frustration or for excitement, often as part of a peer group and as part of a series of offending behaviour.</p> <p>Often the young people exhibit conduct disorders and come from unstable home environments and experience poor parental care, control and guidance. They may exhibit high levels of aggression and poor social skills.</p> <p>This group show little empathy and there is a danger the behaviour will escalate if services and treatment are not provided. They are likely to be children in need.</p>

## Protocol on children who harm other children

<b>Disturbed fire setters</b>	These are children and young people who are suffering from a high level of emotional disturbance and who may have histories of abuse. Some may have diagnosed mental health problems and the behaviour is more likely to continue into adulthood.  They are likely to be involved in several incidents of fire setting, and some children may show a fascination with fire. This is indicative that the behaviour is likely to continue and escalate, becoming more dangerous and unpredictable.
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### Parenting factors

In particular for the case of delinquent fire setters, the following factors are more likely to lead to fire setting behaviour:

- lone parents
- neglectful parenting with a lack of supervision or boundaries
- trauma caused by witnessing domestic violence
- families in conflict
- harsh disciplinary regime
- high number of stressful life events.

### Risk factors

Although most fire setters do not intend to cause harm to others and often target “victimless” settings such as stolen cars or empty buildings, the nature of fire setting means all incidents need to be taken seriously.

The presence of the following factors will indicate that a high level multi-agency response may be needed to deal with the behaviour:

- multiple episodes of fire setting
- early history of fire setting
- evidence of escalating fire setting behaviour
- knowledge and use of inflammatory materials
- concerns about parental supervision and control and other family factors
- possible history of neglect and abuse
- evidence of emotional disturbance.

Services need to be aware of the serious risk posed by fire setting behaviour both to the perpetrator, family members and the community in general.

## **Appendix 3: Serious youth violence and weapons**

### **Definition**

Serious youth violence is defined by the Metropolitan Police as any offence of the most serious violence or weapon enabled crime where the victim is aged 1-19. It covers serious criminal offences such as murder, manslaughter, rape, wounding with intent and causing grievous bodily harm.

This protocol covers serious youth violence involving the physical or sexual abuse of a child where there is only one perpetrator and the violence is not linked to gang activity.

Children who commit acts of serious violence can be divided into 3 groups:

- psychotic children who have no understanding of reality and do not appreciate what they are doing (this is rare)
- over-stressed children who become extremely violent under certain stress triggers (usually a “one-off” incident)
- aggressive children who exhibit high levels of anti-social behaviour, an early history of problem behaviour and whose aggression escalates over time (the majority of cases).

### **Factors contributing to violent behaviour**

The diagram below shows the main indicators of low, medium and high risk factors for involvement in serious youth violence, but research strongly suggests that the main indicator is an early history of anti-social behaviour and conduct disorder, with an increase in frequency and seriousness of incidents over time.

Children are likely to exhibit poor concentration, hyperactivity and risk taking behaviour. They are likely to have poor education histories and outcomes and suffer from poor peer relationships. Some may have a history of abuse or live in families where domestic violence or family conflict is present.

Parenting styles that significantly contribute to aggressive and violent behaviour are cold and non-nurturing with harsh disciplining, or permissive and neglectful parenting where there are poor boundaries and guidance.

Use of alcohol and substances is likely to reduce may increase the likelihood of violent behaviour, and frequent and early exposure to violent images may desensitise children to violence.

# Protocol on children who harm other children

## High level risk factors

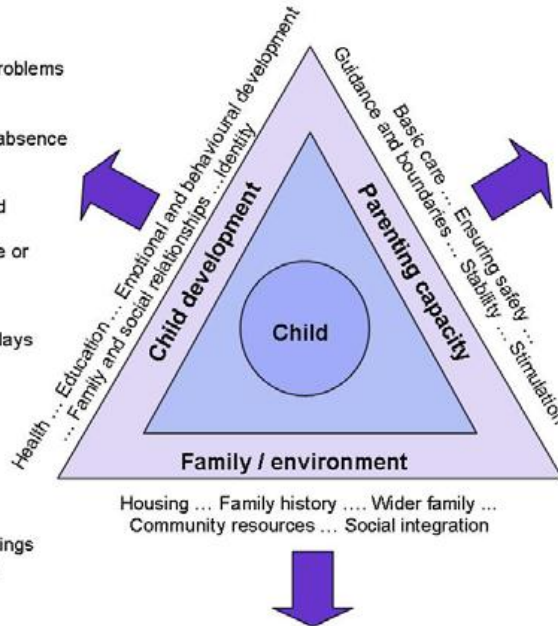
- Early problems with antisocial and criminal behaviour
- Persistent offending
- Alcohol and drug misuse
- Unable to regulate own emotions and behaviour
- Physical violence and aggression
- Permanent exclusion from school
- Peer drug use
- Friends condoning or involved in antisocial and aggressive behaviour
- The need to identify older, and younger, as gang initiation, particularly in Year 7 of secondary schools

## Medium risk factors

- Mental health problems
- Aggression, behavioural problems
- Depression
- Low self esteem
- Truancy and unexplained absence from school
- Bullied or bullying others
- Medical history of repeated injuries of accidents
- Child in local authority care or leaving care

## Low level risk factors

- Specific developmental delays
- Lack of ethnic identity
- Peer rejection
- Not involved in positive activities
- Friends condoning or involved in antisocial and aggressive behaviour
- Few social ties
- Aggressive bullying by siblings
- Exposure to violent media



## High level risk factors

- Child neglect
- Conflict and violence in home
- Lax parental supervision
- Child is not protected from significant harm or danger, including contact with unsafe adults
- Lack of parental attachment to child
- Historically involved with or known to social services
- Parental abuse
- Parents aggressive towards or unwilling to engage with statutory agencies

## Medium risk factors

- Allowing child to associate with known troublemakers
- Inconsistent or minimal boundaries
- Lack of emotional care
- Lack of parental discipline
- Violent discipline

## Low level risk factors

- Parents unable to communicate effectively with children
- Child left with multiple or unsuitable carers
- Lack of social opportunities
- Unstable family environment
- Parents don't model positive and responsible behaviour
- Absent parent
- Parent-child separation

## High level risk factors

- Family members involved with or associate with gangs
- Wider family involved with gangs
- Community norms that tolerate crime
- Known gang recruitment at school
- High levels of local crime including drugs market
- Presence of gangs in community
- Local tensions between ethnic / cultural / religious groups

## Medium risk factors

- Availability and use of drugs
- Witness or victim of domestic violence
- Criminal conviction of parents or siblings

## Low level risk factors

- Lack of reliable support from wider family
- Lack of positive role models in the community
- Little interaction with neighbours and community
- High unemployment
- Sustained poverty
- Limited access to conventional careers
- Lack of age appropriate, safe play facilities in area
- Transient families
- Financial difficulties affecting child

## Use of weapons

Carrying weapons such as knives are likely to significantly increase a young person's risk of becoming either a perpetrator or a victim of violent crime. Reasons for carrying weapons are often to do with fear and the perceived need for self-protection, particularly in deprived or crime affected neighbourhoods.



## **Appendix 4: Contact details**

### **FSSW Duty and Assessment teams**

**FSSW North (West End Lane office):** 156 West End Lane, London NW6 1SD

**Tel:** 020 7974 6600/1125  
**Fax:** 020 7974 6605  
**Manager:** 020 7974 6589  
**Senior practitioners:** 020 7974 6617/6598

**Wards covered:** Adelaide, Belsize, Fitzjohns, Fortune Green, Frogna, Gospel Oak, Grafton, Hampstead Town, Highgate, Kilburn, Priory, South End, Swiss Cottage, St Johns, West End.

**FSSW South (Crowndale Centre office):** Crowndale Centre, 218 Eversholt Street, London NW1 1BD

**Tel:** 020 7974 4094/4446  
**Fax:** 020 7974 1557  
**Manager:** 020 7974 1553  
**Senior practitioners:** 020 7974 4018/4178

**Wards covered:** Bloomsbury, Brunswick, Camden, Castlehaven, Caversham, Chalk Farm, Holborn, Kings Cross, Regents Park, Somers Town, St Pancras.

### **Youth Offending Service:**

Crowndale Centre, 218 Eversholt Street, London NW1 1BD

**Tel:** 020 7974 6181  
**Duty worker:** 020 7974 1261  
**Fax:** 020 7974 4163

### **Multi-agency liaison team (MALT):**

Vadnie Bish House, 33 Caversham Road, London NW5 2DR

**Tel:** 020 7974 3163

**Police Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT):** Holborn Police Station, 10 Lambs Conduit Street, London WC1N 3NR

**Tel:** 020 8733 6494