



1. Introduction

Good safeguarding practice doesn't happen by accident – and in the same way abuse and exploitation doesn't end at the age of 18 and yet many of the services for adults are designed to support only those people with ongoing care and support needs. A new joint briefing on making Transitional Safeguarding a reality has been published by the Department of Health and Social Care and other agencies, including ADASS, LGA and BASW. The 4LSAB have developed an overarching multi-agency framework for managing risk and safeguarding people moving into adulthood has been covering the Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton and is fully supported and endorsed by the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnerships.

The Framework aims to strengthen the safeguarding support available to young adults aged 18 years with pre-existing vulnerability and risk factors as they move into adulthood. It is recognised that safeguarding arrangements for young adults need to take account of their distinct safeguarding needs.

2. What is transitional safeguarding?

'Transitional safeguarding' is about recognising that the needs of young people do not change or stop when they reach 18, although the laws and services supporting them often do. It is about making sure they have the help they need to keep themselves safe and as independent as possible. It is an approach to safeguarding that moves through developmental stages, rather than just focusing on chronological age, building on best practice and learning from both adult and children's services. "Those working with adults should be curious about the childhood of the adult they are supporting and those working with children should be ambitious about the adult they are helping to create" (Dez Holmes, 2021).



3. Why is transitional safeguarding important?

The wider child safeguarding system does not always work well for adolescents, often designed to meet the needs of younger children. Adolescents are thought to need distinct services and professional approaches in line with their developmental needs, recognising that harm and its effects do not stop at age 18. Many of the environmental and structural factors that increase a child's vulnerability continue into adulthood, resulting in unmet needs and costly later interventions.

The children's and adults' safeguarding systems have developed from different theories, come under different laws and have different processes as a result. This can make the transition to adulthood harder for young people facing ongoing risk and mean that young people entering adulthood experience a 'cliff-edge' in terms of support.



4. How is it different to safeguarding children?

Transitional safeguarding uses aspects from both adult and child approaches in organisations, to offer more tailored support as a young person moves into adulthood. It does not expect that all young adults experiencing risk will have this removed or lessened by formal services in the same way that safeguarding children focuses on explicit protection from harm.



5. What are the links with safeguarding adults?

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The Making Safeguarding Personal approach, set out in the Care Act, means recognising an adult's rights, freedom of action, choice and control; and the right to make decisions that may seem unwise where mental capacity is not in question. It is about understanding that adulthood gives degrees of personal responsibility, and respecting people's preferred outcomes. It is about risk enablement taking account of an individual's preferences, history and circumstances to achieve a proportionate tolerance of accepted risk.

The statutory guidance under the Care Act 2014 outlines steps to take for young people who are 'likely to have needs' at transition as well as for those who are not in receipt of children's services. The statutory guidance states 'the adult's needs arise from or are related to a physical or mental impairment or illness. Local authorities must consider at this stage if the adult has a condition as a result of either physical, mental, sensory, learning or cognitive disabilities or illnesses, substance misuse, brain injury ... a formal diagnosis of the condition should not be required'.



6. What does it mean for young people moving into adulthood?

An adolescent engaged in 'county lines' or other gang associated harm, may find they receive a criminal justice response rather than being recognised as a victim of criminal exploitation.

A young adult experiencing sexual exploitation may not be eligible for a safeguarding response unless they have care and support needs.

A young person who is subject to a child protection plan may find that support stops abruptly as they turn 18, despite their experiences of maltreatment leaving them just as vulnerable as a child leaving care who would be entitled to ongoing support.

A young adult experiencing domestic abuse and poor mental health may be offered little or no support for their own safety unless the circumstances become critical.

Upon becoming a parent, they may find that children's services consider their child to be at risk.

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