



THE  
**HOUSE PROJECT**  
Lancashire

# Safeguarding Policy

**2023 - 2025**



Related Procedures	<a href="#">Lancashire's Children's Services Procedure</a> <a href="#">Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (CSAP) Pan-Lancashire Safeguarding Procedures</a> LHP Missing Young Person Policy LHP Behaviour Support Policy LHP Whistleblowing Policy
Relevant Guidance	<a href="#">Supported Accommodation (England) Regulations 2023</a> <a href="#">Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)</a>
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Terminology	Definition
Social Worker	The young person's social worker. In their absence the duty social worker, team manager, duty team manager or other suitable professional from the Permanence Service.
LHP Practitioners	LHP Facilitators and LHP Leads

Parent	The young person's parent (irrespective of parental responsibility, for young people who were adopted this refers to the adoptive parents only), or any other person with parental responsibility.
Trusted Adult	A person actively involved in the young person's care plan but not a professional.
LCS	The young person's electronic case file on Lancashire's Children's System (Liquid Logic)
LHP Base	Lancashire's House Project's designated young people space in an LCC building.
LHP Home	The young person's 'placement'. This is a social housing property provided by a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) and made available to the young person by Lancashire County Council as part of Lancashire's House Project prior to their 18 <sup>th</sup> birthday.

## 1 Recognising Abuse and Neglect

Sub-Section	Content
1	Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Young People
2	Recognising Concerns
3	Neglect
4	Physical Abuse
5	Sexual Abuse
6	Emotional Abuse
7	Bullying and Peer Abuse
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### 1.1 Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Young people

Safeguarding relates to the action taken to promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and protect them from harm. **Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.** Safeguarding is defined in the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE) as:

- Protecting children and young people from maltreatment;
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health and development;
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

#### Significant Harm



The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of 'Significant Harm' and 'the likelihood of Significant Harm' as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children; the act places a duty on local authorities to make enquiries to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering or is likely to suffer Significant Harm.

Harm is defined as the ill treatment or impairment of health and development. This definition was clarified in section 120 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (implemented on 31 January 2005) so that it may include, "... impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another" (for example in the case of a child who witnesses domestic abuse).

Under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, children are recognised as victims of domestic abuse in their own right, if they see, hear, or experience the effects of the abuse, and are related to the perpetrator of the abuse or the victim of the abuse. Abuse directed towards the child is defined as child abuse.

Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Emotional Abuse and Neglect are all categories of Significant Harm.

There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. Sometimes a single violent episode may constitute significant harm but more often it is an accumulation of significant events, both acute and longstanding, which interrupt, damage or change the child's development.

### **Extra-familial Harm**

When supporting young people, it is important for LHP Practitioners to understand that significant harm can not only be caused by parents or those directly caring for a young person, but also by members of the wider family, boy-/girlfriends, friends, associates or peers. Guidance on safeguarding young people from extra-familial harm is provided in the chapters:

- Criminal Exploitation, County Lines and Gangs
- Sexual Exploitation
- Other Forms of Exploitation
- Abusive Relationships (Victim/Perpetrator)
- Radicalisation and Extremism

It is important to consider whether a young person might be at risk of extra-familial harm when missing from care.

The Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (CSAP) provides important and additional safeguarding guidance for young people in specific circumstances, including:

- Abduction
- Bullying
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Child Criminal Exploitation
- Children from Abroad, including Victims of Modern Slavery, Trafficking and Exploitation
- Complex (organised or multiple) Abuse
- Concealed and Denied Pregnancy Guidance
- Dangerous or Out of Control Pets
- Disabilities and Learning Difficulties
- Diversity
- Domestic Abuse
- Fabricated or Induced Illness and Perplexing Presentations Guidance (2022)
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Forced Marriage
- Gambling
- Gang, Group Activity and Criminal Exploitation Affecting Children
- Historical Abuse Allegations
- 'Honour' Based Abuse
- Missing Children and Families
- Online Safeguarding
- Peer Abuse
- Radicalisation
- Religious Beliefs and Linked Abuse
- Self-Harm and Suicidal Ideation
- Sexually Active Young People Under the Age of 18

This is not an exhausted list and further safeguarding guidance is available from the [Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership \(CSAP\) Pan-Lancashire Procedures](#)

## 1.2 Recognising Concerns

Local authorities have a duty to promote and safeguard the welfare of young people and to investigate and take necessary action to protect young people from abuse and/or harm.



Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people and, in particular protecting them from abuse and harm, is a shared responsibility and depends on effective joint working between all LHP Practitioners along with all the relevant agencies and professionals.

Young people should be supported by LHP Practitioners to understand what abuse is, and to manage the impact of any abuse or neglect they have suffered.

Young people must be listened to and enabled to report any abuse, neglect or harm at the earliest opportunity. They should be given information about how to report abuse or any concerns about possible abuse among their peers. This should include being able to access in private, relevant websites or help lines such as **Childline** to seek advice and help.

All LHP Practitioners have a responsibility to report any suspicions or concerns that a child or young person has or may be mistreated or harmed.

Abuse, neglect or harm is not always easy to identify, LHP Practitioners are more than likely to have some information but not the whole picture.

The first indications that a young person is being abused, neglected or suffers harm may be as a result of:

- Remarks made by the young person or their parents or friends;
- Changes in a young person's behaviour or demeanour which may indicate abuse, neglect or harm;
- By a series of events or indicators which, whilst not necessarily of concern in themselves, are of concern when considered together.

Initially, the situation may not seem serious, but it should be remembered that intervening early can prevent minor abuse from becoming more serious.

Any allegation of harm or abuse must be addressed in line with Section 2 – Safeguarding Young People and Referring Safeguarding Concerns.

The Registered Service Manager should ensure that all LHP Practitioners have relevant training in safeguarding and children protection.

## **Forms of Abuse**

There are four defined categories of child abuse, which are forms of 'Significant Harm':



- Neglect;
- Physical Abuse;
- Emotional Abuse;
- Sexual Abuse.

A person can abuse or neglect a young person by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Young people can be abused in a family or in an institution or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They can be abused by an adult or adults or another young person or young people.

When supporting young people, forms of abuse can be linked to:

- Extra-familial harm
- Exploitation

### **1.3 Neglect**

Neglect is a form of Significant Harm which involves the persistent failure to meet a child or young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child or young person's health or development.

Neglect may occur/involve:

- During pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse;
- Parent/carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment;
- Failing to protect a child or young person from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- Failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inappropriate carers;
- Failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment;
- May also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child or young person's basic emotional needs.

Warning signs include:

- Non-organic failure to thrive, i.e. where there is poor growth for which no medical cause is found, especially with a dramatic improvement in growth on a nutritious diet away from home;
- A consistently unkempt, dirty appearance;



- Unmet medical needs, e.g. failure to seek medical advice or attend appointments for illness, severe untreated nappy rash, missed immunisations where they have not been refused on other grounds;
- Developmental delay without any other clear cause;
- Lack of social responsiveness;
- Self-stimulating behaviours such as head banging or rocking (note that some children with special needs may exhibit this behaviour due to their disability but this should also be evaluated for context);
- Repeated failure by parents/carers to prevent injury;
- Consistently inappropriately clothed for the weather;
- Hazardous living conditions.

## 1.4 Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is a form of Significant Harm which may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or young person, including fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately causing, ill health, to a child or young person.

Harm may be caused to children and young people both by the abuse itself, and by the abuse taking place in a wider family, extra-familial or institutional context of conflict and aggression, including inappropriate or inexperienced use of physical restraint. Physical abuse has been linked to aggressive behaviour in children and young people, emotional and behavioural problems, and educational difficulties.

Violence is pervasive and the physical abuse of children and young people frequently coexists with domestic abuse. It may involve hitting, shaking, scolding, suffocating or poisoning and it may cause the following injuries:

### Bruises

Symmetrically bruised eyes are rarely accidental, although they may occur where there is a fracture of the head or nose and blood seeps from the injury site to settle in the loose tissue around the eye. A single bruised eye may be the result of an accident or abuse. Careful consideration is required whenever there is an injury around the eye. It should be noted whether the lids are swollen and tender and if there is damage to the eye itself.

- Bruising in or around the mouth (especially in small babies);
- Grasp marks on legs and arms or chest of a small child;



- Finger marks (e.g. you may see three or four small bruises on one side of the face and one on the other);
- Symmetrical bruising (especially on the ears);
- Bruising behind the ears;
- Outline bruising (e.g. belt marks, hand prints);
- Linear bruising (particularly on the buttocks or back);
- Bruising on soft tissue with no obvious explanation, e.g. inner aspect of thigh;
- Bruising of different ages.

The following are uncommon sites for accidental bruising:

- Back of legs, buttocks, except occasionally along the bony protuberances of the spine
- Mouth, cheeks, behind the ear;
- Stomach, chest;
- Under the arm;
- Genital, rectal area;
- Neck.

Babies or others who are not yet mobile, i.e. are developmentally unable to move on their own, should not get bruises or other injuries. If they have bruises or other injuries, these must be adequately explained before they are accepted as accidental.

#### **Note**

Seemingly trivial injuries should not be ignored. Abuse can and does sometimes escalate against a child or young person if it goes unchecked. All injuries should be noted and collated in the young person's records.

#### **Scars**

Children and young people may have scars, but notice should be taken if a young person has large number of scars of different ages (especially if coupled with current bruising), unusual shaped scars (e.g. round ones from possible cigarette burns) or of large scars that are from burns or lacerations that did not receive medical treatment.

#### **Fractures**

These should be suspected if there is pain, swelling and discolouration over a bone or joint. Fractures should be suspected if the young person is not using a limb. The most common non-accidental fractures are to the long bones in the arms and legs, and to the ribs. It is very

rare for a child under one year to sustain a fracture accidentally. Fractures also cause pain and it is very difficult for a parent to be unaware that a child has been hurt.

### **Burns/Scalds**

It can be very difficult to distinguish between accidental and non-accidental burns; however, burns or scalds with clear outlines are suspicious as are burns of uniform depth over a larger area.

### **Bites**

These can leave clear impressions of the teeth. Human bites are oval or crescent shaped. If the impression of the bites is more than 3 cm across its width, they must have been caused by an adult or older child with permanent teeth.

### **Other injuries which may be deliberately caused**

- Poisoning;
- Ingestion or other application of damaging substances, e.g. bleach;
- Administration of drugs to children where they are not medically indicated or prescribed;
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Breast Ironing is Physical Abuse and a criminal offence regardless of cultural or other reasons.
- Injuries may also be caused as a result of a parent fabricating or inducing illness in a child.

## **1.5 Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child or young person is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children or young people in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children or young people to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child or young person in preparation for abuse.

Sexual abuse often takes place online, and can be in many forms including grooming, sexting (including sharing explicit photos / images) and social media. Creating or sharing explicit

images of a child or young person under the age of 18 is illegal, even if the person doing it is a child. A young person is breaking the law if they:

- Take an explicit photo or video of themselves or a friend;
- Share an explicit image or video of a child or young person under 18, even if it's shared between children and young people of the same age;
- Possess, download or store an explicit image or video of a child or young person under 18, even if the child or young person gave their permission for it to be created.

However, if a young person is found creating or sharing images, the police can choose to record that a crime has been committed but that taking formal action is not in the public interest.

With effect from 29 June 2021, section 69 Domestic Abuse Act 2021 expanded so-called 'revenge porn' to include threats to disclose private sexual photographs and films with intent to cause distress.

Technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse.

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other young people.

Sexual abuse can have a long-term impact on emotional, social and educational development and is linked to the development of mental health issues in later life.

Most child victims are sexually abused by someone they know - either a member of their family or someone well known to them or their family. It can be the most secretive and difficult type of abuse for children and young people to disclose.

Children and young people of all ages are abused, and the abuse may carry on for many years before it comes to light.

Initially children and young people may not recognise themselves as victims of sexual abuse - a child may not understand what is happening and may not even understand that it is wrong especially as the perpetrator will seek to reduce the risk of disclosure by threatening them, telling them they will not be believed or holding them responsible for their own abuse.

Recognition of sexual abuse generally follows either a direct statement from the child/young person (or very occasionally from the abuser), or more often, as a result of concerns about the child/young person's behaviour, or because of physical symptoms or signs.

Indicators that a child or young person has been sexually abused include:

- Changes in behaviour, including becoming more aggressive, withdrawn, clingy;
- Problems in school, difficulty concentrating, drop off in academic performance;
- Sleep problems or regressed behaviours such as bed wetting / soiling when previously dry;
- Frightened of or seeking to avoid spending time with a particular person;
- Knowledge of sexual behaviour/language that seems inappropriate for their age;
- Physical symptoms including pregnancy in adolescents where the identity of the father is vague or secret, STIs, discharge or unexplained bleeding;
- Poor hygiene, which often leads to social isolation in school or college;
- Injuries and bruises on parts of the body where other explanations are not available especially bruises, bite marks or other injuries to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or thighs; and
- Injuries to the mouth, which may be noted by dental practitioners.

LHP Practitioners have to be sensitive to the fact that young people supported by Lancashire's House Project may have been:

- a victim of child sexual abuse;
- a perpetrator of sexually harmful behaviour; or
- a victim of child sexual abuse as well as perpetrator of sexually harmful behaviour.

### **Sexual Exploitation**

Sexual exploitation of young people under the age of 18 is also a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity a) by exploiting the victim's vulnerabilities and needs in a way that make them believe this is an exchange for something they need or want (e.g. by providing the young person with a false sense of belonging and creating dependencies), and/or b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Also see:



- Section 6 - Sexual Exploitation
- [CSAP Pan-Lancashire Safeguarding Procedure - Child Sexual Exploitation](#)
- [CSAP Pan-Lancashire Safeguarding Procedure - Concealed and Denied Pregnancy Guidance](#)
- [CSAP Pan-Lancashire Safeguarding Procedure - Sexually Active Young People Under the Age of 18](#)

## 1.6 Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is a form of Significant Harm which involves the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or young person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child/young person's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children or young people that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child/young person opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children or young people. These may include interactions that are beyond the child/young person's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child/young person participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including on-line/ Cyberbullying\*) causing children or young people frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child/young person, though it may occur alone.

\*Cyberbullying means when the internet, mobile phones or other devices are used to hurt or bully another person, this can include text messaging, emails, instant messaging and use of social networking sites such as Facebook.

It is not usually indicated by a specific incident but is observed in the interaction with the child/young person. One child/young person may be scapegoated or treated completely differently to their siblings.

### Behaviours associated with Emotional Abuse

The following may identify behaviours which, if persistent, may be emotionally abusive. What is inappropriate will often depend on the child/young person's developmental stage:



- A persistently negative view of the child/young person, particularly as inherently bad, often combined with "deserved" harsh punishment;
- Inconsistent and unpredictable responses particularly where there is threat to or rejection of the child/young person;
- Expectations which are inappropriate for the developmental stage of the child/young person, either too high or too low, over protective or under protective;
- A lack of emotional availability or responsiveness to the child/young person;
- No respect for personal boundaries of the child/young person; not seeing the child/young person as an individual;
- Promoting mis-socialisation or poor social adaptation;
- Contradictory, confusing or misleading messages in communicating with the child/young person which seriously distort reality for the child/young person or promote confusion;
- Serious physical or psychiatric illness of a parent including periods of hospitalisation;
- Induction of a child into bizarre parental beliefs;
- Breakdown in parental relationship with chronic, bitter conflict over contact or residence (this would also include situations where there is domestic abuse);
- Major emotional rejection of the child/young person and parental inability to perceive their needs with any objectivity;
- Major and repeated familial change, e.g. separations, reconstitution of families;
- Parental drug and/or alcohol misuse;
- Entrenched offending behaviour which may be criminal and which might also lead to a term of imprisonment.

### **Behavioural signs in children and young people**

Behaviour in a young person which may indicate emotional abuse includes:

- Very low self-esteem, often with an inability to accept praise or to trust;
- Lack of any sense of fun, over-serious or apathetic;
- Excessive clingy or attention seeking behaviour;
- Over-anxiety, either watchful and constantly checking or over-anxious to please;
- Developmental delay, especially in speech;
- Substantial failure to reach potential in learning, linked with lack of confidence, poor concentration and lack of pride in achievement;
- Self-harming; compulsive rituals; stereotypical repetitive behaviour;
- Unusual pattern of response to others showing emotions.



## 1.7 Bullying and Peer Abuse

Young people, particularly those living away from home, are also vulnerable to physical, sexual and emotional bullying and abuse by their peers. Such abuse should always be taken as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult. It should be subject to the same safeguarding procedures as apply in respect of any child who is suffering, or at risk of suffering, Significant Harm from an adverse source.

Severe or persistent bullying can result in Peer Abuse and Significant Harm, which is why LHP Practitioners must have the skills required to intervene, protect and address bullying behaviours effectively.

Bullying is defined as 'behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, which intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally' (DfE definition). Repeated bullying usually has a significant emotional component, where the anticipation and fear of being bullied seriously affects the behaviour of the victim.

It can be inflicted on a young person by another young person or an adult. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyberbullying or online bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or can be because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between young people, or perceived differences.

It can take many forms, but the three main types are:

- Physical - for example, hitting, kicking, pushing, theft;
- Verbal - for example, threats, name calling, racist or sexual/homophobic remarks;
- Emotional - for example, isolating an individual from activities/games and the social acceptance of their peer group.

An Ofsted thematic review ([Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools and Colleges \(Ofsted\)](#)) identified substantial levels of sexual harassment for both girls (90%) and boys (nearly 50%) – usually in unsupervised settings. Sexual harassment and sexual violence exist on a continuum and may overlap. Where the latter occurs, there could be a criminal offence committed.

A significant proportion of sex offences are committed by teenagers, and, on occasion, such offences are committed by younger children. LHP Practitioners need to support young people to understand and recognise the difference between consenting and abusive, and between appropriate and exploitative peer relationships.

LHP Practitioners should not dismiss any abusive sexual behaviour as 'normal' between young people and should not develop high thresholds before taking action.

Online/Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using technology. Whether on social media sites, through a mobile phone, or gaming sites, the effects can be devastating for the young person involved. There are ways to help prevent a child from being cyberbullied and to help them cope and stop the bullying if it does happen. It is another form of bullying which can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience. By its very nature, cyberbullying tends to involve a number of online bystanders and can quickly spiral out of control. Children and young people who bully others online do not need to be physically stronger and their methods can often be hidden and subtle.

Bullying often starts with apparently trivial events such as teasing and name calling which nevertheless rely on an abuse of power. Such abuses of power, if left unchallenged, can lead to more serious forms of abuse, such as domestic violence and abuse, racial attacks, sexual offences and self-harm or suicide.

Bullying is a type of behaviour which needs to be defined by the impact on the child/young person being bullied rather than by the intention of the perpetrator.

LHP Practitioners must ensure they work together with education establishments where bullying occurs between at school or college between young people of Lancashire's House Project.

Evidence suggests that young people who abuse others may have suffered considerable disruption in their lives, been exposed to violence within the family, may have witnessed or been subject to physical or sexual abuse, have problems in their educational development, and may have committed other offences. However, young people who abuse others should be held responsible for their abusive behaviour, while being identified and responded to in a way that meets their needs as well as protecting others. Allegations of peer abuse will be taken as seriously as allegations of abuse perpetrated by an adult;



Also see:

- LHP Positive Behaviour Support Policy Section 10: Countering Bullying and Peer Abuse
- [CSAP Pan-Lancashire Safeguarding Procedure - Bullying](#)
- [CSAP Pan-Lancashire Safeguarding Procedure - Peer Abuse](#)

## 1.8 Exploitation

Exploitation occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive another individual. The victim's vulnerabilities and needs are exploited in a way that make them believe this is an exchange for something they need or want (e.g. by providing the young person with a false sense of belonging and creating dependencies), and/or b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been exploited even if the activity appears consensual.

Exploitation can link to any of the above categories of abuse and young people missing from care (including disengaging from professionals or being away from placement without authorisation) are at increased risk of exploitation.

The most common forms of exploitation are:

- Criminal Exploitation
- Sexual Exploitation
- Emotional Exploitation
- Financial Exploitation

Also see:

- Section 5 – Criminal Exploitation, County Lines and Gangs
- Section 6 – Sexual Exploitation
- Section 7 – Other Forms of Exploitation
- Section 8 – Controlling, Coercive and Abusive Relationships
- Section 9 – Radicalisation and Extremism
- [Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership \(CSAP\) Pan-Lancashire Safeguarding Procedures](#)

## 2 Safeguarding Young People and Referring Safeguarding Concerns

This chapter must be read in conjunction with:

- [CSAP Pan-Lancashire Safeguarding Procedure - Strategy Discussions](#)
- [CSAP Pan-Lancashire Safeguarding Procedure - Section 47 Enquiries](#)

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2	Proactive Safeguarding Practice
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9	Actions by the Registered Service Manager
10	Allegations made against Children or Young People

### 2.1 Principles

Lancashire's House Project supports young people to keep themselves safe and be protected from harm.

The Registered Service Manager will ensure:

- That LHP Practitioners:
  - Assess whether each young person is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the young person's relevant plans, and, if necessary, support the young person and work in partnership with other professionals to make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the young person;
  - Help each young person to understand how to keep themselves safe;
  - Have the skills to identify and act upon signs that a young person is at risk of harm;
  - Manage relationships between young people to prevent them from harming each other;
  - Understand the roles and responsibilities in relation to protecting young people that are assigned to them by the Registered Service Manager;
  - Take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a young person's welfare; and



- Are familiar with, and act in accordance with, Lancashire's House Projects safeguarding policies;
- That Lancashire's House Project's support and outreach is arranged and delivered to support young people to keep themselves safe and protected from harm;
- That the premises used for the purposes of the LHP Base and LHP Homes are located so that young people are effectively safeguarded;
- That the premises used for the purposes of the LHP Base and LHP Homes are designed, furnished and maintained so as to protect each young person from avoidable hazards to their health; and
- That the effectiveness of Lancashire's House Projects safeguarding policies is monitored regularly.

See also related procedures on protecting and safeguarding young people from specific types of harm and abuse as set out in Lancashire's House Project Safeguarding Policy, Lancashire's House Project Missing Young Person Policy and [Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership \(CSAP\) Pan-Lancashire Safeguarding Procedures](#)

## 2.2 Proactive Safeguarding Practice

Lancashire's House Project is proactive in working with young people to reduce the risk of harm to them, and sets high expectations to ensure that young people feel safe and are safe, understand how to protect themselves and are effectively supported to be protected from significant harm and extra-familial harm, including (but not limited to) neglect, abuse, sexual and criminal exploitation, accidents, bullying, self-harm, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, homophobic behaviour, racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination, and radicalisation. Any discriminatory behaviours are challenged and help and support are given to young people about how to treat others with respect. LHP Practitioners are prepared and supported to respond to young people who may face these risks, and receive suitable training.

Young people must feel safe and be safe. LHP Practitioners should support young people to be aware of and manage their own safety both inside and outside their LHP Home to the extent that any good parent would. LHP Practitioners should help young people to understand how to protect themselves, feel protected and be protected from significant harm.

Young people should be encouraged to develop positive relationships with others within Lancashire's House Project and beyond as set out in the LHP Positive Behaviour Support Policy. However, LHP Practitioners should be alert to the possibility that young people may be at risk from such relationships including with other young people in Lancashire's House

Project, LHP Practitioners, family members, friends and others, and they therefore should take appropriate steps to protect a young person where there are concerns for a young person's safety.

Proactive and creative safeguarding practice means that all young people, including the most vulnerable, have a strong sense of safety and well-being and so are unlikely to be missing from care on a regular basis.

LHP Practitioners will be prepared and supported to manage situations and behaviour, and use clear and consistent boundaries to contribute to a feeling of well-being and security for young people. Young people will be involved in creating ways to de-escalate situations and finding creative alternative strategies that are effective.

All staff will undergo Safeguarding training. Staff need the knowledge and skills to recognise and be alert for any signs that might indicate a young person is in any way at risk of harm and should know what to do when they have concerns. The Registered Service Manager will ensure that skills in safeguarding are gained, refreshed as needed and recorded in the LHP Workforce Development Plan.

All LHP Practitioners will be made aware of and have access to the LHP Safeguarding Policy, Allegations Against LHP Practitioners and Volunteers and Lancashire County Council's Whistleblowing Procedure.

Supervision of LHP Practitioners practice should ensure that all LHP Practitioners are engaged in the safeguarding culture of Lancashire's House Project so they understand what they would need to do if they found other LHP Practitioners or professionals misusing or abusing their position to the detriment of the safety of a young person. See also:

## **2.3 Care and Placement Planning**

Care and placement planning should ensure that any risks associated with young people offending, misusing drugs or alcohol, self-harming, going missing, being affiliated with gangs, being subject to sexual or criminal exploitation, extremism or radicalism are known and understood by LHP Practitioners who support them. This includes regular contact and planning with the social worker and their family, if this is appropriate, and in accordance with plans for their future.

Leaders and managers will regularly review and act on any known risks to young people, taking advice and guidance from local partners and agencies as appropriate.

## **2.4 Working in Partnership with Others**

The Registered Service Manager is responsible for coordinating safeguarding young person referrals.

However, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people and protecting them from abuse and harm is a shared responsibility and depends on effective joint working between all LHP Practitioners, Children's Services staff and other agencies. All LHP Practitioners have a responsibility to report any suspicions that a young person has been mistreated or harmed.

Local authorities have a duty to promote and safeguard the welfare of young people and to investigate and take necessary action to protect young people from abuse and harm.

Lancashire's House Project will maintain effective links with social workers, designated officers and other safeguarding agencies and ensure that there is good communication about safeguarding issues. Lancashire's House Project also has good relationships with relevant local voluntary sector organisations that may be able to offer specialist support to young people in keeping themselves safe.

Lancashire's House Project will also make all notifications as required by Regulation 27 Notification of serious events to notify the social worker, Ofsted and other relevant persons about serious events.

## **2.5 Managing Risk**

LHP Practitioners should continually and actively assess the risks to each young person and the effectiveness of the arrangements in place to help them keep safe and be protected.

Where there are safeguarding concerns for a young person when their placement commences, their placement plan, agreed between Lancashire's House Project and social worker/relevant manager, must include details of the steps Lancashire's House Project will take to manage any assessed risks on a day to day basis. Subsequent changes and updates will be recorded on the young person's risk assessment plan.

Young People will be supported to take age-appropriate risks, as part of their development of independent living skills. Lancashire's House Project implements a proportionate approach to

risk assessments to ensure that these work in practice, are fit for purpose and provide enough information to all relevant people so that they can support young people safely and appropriately. Individual up-to-date risk assessments must effectively address any known vulnerabilities for each young person and set out what action should be taken to address and minimise the risks, and reduce harm or the risk of harm.

## **2.6 Providing Someone for Young People to Talk to**

There is a strong safeguarding culture in Lancashire's House Project where young people are listened to, respected and involved in both the development of Lancashire's House Project and decisions about their LHP Home. All LHP Practitioners will strive to build positive relationships with young people in Lancashire's House Project and develop a culture of openness and trust that encourages young people to be able to tell someone if they have concerns or worries about their safety.

LHP Practitioners should provide young people with a written guide that contains information on how to contact their social worker to call for a review of their care plan if they have concerns about their safety or welfare, and support them to do so, if needed. The written guide will also provide the young person with information about speaking to an independent advocate, their Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO), Ofsted Inspector, or other relevant person, contacting Childline, the Children's Commissioner or making a complaint and will encourage and support young people to do so if they have concerns about their safety.

Young people will be supported by LHP Practitioners to understand what abuse is. They will be given information about how to report abuse or any concerns about possible abuse. They will be able to access in private, relevant websites or help lines such as [Childline](#) to seek advice and help.

Young people will be supported to identify a trusted adult within their support network who they can talk to about any concerns. When young people raise concerns, it is essential that the adults in whom they confide listen to them, take their concerns seriously and respond appropriately.

## 2.7 Receiving Concerns in relation to Abuse or Harm

When a LHP Practitioner sees, hears or is told anything that causes them to become concerned that a young person is suffering or likely to suffer **Significant Harm**, they must report it immediately - as described in the following chapter: Reporting Concerns.

Young people will sometimes disclose abuse to an adult who they have come to feel they can trust. If a young person discloses abuse, it is important that LHP Practitioners respond appropriately by remaining calm and receptive; listening without interrupting; only asking questions for clarification and acknowledging the young person's courage in telling.

It is not the LHP Practitioners member's responsibility to investigate or in any way make judgements about what is reported to them. Investigations, if necessary, must be undertaken by the police and Children's Social Care.

If a disclosure or allegation of abuse or harm has been made, LHP Practitioners should discuss with the young person or other person who has made the complaint what steps they would like to be taken to protect them and their wishes should be shared and, if not in conflict with procedures, followed.

Where the allegation or disclosure is of a non-recent or historical nature, e.g. relating to abuse or harm that may have been perpetrated in another placement or by family members, allegations must be taken seriously and must be reported in the same way as any other allegation.

LHP Practitioners must not give absolute guarantees of confidentiality to those who report possible abuse or harm, but they should guarantee that they will take steps to ensure that appropriate action is taken and the young person protected.

If an allegation or any suspicion is about the behaviour, past or present of another member of Lancashire's House Project or other Lancashire County Council employee, including managers, which may in any way put young people at risk, LHP Practitioners must follow the **Allegations Against LHP Practitioners and Volunteers Procedure**.

LHP Practitioners must make a written record as soon as possible of what they have been told, any questions they asked and the replies given and the actions taken and by whom. They must then give the report to the Registered Service Manager.

This information should be placed on the young person's record except where a colleague or staff from Children's Social Care is implicated or there is any risk to the young person as a result, in which case notes/records should be given to the Registered Service Manager dealing with the matter.

LHP Practitioners should not discuss the matter with others, including other LHP Practitioners, parents etc. unless asked to do so by those responsible for dealing with any subsequent investigation or enquiry.

Where there might be a criminal investigation due to the information disclosed by the young person it is important for LHP Practitioners to be mindful of their actions to not compromise possible evidence.

## 2.8 Reporting Concerns

The general principle is that all safeguarding concerns and any allegations must be reported.

Young people must be listened to and enabled to report any abuse or neglect at the earliest opportunity.

The following actions should be taken when there is any concern or, disclosure about the welfare of a young person. This includes non-recent or historical abuse that may have occurred at some time in the past and may not have been previously reported or investigated.

Harm can be perpetrated by any person, including:

- Another child or young person (including serious or persistent bullying) – see: [Allegations made Against Children or Young People](#);
- A member of LHP Practitioners, or manager, see [Allegations Against LHP Practitioners and Volunteers](#);
- A visitor or person in the community;
- A teacher, social worker or other professional;
- A parent or other family member.

LHP Practitioners should firstly make their report to the Registered Service Manager, unless they are implicated. In which case LHP Practitioners must notify one of the following:

- A senior manager of the Permanence Service;



- Police;
- The Regulatory Authority (Ofsted).

In an emergency, where there is an immediate risk to the young person, LHP Practitioners must take necessary action. This may involve asking for police assistance or seeking emergency medical assistance e.g. taking the young person to hospital or contacting the emergency services via 999. If the young person is taken to hospital or the police are called, LHP Practitioners must inform them that there is a suspicion of abuse or harm. Thereafter LHP Practitioners must notify the LHP Lead and Registered Service Manager (or other agency) as described above. Once notified, the Registered Service Manager will be responsible for alerting and liaising with the social worker.

When sharing information about a young person with the social worker, it is good practice for practitioners to be transparent about their concerns and to seek to work cooperatively with the young person. Therefore, the most appropriate LHP Practitioner or Registered Service Manager should usually inform the young person that they are going to make a referral.

However, referrals can be made without first informing the young person where to do so would place a young person at risk. Any decision not to inform a young person must be recorded with reasons.

Lancashire's House Project must keep a record of all safeguarding concerns and the actions taken by LHP Practitioners and the Registered Service Manager. This is always recorded on LCS and, where applicable, the young person's risk assessment.

## 2.9 Actions by the Registered Service Manager

After receiving a report of a concern, suspicion or allegation of abuse or harm, the Registered Service Manager must firstly take any steps needed to protect any young person from risk of immediate harm.

The Registered Service Manager should ensure the following people are notified, and retain a record of the referral:

- The LHP Lead;
- The Social Worker/Children's Social Care
- If the suspicion/allegation relates to a LHP Practitioners/professional\*, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO);

- If a Child Protection Enquiry is initiated, Ofsted

\*Re Allegations Against LHP Practitioners: See Allegations Against LHP Practitioners and Volunteers.

The procedures that will be followed will depend on the decisions made by Children's Social Care and the social worker. It is also likely that the Regulatory Authority will be involved in decision making.

The Registered Service Manager will co-operate with the decisions/actions taken by them.

Following receipt of the referral, if the social worker/Children's Social Care have concerns that a young person has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm a Strategy Discussion/Meeting will be convened, to decide whether to initiate a Child Protection Enquiry/Section 47 Enquiry, and, if so, to agree the following with the Registered Service Manager:

1. Who should inform the young person's parent(s);
2. Arrangements for any medical examination of the young person;
3. Any immediate arrangements for protection of the young person (or young people), including whether the young person should be moved to another emergency home;
4. Whether it is necessary to inform LHP LHP Practitioners and if so who will do it;
5. Whether any implicated LHP Practitioners should be suspended or moved;
6. Who should inform/update the person making the initial allegation of the steps/actions taken?

The Registered Service Manager should ensure that the young person is supported during any enquiries/investigation, this may require an independent advocate or independent person to be involved. The Registered Service Manager should also ensure that all LHP Practitioners co-operate fully.

If the Registered Service Manager is not satisfied with the response from Children's Social Care, they should escalate their concerns appropriately, including by writing to the director of children's services (DCS).

If a Child Protection / Section 47 Enquiry is initiated, the Registered Service Manager must inform Ofsted.



## **2.10 Allegations made against Children or Young People**

Abuse and harm can be perpetrated upon one child or young person by another in many different ways, including persistent or serious bullying, sexual exploitation, aggressive, exploitative or other threatening behaviour which places a child or young person at risk.

Where there is any suspicion or allegation of abuse or harm perpetrated by one child or young person upon another, the procedures under Reporting Concerns should be followed.

Protecting the rights of both victim and alleged perpetrator is important. It may be necessary, dependent on an assessment of all the facts, to separate the alleged perpetrator and victim but it may not be possible to explain why this is necessary to the perpetrator.

Throughout the process thereafter it will be necessary to ensure that children or young people with allegations made against them are properly supported, by an independent person if appropriate or required, as well as their social worker and parent(s), if appropriate.

Once the investigation is complete, consideration will then need to be given to the needs and interests of both alleged victim and perpetrator, and whether counselling and/or other support should be given.

All children and young people in care have suffered significant harm and abuse and perpetrators of abuse may have been the victim of similar abuse themselves, including sexual abuse.

For young people who are known to have abused other children a risk assessment has to be completed jointly by Lancashire's House Project and Children's Social Care. Where this risk cannot be managed to safeguard the other young people of Lancashire's House Project, that young person will not be permitted to join the project.

## 3 Visitors to the LHP Base and a young person's LHP Home

Sub-Section	Content
1	General Information
2	Visits from Group 1 – Social Workers and DBS checked Professionals involved
3	Visits from Group 2 – Professionals not involved
4	Visits from Group 3 – Parents, relatives and friends
5	Visits from Group 4 – Maintenance Workers and Contractors
6	Visits from Group 5 – General Associates/Peers, Neighbours and Members of the General Public
7	Prevention and Safeguarding Actions

### 3.1 General Information

Visitors are a normal part of young people's day to day live and significant to meet young people's needs. Lancashire's House Project support young people to manage visitors to their LHP Home safely and well.

Visitors to the LHP Base or a LHP Home may fall into one of these groups:

- 1) Social workers and other DBS checked professionals (including former carers) who have active involvement in the young person's care plan
- 2) Professionals from social care or relevant partners who do not have active involvement in the young person's care plan, e.g. inspectors or new employees
- 3) Parents, relatives or friends of the young person
- 4) Maintenance Workers and Contractors such as handymen, delivery drivers, meter readers etc.
- 5) General Associates/Peers, Neighbours or Members of the General Public

LHP Practitioners should be vigilant when allowing visitors into the LHP Base or LHP Home while they are present, ensuring identification is always authenticated where applicable. If there are concerns about the visitor's confirmed or unconfirmed identity, the LHP Lead must be consulted and give approval before contact is permitted.

All visitors from group 1, 2 and 3 have to be pre-approved by the social worker who should confirm their identity and those visitors should be named on the Placement Plan or subsequent care/pathway plan.

The following applies to all visitors who are likely to remain in the LHP Base, LHP Home (while LHP Practitioners is present) or come into contact with young people:

- Visits should normally be planned in advance and must be agreed by LHP Practitioners and the social worker in accordance with the guidance set out for each of the 5 visitor groups as part of the Placement Planning.
- Visitors should be welcomed by LHP Practitioners, who should act as a reference person for them during the visit. LHP Practitioners should ensure that the visitor's identity is authenticated where applicable;
- The visitor should be briefed on practical matters such as fire precautions, the location of toilets, etc.
- Any visitors who have not had Disclosure and Barring Service Checks must not be left alone with a young person at any point except for those pre-approved by the social worker;
- The visit must be recorded
  - for a visit to the LHP Base in the visitors' book
  - for a visit to the LHP Base while young people are present in the visitors' book and on the young people's LCS record
  - for a visit to a LHP Home on LCS (regardless of whether the young person was present or not)

If LHP Practitioners are concerned in any way following a visit to a young person they should raise this with the LHP Lead and speak to the young person's social worker as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Young people reside in LHP Homes independently without LHP Practitioners support onsite and while visits should be planned, this will not always be the case. This limits the opportunity for LHP Practitioners to provide support, increases the importance for young people to be able to manage visitors well and seek appropriate support to keep safe and for LHP Practitioners to be vigilant. Young people in LHP Homes can be at risk from visitors associated to any of the sections of this safeguarding procedure and to extra familiar harm in particular.

LHP Practitioners will provide guidance to young people on how to manage the different groups of visitors before the young person moves into a LHP Home.



## **3.2 Visits from Group 1 - Social Workers and DBS checked Professionals involved**

See: General Information.

This section applies to visits from social workers and other DBS checked professionals (including former carers) who have active involvement in the young person's care plan.

### **Visitors to the LHP Base**

Visits to the LHP Base should normally be planned to ensure coordinated support and avoid any unnecessary disruption for others but may happen on short notice or ad hoc.

### **Visitors to a LHP Home**

The arrangements for visits to a LHP Home will be confirmed with the social worker as part of the placement planning and be recorded in the Placement Plan. Subsequent changes are recorded by the social worker on the young person's Care/Pathway Plan.

LHP Practitioners will provide guidance to young people in how to manage the different groups of visitors before the young person moves into a LHP Home. Visits will normally be arranged directly between the professional and the young person due to their prior involvement and established professional relationship. LHP Practitioners will provide the required support where identified by the social worker or requested by the young person.

Professionals will be advised by LHP Practitioners to notify them of these visits in advance so they can provide any required support and contact the young person after these visits, within a reasonable timescale that is appropriate for the individual circumstances of that young person, to offer any follow up support that might be needed. LHP Practitioners will record details of the visit on LCS. This also ensures information sharing with the social worker.

In the rare and exceptional circumstance that a professional is not to have unsupervised contact with a young person, e.g. because they do not have the required Disclosure and Barring Service Checks, the social worker should advise of this to ensure LHP Practitioners can provide the required support to the young person.

### 3.3 Visits from Group 2 – Professionals not involved

See: General Information.

This section applies to visits from professionals who do not have active involvement in the young person's care plan, e.g. professionals due to become involved in the young person's care plan, police, inspectors or new employees.

#### **Visitors to the LHP Base**

Visits to the LHP Base should normally be planned to ensure coordinated support and avoid any unnecessary disruption for others but may happen on short notice or ad hoc.

#### **Visitors to a LHP Home**

LHP Practitioners should always be present during these visits unless the social worker, personal advisor or a person designated by the social worker is present, because the professionals have no prior involvement and the young person has no established professional relationship with them.

The social worker, young person or any other professional should inform LHP Practitioners of the visit in advance so they can be present or confirm the appropriate professional support for the young person. Where LHP Practitioners do not have to be present, they will contact the young person after these visits, within a reasonable timescale that is appropriate for the individual circumstances of that young person, to offer any follow up support that might be needed. LHP Practitioners will record details of the visit on the young person's LCS record. This also ensures information sharing with the social worker.

The young person should not be left alone with the visitors unless the social worker has confirmed that sufficient checks have been completed, the young person has confirmed they are comfortable to be left alone with the visitor and LHP Practitioners have no concerns about the visit. For social workers, the police and representatives of Regulatory Authority confirmation of the DBS check are not required.

Young people in LHP Homes are advised by LHP Practitioners not to allow visitors entry to the LHP Home, if LHP Practitioners, social worker, personal advisor or the designated person as confirmed by the social worker are not present except for immediate emergency situations. Young people are advised to call LHP Practitioners who will speak with the professional to make appropriate alternative arrangements for the visit.



### **3.4 Visits from Group 3 – Parents, relatives and friends**

See: General Information.

This section applies to visits from parents, relatives or friends of the young person.

#### **Visitors to the LHP Base**

Visits to the LHP Base should normally be planned to ensure coordinated support and avoid any unnecessary disruption for others but may happen on short notice or ad hoc. The rules for visits to the LHP Base are the same as for visits to a LHP Home set out below.

#### **Visitors to a LHP Home**

Any contact between young people and their parents, siblings, relatives or friends should be consistent with arrangements outlined in the young person's Care Plan. As part of the placement planning process and the arrangements for visits be recorded in the Placement Plan.

A risk assessment must be undertaken in relation to contact with family and friends and be updated where new concerns about visitors have been identified.

Visitors under the age of 16 are not permitted into a LHP Home in principle, unless explicitly specified otherwise by the social worker.

Overnight visitors cannot be prohibited in principle due to the young person's age and the importance to promote healthy and supportive social relationships. However, the arrangements have to be approved by the social worker and agreed to by LHP Practitioners. Overnight visits are not permitted for more than 3 nights per week in any case to be compliant with housing legislation and are limited to one person at the time.

Where a LHP Practitioner is present and parents, relatives or friends arrive outside of such arrangements, LHP Practitioners should politely and sensitively explain that they are not allowed to be visiting the young person until the social worker has been consulted.

If there appear to be any immediate risks to the young person or others, LHP Practitioners should seek guidance and support from the LHP Lead or, in exceptional circumstances, the police.





Where a LHP Practitioner is present, they should take reasonable precautions to establish the identity of parents, relatives or friends before these enter a LHP Home or if already present upon arrival of the LHP Practitioner. If there is any doubt or concern on the part of LHP Practitioners, they should be politely asked to leave. The social worker is to be notified of these incidents and they are to be recorded on the young person's LCS record.

### **3.5 Visits from Group 4 – Maintenance Workers and Contractors**

See: General Information.

This section applies to visits from female and male maintenance workers such as handymen, delivery drivers, meter readers etc.

#### **Visitors to the LHP Base**

Visits to the LHP Base should be planned to ensure coordinated support and avoid any unnecessary disruption for others but may happen on short notice or ad hoc. The rules for visits to the LHP Base are the same as for visits to a LHP Home set out below.

#### **Visitors to a LHP Home**

These visits should always be planned and LHP Practitioners should always be present unless the social worker, personal advisor or a person designated by the social worker is present. This is to ensure the safety of the young person and support the young person in developing independent living skills of managing such visits independently as a young adult.

The social worker, young person or any other professional with information about such visit should inform LHP Practitioners of the visit in advance so they can be present or confirm the appropriate professional support for the young person. Where LHP Practitioners did not have to be present, they will contact the young person after these visits, within a reasonable timescale that is appropriate for the individual circumstances of that young person, to offer any follow up support that might be needed. LHP Practitioners will record details of the visit on the young person's LCS record. This also ensures information sharing with the social worker.

LHP Practitioners must ask the visitor to prove their identity before entering the LHP Home. If the person is unable to do so or there is any doubt or concerns on the part of LHP Practitioners,

they should not come into the LHP Home. LHP Practitioners should advise visitors of the need for identity prior to the visit to avoid unnecessary disruption and delay.

Under no circumstances may these visitors be left alone with young people in a LHP Home.

Young people in LHP Homes are advised by LHP Practitioners not to allow visitors entry to the LHP Home, if LHP Practitioners, social worker, personal advisor or the designated person as confirmed by the social worker are not present except for immediate emergency situations. Young people are advised to call LHP Practitioners who will speak with the workmen to make appropriate alternative arrangements for the visit.

Where no entry to a LHP Home is required (e.g. for small doorstep deliveries), it has been assessed by LHP Practitioners that it is appropriate and safe for the young person to manage this without LHP Practitioners supervision as part of the development of their interdependence skills and the young person has confirmed they are comfortable and confident to do so, LHP Practitioners do not have to be present.

Any concerns raised by the maintenance workers, LHP Practitioners or young person must immediately be brought to the attention of the LHP Lead who will consider the significance and inform the Registered Service Manager accordingly.

### **3.6 Visits from Group 5 – General Associates/Peers, Neighbours and Members of the General Public**

See: General.

This section applies to visits from general associates/peers of the young person, neighbours and members of the general public and

#### **Visitors to the LHP Base**

Visits from neighbours, members of the general public or general associates/peers of the young person are not permitted unless these are part of a specific Local House Project or Lancashire County Council programme. Where young people from Lancashire's House Project are present during such programmes, the Registered Service Manager will undertake a risk assessment to ensure young people from the project are safeguarded.

### **Visitors to a LHP Home**

Lancashire's House Project wants every young person to have positive relationships with their neighbours and to be integrated in the local community as part of their interdependence development. Hence Lancashire's House Project liaises with the Registered Social Landlord on general information about the neighbours and neighbourhood to ensure it is suitable to promote this before offering a young person a LHP Home. Lancashire's House Project will also support the young person to introduce themselves to immediate neighbours where possible.

However, general associates/peers, neighbours or members of the general public are not permitted to visit a LHP Home and young people will be advised on and are expected to adhere to this.

Where a LHP Practitioner is present and general associates/peers, neighbours or members of the general public intend to visit or are visiting the young person at a LHP Home, LHP Practitioners should politely and sensitively explain that they are not allowed to be visiting the young person at a LHP Home until their identity has been verified and the social worker been consulted. LHP Practitioners should politely ask them to leave. If there appear to be any immediate risks to the young person or others, LHP Practitioners should seek guidance and support from the LHP Lead or, in exceptional circumstances, the police. The social worker is to be notified of these incidents and they are to be recorded on LCS.

Where a young person develops a friendship with a general associate/peer, neighbour or member of the general public, LHP Practitioners should apply the procedure for Group 3 visitors which includes the prior approval by the social worker and an updated risk assessment.

Young people should have a clear understanding of the risks from visitors, the support available to them, the strategies they can use to manage visitors and the expectations upon them. Young people should have contact details to access support 24/7 to keep themselves safe.

Good tenant behaviour can prevent unexpected and difficult visits from neighbours or members of the general public. LHP Practitioners should provide young people with guidance and support on the expectations of a tenancy and good tenant behaviours before and after a young person moves into a LHP Home.



It is important for LHP Facilitators to form strong and positive relationships with the young people of Lancashire's House Project that ensures frequent communication between the young person and LHP facilitator and to apply professional curiosity and a holistic approach in their conversations with young people to not only develop an awareness and knowledge of the young person's routines and visitors, but also to be able to identify any concerns early.

The LHP Lead should advise the Registered Social Landlord to share any concerns about the young person, both where the young person might be the cause or the victim, with Lancashire's House Project immediately. The LHP Lead should also ensure that there is at least monthly liaison with the Registered Social Landlord to identify issues early. With the young person's consent, in liaison with the Registered Landlord and where it is assessed to not have a detrimental impact on the young person, Lancashire's House Project will provide the immediate neighbour with contact details for Lancashire's House Project to enable additional communication that allows Lancashire's House Project to support and safeguard a young person.

While complaints from neighbours would usually be dealt with by the Registered Social Landlord's complaints process and procedure, if neighbours wish to make a complaint directly to Lancashire's House Project, the LHP Lead should refer to the relevant Complaints Procedure.

### **3.7 Prevention and Safeguarding Actions**

Every incident where a young person reports to LHP Practitioners that they do not feel safe in a LHP Home or LHP Practitioners suspect the young person may not be safe in a LHP Home has to be acted upon by that LHP Practitioner immediately.

Young people reside in LHP Homes independently without LHP Practitioners support onsite and while visits should be planned, visits from parents, relatives or friends and in particular less known peers or associates are less likely to be. This limits the opportunity for LHP Practitioners to provide support, increases the importance for young people to be able to manage visitors well and seek appropriate support to keep safe and for LHP Practitioners to be vigilant. Young people in LHP Homes can be at risk from visitors associated to any of the sections of this safeguarding procedure and to extra familiar harm in particular.

LHP Practitioners will provide specific guidance to young people on how to manage visits from the different group of visitors before the young person moves into a LHP Home.



Young people are more likely to manage visitors well if they have the knowledge and abilities to do so which includes the ability to feel secure and confident to ask for help early, make appropriate choices and develop positive relationships with LHP Practitioners, professionals and their peers.

Young people should have a clear understanding of the risks from visitors, the support available to them, the strategies they can use to manage visitors and the expectations upon them. Young people should have contact details to access support 24/7 to keep themselves safe.

Feelings of social isolation and loneliness increase the likelihood for the young person to allow undesirable visitors into a LHP Home. LHP Practitioners should help young people to connect to communities, develop alternative responses and be available to listen to young people's worries as a preventative measure.

LHP Practitioners can help reduce the likelihood of young people being at risk from visitors by carrying out thorough assessments which feed into the care planning and review processes, by providing individualised support and by showing care and concern for the young people.

At the initial planning stage, local authorities have a duty to place a young person looked after in the most appropriate placement to safeguard the young person and the LHP Location Assessment contributes to this.

It is important for LHP facilitators to form strong and positive relationships with the young people of Lancashire's House Project that ensures frequent communication between the young person and LHP facilitator and to apply professional curiosity and a holistic approach in their conversations with young people to not only develop an awareness and knowledge of the young person's routines and visitors, but also to be able to identify any changes in behaviours, routines or patterns as an early warning sign of potential risks to the young person from visitors. Risks to the young person can be associated to any of the sections of this safeguarding procedure and to extra familiar harm in particular. LHP Practitioners should cross reference between those sections to ensure appropriate actions are taken to safeguard the young person and seek advice from the LHP Lead or Registered Service Manager where unsure or unclear about the correct actions to be taken.

If LHP Practitioners become aware of potential concerns associated to visitors, LHP Practitioners should in the first instance speak to the young person about this and try to help the young person understand the identified concerns, access support to address the concerns and keep themselves safe. The concerns should be shared with the LHP Lead and social worker who should advise on any additional actions including the need for a strategy discussion or safeguarding enquiries where significant concerns have been identified. The LHP Lead will notify the Registered Service Manager of any concerns who will be attending the strategy discussion. Where there is an immediate risk to the young person, the police should be contacted.

It is crucial that LHP Practitioners always show care and concern, even if they find it difficult to maintain a positive relationship with a young person or are sure that a young person will not follow the advice or access the support provided.

At the request of the young person, or where there are continued concerns about a young person welfare in a LHP Home as a result of visitors, the Registered Service Manager should arrange a meeting between the young person and their social worker to consider the reasons and agree strategies to reduce the risk.

If there is a pattern of persistent incidents or the circumstances gave rise for serious concern, Lancashire's House Project should ask Children's Services to review that young person's placement plan. In addition, if there are concerns that a culture or cycle is developing which seems to affect young people of Lancashire's House Project, both individually or in groups, this must be acted on and may result in a young person being moved into alternative accommodation.

In these situations, the Registered Service Manager should 'take stock' and undertake a formal review of the culture and strategies being used and take steps to reduce the incidents. This should include a review of the suitability of Lancashire's House Project for the young person.

## 4 Self Harm and Suicidal Behaviour

This chapter must be read in conjunction with [CSAP Pan-Lancashire's Safeguarding Procedure - Self-Harm and Suicidal Ideation](#).

Sub-Section	Content
1	Planning and Prevention
2	Notifications, Recording and Review
3	Additional Guidance and Resources

### 4.1 Planning and Prevention

Many young people who become looked after have experienced significant trauma in their lives and are often highly vulnerable. It is likely that these young people will sometimes have multiple and complex needs and significant behavioural and emotional difficulties, which can lead to acting in ways that place themselves in situations of high risk.

As part of Placement Planning, relevant information should be gathered, and appropriate risk assessments put in place alongside relevant intervention strategies. This should be regularly reviewed, monitored and risk assessments updated.

In situations where LHP Practitioners are involved with a young person who is actively self-harming or suicidal, they should, in consultation with other members of the team, ensure there is a plan to manage the effects such as distress or grief that an incident of self-harm or suicide may cause other workers or young people in Lancashire's House Project.

All reasonable measures should be taken to reduce or prevent continuation of the behaviour. This may include providing additional support or supervision, confiscation of materials that may be used to self-harm or calling for assistance from the emergency services.

If there is any suspicion that the young person may be involved in self-harming or any attempts of suicide, the social worker must be informed and the LHP Risk Assessment be updated with a view to deciding whether a strategy should be adopted to reduce or prevent the behaviour.

If necessary, specialist advice or support should be sought.

## 4.2 Notifications, Recording and Review

### Notifications of Minor or Non Persistent Self Harming

Minor or non-persistent self-harming should be recorded on LCS and followed up by notifying the social worker, LHP Lead and Registered Service Manager at the first opportunity.

### Notifications of Serious or Persistent Self Harming

Serious or persistent self-harming or attempted suicide must be notified immediately to the Registered Service Manager and the social worker. The social worker should consider whether a strategy meeting/discussion is required.

The Registered Service Manager should also consider whether the incident is a Notifiable Event.

### Recording and Review

An Incident Report must be completed for all incidents of self-harming which is recorded on LCS. If First Aid is administered, details must be included.

All incidents of self-harming are recorded on the young person's LHP Risk Assessment and the LHP Risk Assessment should be reviewed with a view to incorporate strategies to reduce or prevent future incidents.

## 4.4 Additional Guidance and Resources

[Suicide Prevention Strategy for England](#)

[Suicide Prevention: Resources and Guidance](#)

[Mind](#)

[The Mix - Essential Support for Under 25s](#)

[National Self Harm Network](#)

[Papyrus](#)

[Young Minds](#)

[NHS Choices – Self Harm](#)

[NHS Choices – Suicide](#)

[Self Harm in Young People: For Parents and Carers](#)

[Self-harm: Assessment, Management and Preventing Recurrence NICE Guidance](#)

[Suicide Prevention in England: Fifth Progress Report of the Cross-Government Outcomes Strategy to Save Lives](#)





## 5 Criminal Exploitation, County Lines and Gangs

This chapter must be read in conjunction with:

- [CSAP Pan-Lancashire's Safeguarding Procedure - Gangs](#)
- [CSAP Pan-Lancashire's Safeguarding Procedure - Criminal Exploitation](#)
- [CSAP Pan-Lancashire's Safeguarding Procedure - Children from Abroad including Modern Slavery, Trafficking and Exploitation](#)

Sub-Section	Content
1	What is Criminal Exploitation?
2	What is County Lines Offending?
3	What is the definition of Gang?
4	Who is at Risk?
5	Signs and Indicators
6	How to Respond
7	Working with Young People
8	Additional Guidance and Resources

### 6.1 What is Criminal Exploitation?

The Home Office defines Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) as:

Child Criminal Exploitation...occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual.

Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. Criminal exploitation often happens alongside sexual or other forms of exploitation.

Child Criminal Exploitation is broader than just county lines or gangs and includes for instance young people forced to work on cannabis farms, to commit theft, shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

### 6.2 What is County Lines Offending?

County lines is a form of Child Criminal Exploitation. It is a term used to describe the activities of gangs and organised criminal networks who are involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas (within the UK), using dedicated mobile phone lines or other forms of "deal line". These gangs exploit children, young people and vulnerable adults to move (and store) drugs and

money, and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons ([County lines: criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults, Home Office 2018](#)).

The adults running these networks remain at a distance from the frontline activity of drug dealing, reducing the risk of being caught and instead - they exploit vulnerable children/young people who are at high risk of significant harm transporting and selling drugs, often many miles from home.

Young people may be sent to another area of the country to live with a vulnerable adult whose home has been taken over by the gang in exchange for a continued supply of drugs. This is known as 'cuckooing'. These environments are extremely dangerous for children.

County lines activity is a dynamic and lucrative activity, and perpetrators will change their methods of exploitation quickly. As practitioners become more responsive to identifying children at risk, the criminals adapt their tactics. For example, a child who is exploited can leave the Home in the morning, sell drugs and return the same day and so avoid being reported missing.

There are high levels of violence and intimidation linked to county lines activity. Children/Young People can be very quickly groomed into criminal activity, often before parents, carers or practitioners realise what is happening.

All criminally exploited young people are at risk of neglect, emotional harm, sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as substance misuse and extreme forms of violence.

### **6.3 What is the definition of Gang?**

Defining a gang is difficult. They tend to fall into three categories: peer groups, street gangs and organised crime groups. It can be common for groups of children and young people to gather together in public places to socialise, and although some peer group gatherings can lead to increased antisocial behaviour and low level youth offending, these activities should not be confused with the serious violence of a street gang.

A street gang can be described as a relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of young people who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is integral to the group's identity.

A street gang will engage in criminal activity and violence and may lay claim over territory (not necessarily geographical for example it could include an illegal economy territory). They have some form of identifying structure featuring a hierarchy usually based on age, physical

strength, propensity to violence or older sibling rank. There may be certain rites involving antisocial or criminal behaviour or sex acts in order to become part of the gang. They are in conflict with other similar gangs.

An organised criminal group (OCG) is a group of individuals normally led by adults for whom involvement in crime is for personal gain (financial or otherwise). This involves serious and organised criminality by a core of violent gang members who exploit vulnerable young people and adults. This may also involve the movement and selling of drugs and money across the country, known as 'county lines' because it extends across county boundaries and is coordinated by the use of dedicated mobile phone lines. It is a tactic used by groups or gangs to facilitate the use of vulnerable people or children to sell drugs in an area outside of the area in which they live, which reduces their risk of detection.

There is a distinction between organised crime groups (OCG) and street gangs based on the level of criminality, organisation, planning and control. However, there are significant links between different levels of gangs for example street gangs can be involved in drug dealing on behalf of organised criminal groups. Young men and women may be at risk of sexual exploitation in these groups.

Young People may be involved in more than one 'gang', with some cross-border movement, and may not stay in a 'gang' for significant periods of time. Young People rarely use the term 'gang', instead they used terms such as 'family', 'breddrin', 'crews', 'cuz' (cousins), 'my boys' or simply 'the people I grew up with'.

Safeguarding should focus on both young people who are / vulnerable of making the transition to gang involvement as well as those already involved in gangs. Practitioners should be aware of particular risks to young people involved in gangs from violence and weapons; drugs and sexual exploitation.

Young people can become indebted to the gang/groups and then exploited in order to pay off debts. They may have unexplained increases in money or possessions, be in receipt of an additional mobile phone and receive excessive texts or phone calls. The young people involved may not recognise themselves as victims of any abuse, and can be used to recruit other young people.

## 6.4 Who is at Risk?

Any child or young person may be at risk of criminal exploitation, regardless of their family background or other circumstances, but children and young people who are Looked After or who are excluded from mainstream education are at increased risk of being targeted.

The risk or potential risk of harm to the young person may be as a victim, a gang member or both - in relation to their peers or to a gang-involved adult in their household. Teenagers can be particularly vulnerable to recruitment into gangs and involvement in gang violence. This vulnerability may be exacerbated by risk factors in an individual's background, including violence in the family, involvement of siblings in gangs, poor educational attainment, or poverty or mental health problems.

Like other forms of abuse and exploitation, criminal exploitation, county lines and gangs:

- Can affect any young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years;
- Can still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual;
- Can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance (i.e. the receipt by the child of money / drugs or other goods) and is often accompanied by violence or threats of violence;
- Can be perpetrated by individuals or groups and young people or adults; and
- Is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

Perpetrators are known to target vulnerable children, young people and adults; some of the factors that heighten vulnerability include:

- Having prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse;
- Being in care (particularly those living in children's homes and those with interrupted care histories);
- Social isolation or social difficulties;
- Connections with other people involved in gangs;
- Having a physical disability or learning disability;
- Having mental health or substance misuse issues;
- Being excluded from mainstream education, in particular attending a Pupil Referral Unit. It is important when schools are considering exclusions they also consider the safeguarding risks to the child.

It is thought that 14-17 years is the most common age for young people to be exploited but there are reports of children below the age of 11 years being targeted.

Boys are most commonly identified as being criminally exploited, but girls are also used and exploited. It may be that girls are identified by safeguarding children agencies because of concerns other than criminal exploitation while also being criminally exploited.

The specific risks for males and females associated to gangs may be quite different. There is a higher risk of sexual abuse for females, and they are more likely to have been coerced into involvement with a gang through peer pressure than their male counterparts. Gang members often groom girls at school using drugs and alcohol, which act as disinhibitory and also create dependency, and encourage / coerce them to recruit other girls through school / social networks.

## 6.5 Signs and Indicators

### Gang Involvement

- Child withdrawn from family;
- Sudden loss of interest in school or change in behaviour. Decline in attendance or academic achievement (although it should be noted that some gang members will maintain a good attendance record to avoid coming to notice);
- Being emotionally 'switched off', but also containing frustration / rage;
- Starting to use new or unknown slang words;
- Holding unexplained money or possessions;
- Staying out unusually late without reason, or breaking parental rules consistently;
- Sudden change in appearance – dressing in a particular style or 'uniform' similar to that of other young people they hang around with, including a particular colour;
- Dropping out of positive activities;
- New nickname;
- Unexplained physical injuries, and/or refusal to seek / receive medical treatment for injuries;
- Graffiti style 'tags' on possessions, school books, walls;
- Constantly talking about another young person who seems to have a lot of influence over them;
- Breaking off with old friends and hanging around with one group of people;

- Associating with known or suspected gang members, closeness to siblings or adults in the family who are gang members;
- Starting to adopt certain codes of group behaviour e.g. ways of talking and hand signs;
- Going missing;
- Being found by Police in towns or cities many miles from their home;
- Expressing aggressive or intimidating views towards other groups of young people, some of whom may have been friends in the past;
- Being scared when entering certain areas; and
- Concerned by the presence of unknown youths in their neighbourhoods.

An important feature of gang involvement is that, the more heavily a young person is involved with a gang, the less likely they are to talk about it.

There are links between gang-involvement, criminal exploitation and young people going missing from home or care. Some of the factors which can draw gang-involved young people away from home or care into going missing are linked to their involvement in carrying out drugs along county lines. There may be gang-associated child sexual exploitation and relationships which can be strong pull factors for girls who go missing.

### **Criminal Exploitation and County Lines**

Some of the main warning signs that a young person is involved in county lines or being exploited are listed below, with those at the top of particular concern:

- Persistently going missing from their school or the LHP Home and / or being found out-of-area;
- Noticeable changes in behaviour (these changes can be very rapid);
- Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes, or mobile phones;
- Excessive receipt of texts / phone calls and/or having multiple handsets;
- Relationships with controlling / older individuals or groups;
- Lack of communication or disengagement from the project without explanation;
- Suspicion of physical assault / unexplained injuries;
- Carrying weapons / drugs;
- Significant decline in school results / performance / work;
- Gang association or isolation from peers or social networks;
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being.

## **6.6 How to Respond**

When concerns have been identified, the Registered Service Manager and social worker should be notified by the LHP Practitioner and appropriate arrangements be identified between



Lancashire's House Project and Children's Services to keep the young person safe. The young person's LHP Risk Assessment should be updated accordingly.

Where there are concerns that a young person is the victim of child criminal exploitation, they should be referred to the National Referral Mechanism by their social worker.

In suspected cases of radicalisation, the social workers and Local Authorities have a duty to refer the case to the local Channel panel, which will then decide the correct, if any, intervention and support to be offered to that individual.

### **Supporting Young People**

- Building positive relationships with young people is vital to preventing and identifying exploitation;
- LHP Practitioners should be supportive and ready to listen to young people when and if they need to talk;
- Look beyond challenging behaviour; if young people are aggressive, secretive or going missing ask yourself what might be going on in their lives?
- When young people who are known to be at risk of exploitation go missing, this should be reported promptly to the police, the young person's social worker (or duty social worker) so they can take action to locate them and return them to safety;
- The way LHP Practitioners respond to young people when they return is key to preventing future missing episodes and to ascertaining any harm they may have experienced. Young people should be supported to feel safe, comfortable and cared about upon their return which may include a home safety check, utility check and providing the young person with some food. The Police will conduct a Safe and Well interview to conclude their investigation. Independent Return interviews should be offered in line with the Missing, Away without Authorisation or Uncontactable Young People Procedure;
- Building strong links with education providers will help to ensure that Lancashire's House Project is notified promptly if a young person does not arrive at their education establishment as planned, and protective action taken as a result.

If any LHP Practitioners have concerns that a young person is involved in, or at risk of involvement in gangs, criminal exploitation or county lines they should discuss these with the LHP Lead or Registered Service Manager. These concerns should then be shared with the social worker and the Independent Reviewing Officer. The social worker will decide whether

the concerns are to be shared with the police. If LHP Practitioners have concerns that a young person is in immediate danger, they should always ring 999.

All concerns and other relevant information should be recorded on LCS so that any patterns over time can be identified.

### **Sharing Information**

Sharing intelligence and information is crucial to preventing criminal exploitation in the local area. It is only by sharing data that agencies can develop an understanding of the prevalence, nature and scale of criminal exploitation and county lines activity.

An early, coordinated response to any young person who has been criminally exploited is really important for the young person, and other young people linked to them - including other young people from where they lived before moving into their LHP Home and other young people in Lancashire's House Project.

The Home Office has published guidance for safeguarding agencies in the [Child exploitation disruption toolkit](#). The toolkit is primarily aimed at frontline LHP Practitioners, including law enforcement, social care, education, housing and the voluntary sector, working to safeguard children and children under the age of 18 from sexual and criminal exploitation.

## **6.7 Working with Young People**

Young people's needs and safety must always come first. This means that LHP Practitioners should respond flexibly and continue to 'stay with the young person, even when they are unwilling to engage. Relationships between young people and their LHP Facilitator which are based on consistency, stability and respectful communication will help in supporting effective interventions with exploited young people.

When a young person presents with offending, or other concerning behaviour, LHP Practitioners need to be curious and compassionate and ask: What is happening in this young person's life that is causing them to behave this way? What can we do to help them?

Young people who have been criminally exploited are the victims of crime (although they may not initially see themselves as such).



All practitioners working with the young person should consider the context of the young person's behaviour as well as the impact (for example, trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), mental health issues or substance misuse), to help determine an effective response. This is particularly relevant for young people exploited through county lines activity.

LHP Practitioners and managers should consider whether other young people in Lancashire's House Project may also be at risk (exploited young people can be pressured to 'recruit' others). Any concerns should be shared with Children's Social Care and the allocated social workers. For some young people, a move to a different home may need to be considered. This should be discussed with the young person, the allocated social worker, the Independent Reviewing Officer and their parents, if appropriate.

For young people who are leaving care, the Personal Adviser should be made aware of the concerns so that they can continue to offer support when the young person turns 18 years old or moves into other accommodation as a young adult.

## 6.8 Additional Guidance and Resources

[Protecting children from criminal exploitation, human trafficking and modern slavery \(GOV.UK\)](#) - thematic report from Joint Inspections on the risk of child criminal exploitation.

[Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines \(GOV.UK\)](#) - Guidance for frontline professionals on dealing with county lines, part of the government's approach to ending gang violence and exploitation.

[Child exploitation disruption toolkit \(The Home Office\)](#) - Disruption tactics for those working to safeguard children and young people under the age of 18 from sexual and criminal exploitation.

[County lines exploitation: guidance for practitioners \(Ministry of Justice\)](#) - Practice guidance for Youth Offending Teams and frontline practitioners.

[County lines exploitation: practice guidance poster \(Ministry of Justice\)](#) - **Note:** not all processes included may be applicable to your local area, so please refer to your local CCE Pathway as well.

[Children and Young People Trafficked for the Purpose of Criminal Exploitation in Relation to County Lines a Toolkit For Professionals](#) - (The Children's Society in partnership with Victim

Support and the National Police Chiefs' Council) - a number of resources that may be useful for professionals when working with children and young people, their families and communities at risk of abuse and exploitation.

[Child exploitation disruption toolkit](#)

## 6 Sexual Exploitation

This chapter must be read in conjunction with:

- [CSAP Pan-Lancashire Safeguarding Procedure - Child Sexual Exploitation](#)
- [Child Sexual Exploitation - Pan Lancashire Standard Operating Protocol](#)

Sub-Section	Content
1	Introduction
2	Indicators of Possible Sexual Exploitation
3	Referring Cases of Concern
4	Supporting Young People out of Sexual Exploitation
5	Identifying and Prosecuting Perpetrators
6	Supporting Young People through Related Legal Proceedings
7	Additional Guidance and Resources

### 6.1 Introduction

Child sexual exploitation is a crime with devastating and long-lasting consequences for its victims and their families. Childhoods and family life can be ruined, and this is compounded when victims, or those at risk of abuse, do not receive appropriate, immediate and on-going support. The first response to young people, and support for them to access help, must be the best it can be from social workers, LHP Practitioners, police, health practitioners and others who work with young people and their families.

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child/young person is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving

children/young people in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children/young people to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child/young person in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children and young people.

The definition of child sexual exploitation is as follows:

Sexual exploitation of young people under the age of 18 is also a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity a) by exploiting the victim's vulnerabilities and needs in a way that make them believe this is an exchange for something they need or want (e.g. by providing the young person with a false sense of belonging and creating dependencies), and/or b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. See [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#).

Like all forms of child sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation:

- Can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex;
- Can still be abuse even if the sexual activity appears consensual;
- Can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity;
- Can take place in person or via technology, or a combination of both;
- Can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence;
- May occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (through others copying videos or images they have created and posting on social media, for example);
- Can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse; and
- Is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the abuse. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a

range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

Child sexual exploitation is a complex form of abuse which can be difficult for those working with young people to identify and assess. The indicators for child sexual exploitation can sometimes be mistaken for 'normal adolescent behaviours'. It requires knowledge, skills, professional curiosity and an assessment which analyses the risk factors and personal circumstances of individual young people to ensure that the signs and symptoms are interpreted correctly and appropriate support is given. Even where a young person is old enough to legally consent to sexual activity, the law states that consent is only valid where they make a choice and have the freedom and capacity to make that choice. If a young person feels they have no other meaningful choice, are under the influence of harmful substances or fearful of what might happen if they don't comply (all of which are common features in cases of child sexual exploitation) consent cannot legally be given whatever the age of the young person.

Child sexual exploitation is never the victim's fault, even if there is some form of exchange: all young people under the age of 18 have a right to be safe and should be protected from harm. For more information please see [Child Sexual Exploitation: Definition and Guide for Practitioners \(DfE 2017\)](#). This advice is non-statutory and has been produced to help practitioners to identify child sexual exploitation and take appropriate action in response. This advice includes the management, disruption and prosecution of perpetrators.

Many children and young people are groomed into sexually exploitative relationships, but other forms of entry exist. Some young people are engaged in informal economies that incorporate the exchange of sex for rewards such as drugs, alcohol, money or gifts. Others exchange sex for accommodation or money as a result of homelessness and experiences of poverty. Some young people have been bullied and threatened into sexual activities by peers or gangs which is then used against them as a form of extortion and to keep them compliant.

Young people going missing from care, in gangs or criminally exploited are at increased risk of sexual exploitation.

In an intimate relationship, the young person can be either the victim or perpetrator and it is also important to be mindful that young people in Lancashire's House Project might have been the victim and/or perpetrator of sexually harmful behaviour or (sibling) child sexual abuse in the past.



Some young people are groomed to give perpetrators access to young people for sexual exploitation or to participate in exploitative behaviours.

Children and young people may have already been sexually exploited before they join Lancashire's House Project, others may become targets of perpetrators while being part of the project. They can often be the focus of perpetrators of sexual abuse due to their vulnerability. LHP Practitioners of Lancashire's House Project should therefore create an environment which educates young people about child sexual exploitation, involving relevant outside agencies where appropriate. They should encourage young people to discuss any concerns with their LHP Facilitator or other member of LHP Practitioners, and also be encouraged to report any concerns about their peers to LHP Practitioners.

## **6.2 Indicators of Possible Sexual Exploitation**

LHP Practitioners should be aware of the key indicators of child sexual exploitation. These include:

### **Health**

- Physical symptoms (bruising suggestive of either physical or sexual assault);
- Chronic fatigue;
- Recurring or multiple sexually transmitted infections;
- Pregnancy and/or seeking an abortion;
- Evidence of drug, alcohol or other substance misuse.

### **Education**

- Missing school / college / work; disengagement with education/work or noticeable change in performance at school / college / work.

### **Emotional and Behavioural Issues**

- Volatile behaviour exhibiting extreme array of mood swings or use of abusive language;
- Involvement in petty crime such as shoplifting, stealing;
- Secretive behaviour;
- Entering or leaving in vehicles driven by people who are not known to LHP Practitioners;



- Reports of being seen in places known to be used for sexual exploitation, including takeaway restaurants, and shopping centres.

### **Identity**

- Low self-image, low self-esteem, self-harming behaviour, e.g. cutting, overdosing, or eating disorder.

### **Relationships**

- Hostility in relationships with LHP Practitioners, family members as appropriate and significant others;
- Physical aggression;
- Placement breakdown;
- Reports from reliable sources (e.g. family, friends or other professionals) suggesting the likelihood of involvement in sexual exploitation;
- Detachment from age-appropriate activities;
- Associating with other young people who are known to be sexually exploited;
- Sexual relationship with a significantly older person, or younger person who is suspected of being abusive;
- Excessive receipt of phone calls or text messages;
- Adults or older youths loitering outside the LHP home;
- Persistently missing, staying out overnight or returning late with no plausible explanation;
- Going missing and being found in areas where they have no known links.

Please note: Whilst the focus has often been on older men as perpetrators, younger men and women may also be involved and LHP Practitioners should always be mindful of this.

### **Social Presentation**

- Change in appearance;
- Changing to clothing that is unusual for them (inappropriate for age, borrowing clothing from older young people).

### **Family and Environmental Factors**

- History of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse; neglect; domestic violence; parental difficulties.

### **Housing**



- Pattern of previous street homelessness;
- Having keys to premises other than those known about.

### **Income**

- Possession of large amounts of money with no plausible explanation;
- Acquisition of expensive clothes, mobile phones or other possessions without plausible explanation;
- Accounts of social activities with no plausible explanation of the source of necessary funding.

This list is not exhaustive.

LHP Practitioners should be aware that often young people who are sexually exploited do not see themselves as victims. In such situations, discussions with them about the concerns which LHP Practitioners have should be handled with great sensitivity. Seeking prior advice from specialist agencies may be useful. This should be done without disclosing personal, identifiable information.

In assessing whether a young person is being sexually exploited, or at risk of sexual exploitation, careful consideration should be given to the issue of consent. It is important to bear in mind that:

- A child under the age of 13 is not legally capable of consenting to sex (it is statutory rape) or any other type of sexual touching;
- Sexual activity with a child under 16 is also an offence;
- It is an offence for a person to have a sexual relationship with a 16 or 17 year old if they hold a position of trust or authority in relation to them;
- While sexual activity with a 16 or 17 year old is not in itself a criminal offence, it may still be exploitative if the young person's consent has not been freely given (e.g. as a result of intoxication or threats of violence);
- Non-consensual sex is rape whatever the age of the victim; and
- Child sexual exploitation is therefore potentially a safeguarding and child protection issue for all children under the age of 18 years and not just those in a specific age group.

Young people can be both experiencing child sexual exploitation and perpetrating it at the same time. Examples might include a young person who is forced to take part in the exploitation of another child/young person under duress, or a young person who is forced to

introduce other children/young people to their abuser under threats to their family's safety. These situations require a nuanced approach that recognises and engages with the young person's perpetration within the context of their own victimisation.

As well as responding to an individual young person who goes missing, Lancashire's House Project should also collate and share data on missing incidents.

### **6.3 Referring Cases of Concern**

Where a LHP Practitioner is concerned that a young person is involved in, or at risk of, sexual exploitation, they should discuss their concerns with the LHP Lead or Registered Service Manager. These concerns should then be shared with the social worker and appropriate arrangements be identified between Lancashire's House Project and Children's Services to keep the young person safe. The young person's LHP Risk Assessment should be updated accordingly. The social worker may initiate a strategy discussion and section 47 enquiry.

If LHP Practitioners have concerns that a young person is in immediate danger, they should always ring 999.

In the case of suspected Child Sexual Exploitation Ofsted, the Local Authority and Police must be informed.

### **6.4 Supporting Young People out of Sexual Exploitation**

Statutory agencies and voluntary sector organisations together with the young person, and their family as appropriate, should agree on the services and support which will be provided to them and how they will be coordinated. The types of intervention offered should be appropriate to the young person's individual needs and should take full account of identified risk factors and their individual circumstances.

Advice should be sought from the nearest specialist service which works with young people involved in Sexual Exploitation. A referral should be made as appropriate, following consultation with the young person.

Issues raised and action planned should be incorporated into the child's Care Plan and reviewed as part of the Looked After Child Review. Because the effects of Sexual Exploitation can last well into adulthood, support may be required over a long period of time. In such circumstances, effective links should be made between Children and Adult Services and



statutory and voluntary organisations. This should be incorporated into the young person's Pathway Plan.

## 6.5 Identifying and Prosecuting Perpetrators

The Police and Criminal Justice Agencies lead on the identification and prosecution of perpetrators. All practitioners, however, have a role in gathering, recording and sharing information with the Police and other agencies, as appropriate and in agreement with them.

The LHP Lead and Registered Service Manager should proactively liaise with local Police regarding Child Sexual Exploitation. This should include the Police giving advice to LHP Practitioners about what action they should take if they are concerned a young person of Lancashire's House Project is at risk of or is being sexually exploited. This may include gathering information to pass onto the Police, such as vehicle registration numbers, names, physical descriptions etc. It may also include what action LHP Practitioners should take in the case of suspected sexual or physical abuse in order to protect potential evidence, which may be useful in the case of an alleged perpetrator being prosecuted.

LHP Practitioners should bear in mind that sexual exploitation often does not occur in isolation and has links to other crime types, including:

- Child trafficking (into, out of and within the UK);
- Domestic Abuse and Violence;
- Sexual violence in intimate relationships;
- Grooming (both online and offline);
- Abusive images of children and their distribution (organised abuse);
- Organised sexual abuse of children;
- Drugs-related offences (dealing, consuming and cultivating);
- Gang-related activity;
- Criminal Exploitation;
- Immigration-related offences;
- Domestic servitude.

## 6.6 Supporting Young People through Related Legal Proceedings

Where alleged perpetrators are arrested and charged with offences against young people of Lancashire's House Project, LHP Practitioners should ensure the young people concerned are supported throughout the prosecution process and beyond. Specialist agencies should also be involved in supporting the young person, as required. This may include using special

measures to protect them when giving evidence in court for example. Independent Sexual Violence Advisers or specialist voluntary sector services, if available, may also have an important role to play.

## 6.7 Additional Guidance and Resources

[Child Sexual Exploitation: Definition and Guide for Practitioners \(DfE, February 2017\)](#)

[What to do if You're Worried a Child is Being Abused: Advice for Practitioners \(DfE\)](#)

[Barnardos - Child Sexual Exploitation – Resources and Research on CSE](#)

[Child Sexual Exploitation: Practice Tool \(2017\) \(Research in Practice – Open Access\)](#) -

Information about child sexual exploitation, and guidance on the complexities of practically responding to the issue.

## 7 Other Forms of Exploitation

Sub-Section	Content
1	Prevention
2	Emotional Exploitation
3	Financial Exploitation

### 7.1 Prevention

There can be other forms of exploitation that may or may not interlink with the above types of exploitation. Common other forms of exploitation for young people to experience are emotional exploitation and financial exploitations.

Where there are concerns about other forms of exploitation, this should be discussed at Placement Planning to agree strategies and support for the young person, this be recorded in the Placement Plan and considered in the young person's LHP Risk Assessment.

Childhood trauma, the challenges for young people around social isolation and the desire for a sense of belonging, in particular when living independently in a LHP Home, can increase a young person's vulnerability to exploitation.

Young people are less likely to be exploited if they feel secure and safe both emotionally and physically in their LHP Home, able to express their feelings, make appropriate choices and develop positive relationships with LHP Practitioners and their peers.

It is important for LHP facilitators to form strong and positive relationships with young people of Lancashire's House Project that ensures frequent communication between the young person and LHP facilitator and to apply professional curiosity and a holistic approach in their conversations with young people to not only develop an awareness and knowledge of the young person's routines, usual whereabouts and associates, but also to be able to identify any changes in behaviours, routines or patterns as an early warning sign.

It is crucial that LHP Practitioners always show care and concern, even if they find it difficult to maintain a positive relationship with a young person.

## **7.2 Emotional Exploitation**

Emotional exploitation occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of a young person's emotional vulnerabilities or needs to coerce, manipulate or deceive a young person in a way that make them tolerate unjust expectations or demands. It can occur subtle in in relationships with family, friends, peers and general associates, in the context of financial exploitation or radicalisation or interlink with criminal or sexual exploitation.

Where a LHP Practitioner is concerned that a young person is involved in, or at risk of, exploitation, they should discuss their concerns with the LHP Lead or Registered Service Manager. These concerns should then be shared with the social worker. The young person's LHP Risk Assessment should be updated accordingly.

If it is decided that action needs to be taken to protect the young person, see: Section 2 – Safeguarding Young People and Referring Safeguarding Concerns.

If LHP Practitioners have concerns that a young person is in immediate danger, they should always ring 999.

## **7.3 Financial Exploitation**

Financial exploitation occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of a young person's vulnerabilities or needs to coerce, manipulate or deceive them in a way that make them make unjust financial payments to that individual or group. Young people due to be in

receipt of inheritance or an allowance from the Criminal Injury Compensation Authority (CICA) may be particularly vulnerable and struggle to manage both the demands and expectations from others on them and their finances. Where inheritance or CICA allowance is due, this should be discussed at Placement Planning, recorded in the Placement Plan and considered in the young person's LHP Risk Assessment.

Where a LHP Practitioner is concerned that a young person is involved in, or at risk of, exploitation, they should discuss their concerns with the LHP Lead or Registered Service Manager. These concerns should then be shared with the social worker. The young person's LHP Risk Assessment should be updated accordingly.

If it is decided that action needs to be taken to protect the young person, see: Section 2 – Safeguarding Young People and Referring Safeguarding Concerns.

If LHP Practitioners have concerns that a young person is in immediate danger, they should always ring 999.

## 8 Controlling, Coercive or Abusive Personal Relationships (Victim/Perpetrator)

Personal and intimate relationships are an important part of any person's emotional wellbeing. Many young people of Lancashire's House Project will be in personal and intimate relationships which are healthy and supportive.

However, for a small proportion of young people, these relationships may be controlling, coercive or abusive.

Teenage relationship abuse often is hidden, because teenagers typically:

- Have little experience of intimate relationships;
- Can be under pressure from their peers; and
- Have 'romantic' views of love.

Most common signs of teenage relationship abuse are:



- Emotional Abuse: controlling behaviour, like telling someone where they can go and what they can wear
- Online Abuse: threatening to post personal pictures or information about them
- Controlling Someone's Finances: withholding money or stopping someone going to work
- Snooping: reading emails, text messages or letters
- Sexual Abuse: making someone do something when they don't want to
- Physical Abuse: violence towards someone, such as kicking, punching, hitting

Victims might believe that:

- They are responsible for the violence or abuse
- Their partners abusive behaviour is 'romantic'
- Abuse is normal
- An abusive relationship is better than no relationship at all
- There is no one to ask for help

Young people male or female can be the victim or perpetrator of an abusive relationship.

Some young people might believe in false gender or role stereotypes or believe that:

- They have the right to control their partner as they see fit
- They lose respect if attentive and supportive towards their partner
- They demonstrate strength through physical aggression
- They have a right to demand intimacy

It is important for LHP facilitators to form strong and positive relationships with young people of Lancashire's House Project that ensures frequent communication between the young person and LHP facilitator and to apply professional curiosity and a holistic approach in their conversations with young people to not only develop an awareness and knowledge of the young person's routines, usual whereabouts and associates, but also to be able to identify any changes in behaviours, routines or patterns as an early warning sign.

It is crucial that LHP Practitioners always show care and concern, even if they find it difficult to maintain a positive relationship with a young person.



LHP Practitioners should support young people to develop the knowledge to distinguish between healthy and unhealthy relationships and the ability and confidence to seek help and support, when needed.

LHP Practitioners should always consider abusive relationships in a wider context to identify whether the young person is vulnerable to or at risk from:

- Bullying/Peer Abuse;
- Any type of Exploitation.

Where a LHP Practitioner is concerned that a young person is involved in, or at risk from, an abusive relationship, they should discuss their concerns with the LHP Lead or Registered Service Manager. These concerns should then be shared with the social worker. The young person's LHP Risk Assessment should be updated accordingly.

The LHP Practitioners should support the young person to access relevant community services as a victim or perpetrator. General guidance can be accessed from [The Children's Society](#).

If it is decided that action needs to be taken to protect the young person, see: Section 2 – Safeguarding Young People and Referring Safeguarding Concerns.

If LHP Practitioners have concerns that a young person is in immediate danger, they should always ring 999.

## 9 Radicalisation and Extremism

This chapter must be read in conjunction with [CSAP Pan-Lancashire's Safeguarding Procedure - Radicalisation](#).

Information to understand, recognise and act on the risks and vulnerabilities of extremism and radicalisation, including the definitions for terrorism, extremism and radicalisation, are provided by [CSAP Pan-Lancashire's Safeguarding Procedure - Radicalisation](#).

Social media can be used to promote extremist ideas and radicalise young people. Often social media glorifies violence. LHP Practitioners should be vigilant and seek advice from the

LHP Lead if they are concerned about material a young person has accessed online. [Click here to report suspected online terrorist content](#).

Content of concern can also be referred directly to social media platforms – see [UK Safer Internet Centre](#).

Guidance on online safety is provided by [CSAP Pan-Lancashire's Safeguarding Procedure - Online Safeguarding](#)

If LHP Practitioners have any concerns, for example as a result of observed behaviour, incidents or reports of conversations to suggest the young person supports terrorism and/or violent extremism, they must report these concerns to the Registered Service Manager immediately. The social worker must also be informed of the concern as soon as possible. It will be their responsibility to respond to the concerns, including by referral to the local Channel Panel if appropriate.

Consideration should also be given to the need for an emergency response - however this will be extremely rare but could include where there is information that a violent act is imminent or where weapons or other materials may be in the possession of a young person or member of their family. In this situation a 999 call must be made. In addition to contacting the emergency services, the social worker for the young person must be advised of the concern immediately.

## 10 Allegations Against LHP Practitioners and Volunteers

This chapter must be read in conjunction with [CSAP Pan-Lancashire's Safeguarding Procedure - Allegations against Staff and Volunteers](#).

Related Procedures	<p>LHP – Safeguarding Young People and Referring Safeguarding Concerns</p> <p>LHP - Whistleblowing</p>

All allegations of abuse of children or young people by those who work with them must be taken seriously. Allegations against any person who works with children or young people, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, can cover a wide range of circumstances.

[CSAP Pan-Lancashire's Safeguarding Procedure - Allegations against Staff and Volunteers](#)

provides detailed information and guidance on how to respond and address an allegation against a any person working with children or young people, including LHP Practitioners and volunteers.

The Senior Development Lead for the Permanence Service and Lancashire's House Project is the designated senior manager to whom concerns should be reported.

The LADO must be notified and whether the concern is progressed further by the LADO or alternative routes are sought, the Registered Service Manager should promptly advise the social worker of the concerns and the actions that have been taken.

Ofsted (the regulatory authority) must be notified of any allegation of abuse against LHP Practitioners or any person volunteering as part of Lancashire's House Project.

If, during an inspection, Ofsted become aware of an allegation which was made but not notified to them, the Inspector may place a requirement on Lancashire's House Project.

### **Guidance on What to Say**

The following are principles of good practice when receiving/reporting concerns.

However, this guidance is not exhaustive, all LHP Practitioners should have training on receiving and reporting safeguarding and child protection concerns - **if in doubt, LHP Practitioners must consult Registered Service Manager or another manager who is not implicated immediately.**

### **When an allegation is made against a LHP Practitioners member / colleague:**

LHP Practitioners may ask questions or seek clarification regarding any allegation reported to them, but they may not take any actions to investigate or in any way make judgements about what is reported to them. Investigations or enquiries, if necessary, will be led by the LADO.

LHP Practitioners must not inform or discuss concerns/allegations with any person who is alleged or reported to be the perpetrator, including any colleague/manager. If a manager is implicated, LHP Practitioners must ensure that any reports are passed to their line manager (e.g. Head of Service or other covering manager).



### **When a young person makes a disclosure:**

LHP Practitioners must not give absolute guarantees of confidentiality to those who report possible allegations to them, but they should explain that the information will only be passed to the minimum number of people who need to know to ensure proper action is taken in response to the concern.

#### **DO**

- Give the young person your full attention and demonstrate that you are both listening and hearing them, e.g. put a sign on the door; stop telephone calls etc.
- Ask them if you can take some brief notes (key phrases, short specific detail only) whilst they are talking – but don't allow this to interfere with the 'listening process';
- Maintain eye contact;
- Allow the young person to talk, but don't press for information;
- Tell the young person throughout that they are not to blame for anything that has happened;
- Reassure the young person that they were right to tell;
- Let the young person know that other people will have to be informed;
- Try to explain in a way that the young person can understand.

#### **DON'T**

- Promise to keep secrets;
- Make any promises you can't keep;
- Interrogate the young person or ask leading questions;
- Cast doubt on what they have said;
- Make the young person feel responsible for what's happened;
- Show anger;
- Panic and act hastily (it's unlikely to be a life threatening situation);
- Gossip about what you have been told;
- Talk to the alleged abuser.

LHP Practitioners must make a written record as soon as possible of what they have been told, detailing the questions they asked and the replies. They must then give the report to the Registered Service Manager (unless they are implicated).

**The record should be placed on the young person's file except where a colleague is implicated or where there is any risk to the young person as a result, in which case notes/records should be given to the Registered Service Manager dealing with the matter.**

