

Learning Briefing: Safeguarding Young People 17.5+ Protocol

What's the Protocol for?

The [West Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board \(WSSAB\)](#) and the [West Sussex Safeguarding Children's Partnership](#) joint protocol sets out safeguarding arrangements for young people aged between 17½ - 25 years, who are experiencing, or at risk of abuse or neglect, particularly if this is likely to continue after they are 18.

What do we mean by Safeguarding?

Supporting young people, who have/may have care and support needs, to protect themselves, if they are at risk of, or are experiencing abuse and/or neglect.

Care and support needs means needing support to manage daily tasks and be independent. This could relate to a disability, long-term illness or a mental health condition.

“ It is useful for practitioners to recognise that research now suggests that the human brain does not reach maturity and continues to develop until around the age of 25 years old (Blakemore, 2020). ”



How to report a Safeguarding concern?

If a young person is experiencing or at risk of harm or abuse, complete an [online safeguarding referral form](#). The concern will then be considered for whether safeguarding criteria is met and how best to proceed.

The online form is the best way to report a concern. However, if you have no access to the internet, it is still vital that you report concerns by calling 01403 64 21 21.

Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP)

[Making Safeguarding Personal](#) means keeping young people at the heart of safeguarding to ensure they have choice and control over their lives. Agreement must be sought from young people when a concern is raised, unless they lack capacity or, this puts them or others at further risk of harm.

The Mental Capacity Act (MCA)

[The MCA](#) applies to people aged 16+. This means people 16+ can consent to for example, medical treatment, care and, support. Where there are concerns around capacity to make decisions, then a MCA assessment must be completed, for each specific decision.

What's the process after a concern is reported?

If someone is 17 ½ years or over, it may be that Adults Social Care need to be involved in the safeguarding process being led on by WSCC Children's or Leaving Care services. This would be particularly important if the safeguarding concern is likely to continue after the young person turns 18.

Once a referral has been made, it will be decided whether Children's or Adults Services are the most suitable to support with the safeguarding process.

Any information about safeguarding concerns will be shared with the team supporting the young person and, there is an

[Information Sharing Guide and Protocol](#) in place to support this.

If the young person is to be supported by Adults Services, the start date for the Adult Safeguarding process will be clearly shared with those involved.

Where a safeguarding plan is needed after the young person turns 18, this will be agreed no later than one month before their 18th Birthday, with the involvement of the young person and those working with them.

After the age of 18 [Pan-Sussex Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedures](#) applies.

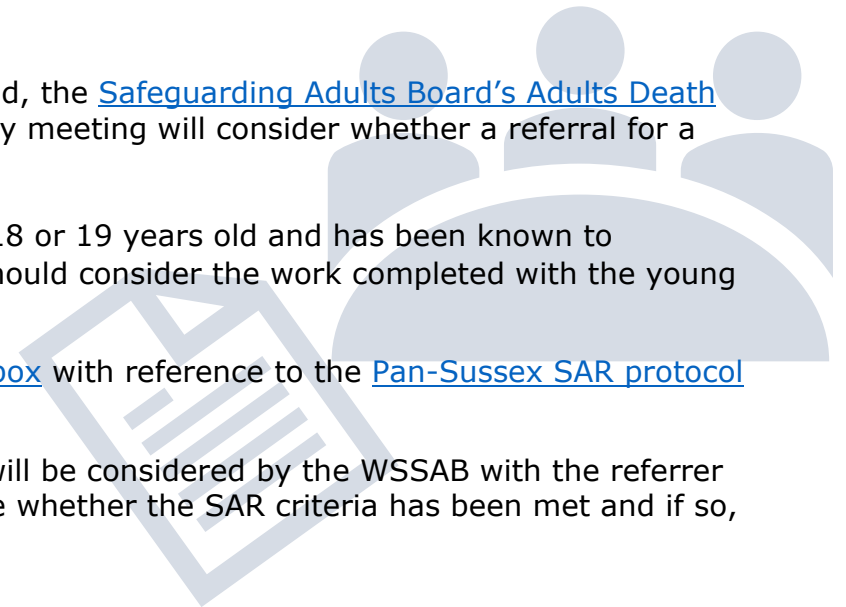
Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SAR) for a young person

If a young person, 18 years or over, dies and abuse and/or neglect is suspected, the [Safeguarding Adults Board's Adults Death protocol](#) should be considered first. If this protocol is followed, the multi-agency meeting will consider whether a referral for a SAR is needed.

If a referral is made for a SAR from any other route and, the young person is 18 or 19 years old and has been known to Children's Services recently and not Adult Services, then Children's Services should consider the work completed with the young person and any areas where there is a need for learning.

To make a [referral](#) the form should be completed and sent to the WSSAB [mailbox](#) with reference to the [Pan-Sussex SAR protocol & Guidance for Referrers](#).

A referral for a young person who has been involved with Children's Services will be considered by the WSSAB with the referrer and senior member of staff from Children's Services. Together, they will decide whether the SAR criteria has been met and if so, which Board will lead on the Review.



Please view the full protocol, available on our WSSAB website. It provides further important details on:

- Definitions of abuse and neglect
- Information on Domestic Abuse
- Sexual and Criminal Exploitation including County Lines and Cuckooing
- Structural inequalities
- Arrangements for out of area safeguarding
- Information on young people who pose a risk to others.

The protocol recognises that there are safeguarding risks that may be more common for young people. These risks can be greater due to young people possibly, finding it harder to recognise often, sophisticated methods of exploitation.

References & useful links to further reading

- WSSAB [Threshold Guidance](#) on a range of concern areas to help referrers consider if concerns are reportable, not reportable or need consultation prior to referral.
- Department of Health and Social Care [Bridging the gap in transitional safeguarding and the role of social work with adults](#)
- [Child Exploitation Disruption toolkit](#) supporting frontline practitioners to recognise and deploy tactics to disrupt multiple types of exploitation when they occur.
- [The Care Act 2014](#)
- [Independent Inquiry into Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham](#)
- [GOV.UK County Lines exploitation: applying All Our Health](#)
- [National Crime Agency County Lines](#)
- [Family Law Reform Act \(1969\)](#)
- [Directors of Adult Social Services \(2016\). ADASS Safeguarding Adults Policy Network Guidance, Out-of-Area Safeguarding Adults Arrangements](#)

