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| **TORBAY SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP** |

**Torbay Safeguarding Children Partnership**

 **Terms of Reference for**

**Multi Agency Case Audit on Harmful Sexual Behaviour**

**1. Background**

A Thematic Review into Peer on Peer Abuse undertaken by the Torbay Safeguarding Children Board in 2019 identified that the offer to children and young people in the Bay who either perpetrated or were victims of harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) was limited, and that the underpinning policy was outdated, with limited understanding across the Partnership of the referral pathways available for practitioners.

Recommendations were made from this Thematic Review, including an update of the Harmful Sexual Behaviour Practice Guidance.

Due to changes within the Partnership arrangements coupled with the impact of Covid19, it is not clear how widely the learning from this Review was embedded.

**2. What is harmful sexual behaviour?**

The term “harmful sexual behaviour” is used to describe a continuum of sexual behaviours, from inappropriate to problematic to abusive. There is a range of common and healthy behaviours at different developmental stages. When a child or young person behaves in ways considered to be outside of this range, their behaviour may be called ‘harmful’ because it is harmful to themselves or others.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Sexual behaviour can become abusive where there is:

* No true consent (not the same as legal consent – there shouldn’t be an assumption that children over the age of 13 can or have consented)
* Coercive use of substances or other coercive behaviour
* A power imbalance
* Exploitation
* Aggression

Sexual behaviour should therefore be seen as being on a continuum from age appropriate experimentation to very serious crimes.[[2]](#footnote-2)

**3. Purpose of the MACA on HSB**

This multi-agency case audit will consider:

* The effectiveness of frontline practice in protecting children and young people who are either perpetrating or experiencing HSB through a deeper audit into 10 cases
* How well the learning from the previous Thematic Review has been embedded and translated into practice across the partnership through the use of the NSPCC Harmful Sexual Behaviour Framework
* Recommendations for further operational and strategic consideration by Torbay Safeguarding Children Partnership (TSCP) and the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group (DASVEG)

**4. Objectives of the Audit**

***Theme 1: Responses***

Understand the extent to which the data we hold gives us an accurate picture of children and young people displaying HSB in Torbay in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and proportion with learning difficulties or disability.

Understand the extent to which that data is used to inform service delivery and workforce development

Explore the extent to which professionals can effectively differentiate between age appropriate behaviour versus behaviour that would give cause for concern regarding the safety of that child and others around them.

***Theme 2: Prevention***

Understand the extent to which the primary, secondary and tertiary prevention initiatives within Torbay are effective and appropriately targeted

***Theme 3: Assessment and referral pathways***

Understand the extent to which assessments include a holistic view of the child or young person, including consideration of harmful behaviours, development, family and environment

***Theme 4: Approach to intervention***

The support provided to children and young people is tailored to meet their developmental needs and takes into account specific vulnerabilities

***Theme 5: Workforce development***

Understand the extent to which we can demonstrate effective multi-agency learning and approaches to HSB in our area

**5. Identification of Cases**

* Cases for this audit will be identified by the Youth Offending Team (YOT) and the Torbay Education Safeguarding Service (TESS)
* Cases will cover a range of ages between primary and secondary school, and will include children with special educational needs
* To allow for oversight of the difference in practice and presentation pre and in Covid, the scope for this audit will be from 01st April 2019 to 30th July 2020

**6. Professional engagement in the MACA**

To ensure that the objectives of the audit are effectively met, and to support robust analysis of the cases, there should be contribution from the following partners:

**6a. Case Audit – where involved**

* Children’s Social Care – Children’s Disability Team, Operational and Regulated Services, MASH, Early Help, Safeguarding & Reviewing Service
* Education – Special Education Needs Team, Vulnerable Pupils, Alternative provisions, Virtual Schools
* Youth Offending Team
* Schools – DSLs, Pastoral & SRE Leads
* Health – Public Health Nursing (School Nursing), Primary Care (GP), CAMHS, Sexual Health Services
* SARC
* Police
* Voluntary Sector
* Young Devon/Adopt South West
* Action for Children 0 – 19 partnership

**6b. Wider Partnership audit using the NSPCC Framework**

* Children’s Social Care – Children’s Disability Team, Operational and Regulated Services, MASH, Early Help, Safeguarding & Reviewing Service
* Education – Special Education Needs Team, Vulnerable Pupils, Alternative provisions, Virtual Schools
* Youth Offending Team
* Schools – DSLs, Pastoral & RSE Leads
* Health – Public Health Nursing (School Nursing), CAMHS, Sexual Health Services
* SARC
* Police
* Voluntary Sector
* Young Devon/Adopt South West
* Action for Children 0 – 19 partnership

**7. Timeline for Audit**

Audit to take place in July 2021

Final draft of report presented to the Business Group in September 2021

Best Practice Seminar/Learning to be disseminated in September 2021

Dip Sample of learning in March 2022

1. Key messages from research on children and young people who display harmful sexual behaviour: DMSS research 2018 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. A continuum of children and young people’s sexual behaviours: Hackett, 2010 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)