



One minute guide

The Safe Project

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What is The Safe Project?

The Safe Project is based within Leeds Children and Families Services. The aim of the team is to support young people to be safe and free from child exploitation by providing intensive, flexible and timely support to the young people and their families/ carers.

The team was established in April 2015 and consists of a range of staff including social workers, youth workers family practitioners and a harmful sexual behaviour co-ordinator. The Safe Project works closely with partners from the children's social work service, police, education, third sector agencies, health and substance misuse services.

A multi-agency approach to tackling both [sexual](#) and [criminal](#) exploitation is recognised as best practice and is central to the way in which the Safe Project works.

Who does The Safe Project work with?

The team offers support and direct work to young people, both boys and girls, who have been assessed as being at medium or high risk of child sexual exploitation or child criminal exploitation. This means that families and practitioners who know the young people are concerned that they are either already being exploited or at significant risk of being so.

In addition to the young people themselves, parents, extended family network and carers are supported by the team's family practitioners. The team endorses and uses PACE's (Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation) [Relational Safeguarding Model](#), with parents being viewed as protective partners where at all possible.

All of these young people will already be known to the Children's Social Work Service and will have an allocated social worker, who will remain involved. The Safe Project workers will promote and support existing professional relationships that young people have, offering additional targeted support, rather than replacing or repeating work that has already been undertaken.

The Safe Project recognises that it is not always in the best interests of the child to offer a new worker, particularly if they have pre-existing good relationship with another professional, so they also offer consultation support to any professional in any agency through their Safe Space to strengthen those relationships, to empower and enable intervention through them.

Young people and families are identified through a referral to the Safe Project by an allocated social worker.

What else is offered by the Safe Project?

Safe Networks – a time limited group which runs up to three times a year, for younger siblings of children who have been or are at risk of being exploited. It aims to acknowledge the impact of child exploitation on the whole family and offers early intervention for the younger siblings.

Awareness raising and training around child exploitation – training with staff groups both within and external to Children and Families Services, and sessions which are co-delivered with police within the night and daytime economy and local community groups.

Safe Parents' Forum – a supported but increasingly peer-led group for any parents in Leeds whose children have been affected by child exploitation. The parents meet regularly and have provided feedback to a range of practitioners both locally and nationally.

Safe Space—a one-off consultation or supported formulation to offer specialist support and advice to practitioners working with children who are at risk of or are being exploited. This could include: advice on completing CE risk assessment toolkits; procedures around CE; safety planning; and resources around individual/ Safety Net work.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour—specialist advice and assessment support for Harmful Sexual Behaviour is provided within Safe.

How are young people and their families supported by the team?

The Safe Project's intervention is based on the areas of risk that the young person themselves and those who know them have identified as the most worrying. The social worker will have already captured these on a child exploitation risk identification tool, which is used to assess the current level of risk. A similar risk identification tool, the [Child Exploitation Risk Identification tool](#), is available for non-social work practitioners from Leeds Safeguarding Children's Partnership (LSCP) [CE web pages](#). Safe Project also use the [Leeds Practice Principles](#) Re-think formulation model to identify key areas of need for children, and use contextual safeguarding to support partners to explore how exploitation can be disrupted for the child.

The Safe Project's intervention will form part of the Vulnerability and Risk Management Plan (VRMP), which makes it clear what those working with the young person are doing to try and reduce the risks, as well as building the young person's resilience, to educate the child and family and to disrupt the exploitation.

Safe Project workers spend time getting to know the young person and listening to their views about their own and other people's concerns, as well as agreeing the type of work or activities they would like to engage with. The Safe Project's intervention is regularly reviewed along with the rest of the professional group, and the young person is supported to participate in this process where possible and appropriate. The Safe Project's intervention is not time limited and workers remain involved until the young person no longer wants support or the risks around CE have reduced though may not be entirely eliminated. A plan will be agreed prior to the Safe Project withdrawing and may involve other agencies continuing to support the young person and their family.

Key contacts and for more information

For information about making a referral and/ or about the work of the Safe Project, please contact safeprojectteamVM@leeds.gov.uk. The team is managed by Hannah Dumphy.

For more information about child exploitation, the [LSCP website](#) includes resources such as the CE multi-agency protocol, CE Checklist tool for partner agencies and practice guidance.