

## Fife Child Protection Committee 7-minute briefing - Vulnerable Young Persons

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**How Are We Supporting Our Vulnerable Young Persons?** The Fife Multi-agency Child Protection Vulnerable Young Person's Protocol relates to young people who are either aged 16-17 years, or under the age of 26 and have statutory entitlement to after care services, and who require support and protection. The protocol supports practitioners in considering legislative and guidance frameworks to inform the most appropriate pathway for the young person's needs and circumstances. For full details please see [Fife's Multi-agency Child Protection Vulnerable Young Person's Protocol](#)

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**VYP Referral Process** Concerns about a young person at risk should be reported without delay, if the risk is immediate or a crime has been committed to Police. Concerns should also be reported to the Social Work Service, this may be the young person's Social Worker if open/allocated or where it's not known if they are open/allocated the Social Work Contact Centre 03451 55 1503 (03451 55 00 99 out of hours). Practitioners should follow their own agency processes to raise concerns and consider whether the threshold for Child Protection, Adult Support and Protection or Care and Risk Management (CARM) is met.

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**Child Protection Pathway Consideration** Child Protection should always be the first consideration for young people aged 16 or 17 years. The threshold for Child Protection is met when an unborn baby, child or young person aged under 18 may have been significantly harmed or may be at risk of **significant harm (note - where the risk is posed from a person in a position of trust the threshold is harm)**. When that threshold is met a Child Protection Interagency referral Discussion (IRD) should be raised.

On occasions significant harm may arise from the young person's own actions, and in these cases consideration can be given to whether CP processes are appropriate. This case-by-case approach allows professionals to assess situations where a child's self-risk behaviours such as self-harm, eating disorder, attempted suicide, or suicidal ideations, running away or absconding or the use of substance may reach a threshold of significant harm. Child Protection may not be the most appropriate pathway to best support the child. If you are unsure about the right pathway to follow speak to your child protection team or specialised worker within your service.

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### Care and Risk Management (CARM) Pathway Consideration

CARM processes are relevant for children aged 12-17 years who pose a serious risk of harm to others.

An Interagency Referral Discussion (IRD) should be convened without delay to consider the need for a CARM meeting and determine if a robust Care and Risk Management Plan is needed.

For full details please see: [Fife Multi-agency Care and Risk Management Protocol](#)

### Prevent Referral Pathway

All practitioners have a duty under the Prevent strategy to identify and respond to concerns about radicalisation. If you are worried about a young person being susceptible to radicalisation:

- Refer to the Prevent Duty Guidance for Scotland
- Submit a [National PREVENT Referral Form](#) to [preventreferrals@scotland.police.uk](mailto:preventreferrals@scotland.police.uk).
- Where the threshold for significant harm is met, an IRD must be initiated without delay.

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### Adult and Support Protection (ASP) Pathway Consideration

Adult Support and Protection applies to individuals aged 16 years or over who are unable to safeguard their own wellbeing, property, rights or other interests, are at risk of harm and are more vulnerable due to disability, mental disorder, illness, or physical or mental infirmity. For further information please on ASP Pathway please see [Interagency ASP Guidance](#)

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**Confidentiality and Information Sharing** Concerns about confidentiality must never be a barrier to the exchange of information between agencies which may be essential to the protection of a child or Young Person at risk of harm (GDPR legal basis - public task).

**Sexual Assault Response Coordination Service (SARCS)** If a Vulnerable Young Person over 16 years of age has been raped or sexually assaulted but are not ready or able to report this to Police, they can access the National Self - Referral Service and evidence can still be collected. An Interagency Referral Discussion (IRD) may be considered if there are signs of vulnerability. In some situations, the welfare and safety of the individual and the public take priority over the self-referral process and Police must be notified– for example, immediate risk to the young person or others such as threat to life, use of weapons or firearms, exploitation or any threat requiring immediate Police response.

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### Dispute Resolution

Differences in professional opinion about the most appropriate course of action is at times expected however this should never delay immediate safety planning. Practitioners should follow the relevant escalation and dispute processes timeously.

Please see [Fife's Multi-agency Child Protection Escalation and Dispute Resolution Protocol](#) or refer to your single agency practice as appropriate for further guidance.