



Strategy to Develop and Improve Norfolk's Safety Planning and Transitions for Children and Young Adults

April 2026

'Whilst for children reaching 18 life may not feel any different, in terms of how they are viewed and how services respond, it's completely different.....I worked with a child who was being sexually exploited; one minute past midnight on the day of her 18th birthday she was defined as a sex worker'

'Transitional safeguarding is complex; we work hard to get things right in Norfolk, but we could do better. The will is there but we need to understand each other's priorities and the impact that has on young people as they become adults.'



1. Introduction

The period for young people between the ages of 15 and 24 years has become increasingly recognised as a distinct development period in which they are both navigating the transition from childhood to adulthood and doing so whilst their brain goes through a developmental change. The ways in which young people experience this are dependent on context and biology, therefore it is not experienced in the same way at the same time for each young person.

Since the Covid pandemic, there have been increasing levels of concern relating to transitional safeguarding both locally and nationally. Research and practice have shown that the organisation of statutory services is not conducive to supporting young people as they move through this development stage, as the provision of services change significantly once the arbitrary age of 18 is reached.

Locally, we have seen specific examples of cases where issues were raised and have been brought to the partnership via the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership's (NSCP's) Safeguarding Practice Review Group, its Vulnerable Adolescent priority subgroup and the Norfolk Safeguarding Adult Board's (NSAB's) Safeguarding Adults Review Group. These cases have illustrated safeguarding concerns where serious incidents have occurred, including loss of life and / or developing safeguarding patterns for this 18 – 25-year-old cohort have been recognised (exploitation, mental and physical health issues, etc).

The complexity of the issues faced by this cohort of young people cannot be underestimated and have been raised nationally. Amongst matters that were raised as causing concern were: the difference in thresholds for intervention and support pre and post a young person's 18th birthday; misalignment of adulthood in criminal legislation; a view that work is often completed in isolation rather than in partnership; and lacking clarity in terms of the statutory legal frameworks that govern how agencies approach young adults. These factors can result in a perceived lack of support for some of our vulnerable young people/young adults, particularly those outside of the care system and/or with undiagnosed or lower-level health and social care needs. If eligibility under relevant legislation is not met, then there is a real chance that there will be a lack of support for the young person. There are opportunities to explore the use of relevant legislation in the context of transitional safeguarding particularly where the young adult needs are not eligible for support under the Care Act. In addition, the fact that these young people are legally adults, but they may not be practically or emotionally equipped to take care of their basic needs, adds varying degrees of complexity when considering support.

A local piece of scrutiny was conducted jointly by the NSCP and NSAB in 2024 and found that the areas of concern are widespread ranging from accommodation/homelessness, education/employment/training (EET), substance misuse and mental health. Norfolk has developed significant service offers for young adults as they

move beyond their 18th birthday, particularly care leavers and children with disabilities. It was also recognised that Partners are operating in a time of economic hardship with budgets already under pressure and agencies that are restructuring to ensure that they work smarter and target resources appropriately. The challenge is to agree how to meet the needs of young adults and see this as a shared priority and responsibility to improve the life chances of Norfolk residents. It is also important to note the benefits of a preventative approach, providing support for young adults is likely to reduce the need for intervention in later life.

In April 2026 both the NSCP and NSAB agreed to make transitional safeguarding a joint priority to address the issues noted above. It is written in the context of much wider reform: social care and the implementation of the Families First agenda, the NHS reform and local government reorganisation. With the backdrop of these radical changes, the imperative to provide a consistent, continuous and containing service to the people we serve is stronger than ever.

This strategy sets out how the Children's Partnership and Adults Safeguarding Board will develop and improve our arrangements for transitional safeguarding in the context of these wider reforms. Included in our strategic approach is recognition of existing projects and cross overs with other partnership board, for example, Norfolk's Community Safety Partnership and the Serious Violence Duty Board that sits underneath it.

The strategy has been informed by national research as well as recommendations from scrutiny and relevant child and adult safeguarding reviews. (See Appendix.)

2. Definition, Principles and Scope

Transitional Safeguarding is an approach to working with young people aged 15 – 24 years old that recognises safeguarding should be an active and collective response to the harms that they may face, it is not about reaching thresholds or the delivery of specific services (Cocker et al, 2024). The aim of this strategy is to consider safeguarding with a small 's' for young adults who are not eligible under relevant legislation such as the Care Act 2014.

In Norfolk, transitional safeguarding will be understood as a preventative, multi-agency approach to supporting children and young adults into adulthood, drawing on multi-agency approaches alongside, Care Act prevention and wellbeing duties as well as children's safeguarding responsibilities and statutory safeguarding processes under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014.

As an emerging approach, it offers a useful way to think about how best to meet the needs of young people that is flexible, personal and appropriate to the needs of each individual young person. As such, it is not about using a defined toolkit, instead, it offers six principles to consider how services are being offered, these can be seen in Figure 1:

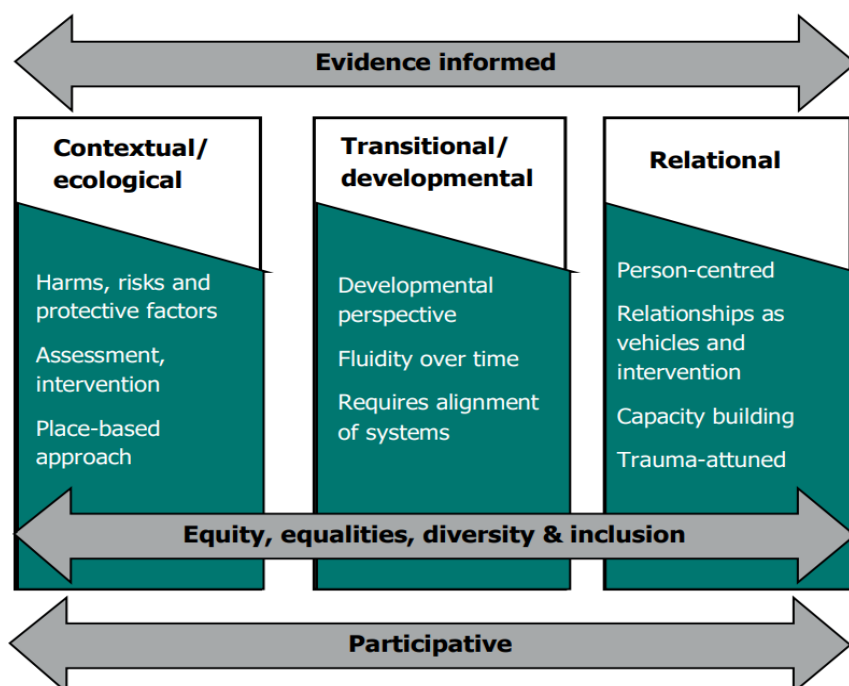


Figure 1: Six principles of Transitional Safeguarding taken from Cocker et al (2024, p.55)

This strategy does not have the space to offer a comprehensive description of each of the principles - please see Cocker et al (2024) for a full exploration of the approach – but will use these domains to structure our aims and objectives. It is important to recognise that the principles are not discrete categories but can and will cut across any work being undertaken.

Principles

In addition to the principles above, this strategy draws on the key principles of the Children Act 1989 and the Care Act 2014, with a focus on the similarities while also seeking to address the differences. It also adheres to the Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) approach and is holding in mind other legal frameworks that influence safeguarding practices, such as the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Norfolk also adheres to the [Flourish framework](#) which sets out our ambition that all children and young people will flourish. The eight domains – friends and family; learning; opportunity; understanding; resilience; individuality; safe and secure; and health – are aspirations that we have for all Norfolk residents, regardless of age, so also need to be applied to this cohort.

The Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) approach is integrated into The Care Act 2014 guidance, requiring safeguarding adults practice to be person led and outcome focused. The approach operates under six key principles which align with those of Transitional Safeguarding (see table 1).

Table 1: Alignment of Transitional Safeguarding Principles with Adult Safeguarding and Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP)

Transitional Safeguarding Principle	Related Care Act MSP Principles
Evidence-informed: Effective safeguarding requires use of evidence-based models and interventions. An evidence-informed approach recognises the importance of using research alongside professional expertise and triangulating this with the lived experience of the cohort or individual you are working with.	Accountability, Protection Decisions are transparent, proportionate and recorded, with adults supported to understand why actions are taken and how these relate to agreed outcomes. Practice is based on learning from SARs, audits and evidence of what improves safety and wellbeing
Relational: If agency and therefore choice for a young person is contextual, then professionals are a crucial contextual resource, particularly for young people living in care. Relationships can increase resilience by giving capacity that support and influence a young person as they negotiate and navigate the world. Transitional safeguarding advocates for “personalised and strength-based approaches” (Cocker et al, 2024, p.57) which recognises trauma and past experiences of the young people and ensures that staff are supported by leadership within reflective spaces.	Partnership, Empowerment Safeguarding is built on trusting relationships with the young adult and their network. MSP supports relational, strengths-based conversations that identify what matters to the person and who they want involved in keeping them safe.
Ecological: The ecological principle draws on the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979) who recognised the interplay of the environment with a young person’s development. This requires professionals to consider the impact of contexts such as immediate family, communities and social structures in supporting the young person to keep safe. In other words, paying attention to spaces and places.	Partnership, Prevention Risk is understood within family, community, environmental and social contexts. MSP encourages multi-agency and community responses that address wider contributory factors, rather than focusing solely on individual behaviour.

Developmental/Transitional: Safeguarding systems for children are not designed with reference to the developmental needs of young people but are designed around reaching risk, care, and age thresholds. A more fluid service response should recognise each young person having different needs at different points and that the response should not be dictated by the service available according to age.	Proportionality, Empowerment Responses recognise changing capacity, resilience and need as young people move into adulthood. MSP supports age-appropriate positive risk taking and least intrusive interventions in line with adult rights and autonomy.
Equity, Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Intersectionality: For an ethical approach to safeguarding, it is necessary to recognise the impact of discrimination and societal injustices in the lives of young people and to challenge these to ensure inclusion and participation. Paying attention to exclusion and discrimination means being aware of the context and the intersectional adversities that young people experience - that is, understanding what challenges young people face based on their various characteristics: gender, ethnicity, class, age and so on.	Protection, Accountability MSP ensures safeguarding responses are accessible, non-discriminatory and tailored, with particular attention to structural inequalities and barriers that affect outcomes for different groups of young adults.
Participative: The transitional safeguarding approach highlights the importance of recognising the young person's rights and their expertise in their own lives, drawing on research that has shown how young people feel disempowered and as having little control (Cocker et al, 2024). This does mean that agencies have to navigate the line for the young person that is both protective and participative. This is tricky to do especially given the focus on managing risk in children's safeguarding. This approach also recognises the critical role of parents, carers and wider support networks in safeguarding and transition planning. Where appropriate, partners will actively seek to engage and involve them, recognising their knowledge, relationships and ongoing role for children and young adults to stay safe and thrive.	Empowerment, Partnership Young adults are supported to define their own safeguarding outcomes, participate in decision making, and receive advocacy where required. MSP's "no decision about me without me" ethos is central.

A note on language:

This strategy focuses on children transitioning to adulthood. Many young people will make this transition easily and naturally with the support of their families and communities. However, we know that for children/young adults with vulnerabilities they may need additional help. When we talk about transitions in this strategy, the focus is on safety planning and interventions to support and meet needs.

Human Learning Systems approach

Norfolk will adopt a Human Learning Systems (HLS) approach to support the development of transitional safeguarding locally. HLS is a way of working that enables partners to respond effectively to complexity through learning, collaboration and adaptation.

Transitional safeguarding involves complex, non-linear challenges that cannot be resolved through standardised processes alone. HLS provides a framework for working across organisational boundaries, recognising that improving outcomes for children and young adults requires a whole-system response rather than a single service intervention.

Core elements of the Transitional Safeguarding HLS approach:

1. Prioritising learning

The primary focus will be developing a culture that prioritises learning, reflection and continuous improvement. This includes creating permission for practitioners and leaders to work with uncertainty and complexity in a multi-agency context.

2. Building learning infrastructure

The development of shared mechanisms that enable ongoing experimentation, reflection and adaptation across the partnership. This is not about additional training, but about embedding structured opportunities to:

- Test new approaches
- Reflect on what is working (and what is not)
- Adapt practice based on learning

This learning will be generated from work with children and young adults and systematically shared across agencies.

3. Connection practice and system change

Learning will flow from frontline practice to inform strategic decision-making, commissioning and governance. This ensures that system change is grounded in the lived experiences of children, young adults and practitioners rather than driven solely by top-down processes.

Applying HLS to transitional safeguarding means we will:

- Treat transitional safeguarding as a whole-system challenge.
- Work in extensive partnerships, including voluntary and community sector organisations, alongside communities, children and young adults and parent/carers.
- Focus on place-based problem solving.
- Create protected space for multi-agency learning and reflection.
- Encourage innovation and experimentation.

This strategy commits to developing a learning-led system that better supports children and young adults as they move into adulthood.

In line with the Human Learning Systems approach, workstream groups are encouraged to test, adapt and learn from practice. This includes creating permission for partners to be creative, innovative and professionally curious, recognising that improving outcomes in complex systems requires trying new approaches and learning together from what works.

Scope

The independent scrutiny report agreed in 2024 noted not only the will to meet the needs of the 18 – 25 year old cohort, but also some significant projects that are currently in place. This strategy recognises that we cannot influence or change legislation, but Norfolk has within its gift the ability to take a systemic approach and make the cultural shift needed to better support our children into adulthood. As a mature partnership we are well placed to take pragmatic risks and focus on putting the scaffolding in place for this cohort that recognises their ages and stages of development.

Some of the areas that we will draw from to develop and improve our approach to transitional safeguarding include:

- Preparing for Adult Learning (PfAL)
- The Futures Project (funded by the Serious Violence Duty Board)
- Learning from multi-disciplinary teams – existing and emerging under the Families First agenda
- Life Beyond Care Service
- New Roads adolescent hubs
- Hearing the voice of the young person – participation groups ranging from universal (Youth Advisory Boards) to targeted (for example, Norfolk in Care Council/Care Leavers, Young Offenders, young people with SEND)
- Data from the ‘front doors’: the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Social Care Community Engagement (SCCE) service
- Analysis of the training offer

- Learning from children's and adults safeguarding reviews
- Engagement with voluntary and community sector partners who play a key role in supporting young people and young adults across Norfolk

3. Strategic Aims and Objectives

The NSCP and NSAB's shared ambition is to:

Support all children into adulthood, ensuring safe, secure transitions, and setting them up to flourish.

In order to respond to this shared priority within the context of increasing demand, constrained partnership resources and ongoing system change, the Transitional Safeguarding Strategic Implementation Group (TSSIG) has agreed a targeted and focused delivery approach. This approach recognises that achieving meaningful change in a complex system requires prioritisation and clarity of scope, alongside a commitment to learning and adaptation in line with a Human Learning Systems approach.

Rather than attempting to address all aspects of transitional safeguarding simultaneously, partners will focus on a small number of priority workstreams where there is clear opportunity to deliver impact, build shared understanding and strengthen multi-agency practice.

Across all elements of delivery, there will be a clear line of sight between this work and transitional safeguarding developments at an Eastern Region level, ensuring alignment, shared learning and collective influence. This will operate both ways, enabling Norfolk to contribute to, and benefit from, emerging regional thinking and practice.

The agreed priority workstreams are:

- **Strategic: Building legal and legislative confidence in transitional safeguarding practice**
- **Operational: Targeted development of learning and practice in SEND (Special Educational Needs & Disability) transitions**

These workstreams reflect areas of shared priority identified through multi-agency engagement:

- There is opportunity to build understanding and confidence across the partnership, particularly in relation to legal frameworks, eligibility and roles in transitional safeguarding and enable and promote a flexible, creative approach to working with children reaching adulthood.

- Developing a shared narrative, language and understanding will improve multi-agency working, strengthen understanding between services and support decision-making.
- A focused approach allows partners to prioritise activity that is realistic and deliverable, while still achieving meaningful impact.
- The identified workstreams build on existing statutory duties enabling a more coherent and joined-up approach across the system
- Learning from these areas will be used to inform future priorities and wider system development.

The TSSIG has agreed a phased approach to delivery. This approach ensures that partnership effort is targeted, manageable and aligned to areas of greatest need, while allowing learning from early activity to inform subsequent work.

The agreed workstreams will be progressed through a coordinated, multi-agency delivery model, reflecting the shared responsibility for transitional safeguarding across the partnership.

Each workstream will be supported by a dedicated multi-agency working group, jointly led by representatives from Children's Services and Adult Social Care. This joint leadership model is intended to:

- Promote shared ownership and accountability
- Strengthen collaboration across organisational boundaries
- Ensure that multi-agency perspectives are embedded in design and delivery

Membership of each group will include relevant partners from across the partnership ensuring a whole-system approach.

Priority Workstream 1: Building legal and legislative confidence in transitional safeguarding practice will be progressed in the first instance. This reflects the strong multi-agency feedback that confidence and consistency in legal understanding is a critical enabler for improving transitional safeguarding practice across the system.

Learning from this workstream will be used to inform and shape the delivery of the second phase.

Priority Workstream 2: Developing learning and practice in SEND transitions will be developed as the second phase of delivery. This will build on the strengthened shared understanding and improved multi-agency working established through the first workstream.

This phased approach reflects our commitment to delivering focused, high-impact activity, while embedding continuous learning and adaptation in line with the Human Learning Systems approach.

Both workstreams will be asked to report against the headlines from the Transitional Safeguarding Framework as described in Table 1 above.

Priority Workstream 1: Building legal and legislative confidence in transitional safeguarding practice

A consistent theme identified through multi-agency engagement is the need to strengthen shared understanding and confidence in the legal and legislative frameworks that underpin transitional safeguarding.

Across the partnership, there is opportunity to further develop how key legislation is understood and applied in practice, for example:

- Care Act eligibility and the use of prevention and wellbeing duties
- The application of the Mental Capacity Act in transitional contexts
- The interface between children's safeguarding responsibilities and adult autonomy and positive risk-taking
- The role of safeguarding under Section 42 and broader preventative approaches
- The use of wider legal mechanisms such as the inherent jurisdiction of the High Court
- The legal and safeguarding implications of unregulated placements.

Strengthening legal and legislative literacy is critical to developing a more confident, consistent and joined-up approach.

This workstream will focus on building a shared, practice-based understanding of how legislation can be applied to support children and young adults effectively.

This workstream will also explore understanding of risk and "comfort tolerance" across services, supporting a shared approach to proportionate decision-making and positive risk-taking in transitional safeguarding practice.

The aim is to ensure partners are fully utilising existing legal frameworks, including prevention duties, to support early intervention and better outcomes as well as exploring creative ways to work together effectively and break down real or perceived barriers.

Priority 2: Developing learning and practice in SEND transitions

Children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) often require coordinated, sustained support across multiple services as they transition into adulthood. Multi-agency discussions highlighted this cohort as a priority. There are opportunities to strengthening early, joined-up planning and shared understanding across agencies, ensuring that transitions are proactive rather than reactive.

This workstream will focus on building a more consistent, coordinated and person-centred approach to SEND transitions. This will ensure that young people with SEND experience smooth, supported transitions into adulthood, with clear pathways and coordinated multi-agency involvement.

It will build on existing local strengths alongside learning from effective practice in other areas. This workstream also aligns with ongoing system transformation, including the development of place-based and integrated working models, and will be progressed in line with Norfolk's Human Learning Systems approach. This will support partners to develop and refine approaches to SEND transitions through shared learning, collaboration and continuous improvement, ensuring that changes are both practical and sustainable.

4. Measuring Impact

In the first iteration of this strategy, impact measurements are yet to be fully developed and will emerge more clearly when we have established a shared dataset. As a minimum, in the first 12 months we anticipate both quantitative and qualitative measures.

The NSCP's and NSAB's Senior Analysts will support with developing a data profile. The data dashboard will include clear outcome measures and be reported to both NSAB and NSCP at six monthly intervals.

In line with our Human Learning Systems approach, our understanding of impact will be developed through continuous learning rather than fixed metrics alone. We will combine quantitative data with qualitative insight, including practitioner experience and the lived experience of children and young adults, to understand what is improving outcomes.

Impact will be assessed through:

- Evidence generated from test-and-learn cycles
- Multi-agency reflection and review
- Feedback from young people and partners
- System-level changes informed by frontline learning

This approach recognises that in complex systems, meaningful impact cannot always be captured through predefined measures alone and must evolve over time.

5. Leadership and Governance

As a priority area, Norfolk's Transitional Safeguarding Strategy will be governed by a discrete multi-agency joint NSCP/NSAB subgroup, chaired by Children's Services Director of Family Help, Care and Protection and Adult's Services Director of Social Work, Quality & Practice and Principal Social Worker.

The Transitional Safeguarding Strategic Implementation Group (TSSIG) has clear Terms of Reference and representation from strategic leaders from across the partnership. TSSIG will report to the NSAB and the NSCP Partnership Group. If smaller, more discrete meetings are required, the Director of Adults Social Care will be invited to the NSCP's Delegated Safeguarding Partners meeting or the Executive Director of Children's Services will be invited to NSAB's Chairs Executive meeting.

The Transitional Safeguarding Strategy Implementation Group (TSSIG) is strategic and will be supported by relevant subgroups with identified leads to deliver against the strategic statements set out under Section 3. The TSSIG is responsible for improving multi-agency practice and the subgroup leads will support specific developments against their areas of responsibility, as detailed in the action plan.

The TSSIG will also oversee the system's learning approach, ensuring that insights from practice are actively used to inform strategic decisions. Governance arrangements will support permission to learn, including oversight of innovation, reflection cycles and shared learning across partners.

Appendices

- 1) Scrutiny findings and recommendations
 - a) Transitional Safeguarding (2024)
 - b) CSEA – response to Casey report (2026)
- 2) Relevant Recommendations from:
 - a) Safeguarding Child Practice Reviews
 - b) Safeguarding Adults Reviews

Appendix 1a – Transitional Safeguarding Scrutiny Findings and Recommendations (2024)

Finding one - There is a lack of awareness and understanding of the responsibilities placed upon professionals who are engaged in safeguarding individuals pre and post the age of 18. This becomes even more apparent regarding differences in the legislation that govern working practices. This can lead to frustration with professionals observing the cultural differences in risk management between child and adult care. This cultural difference was highlighted across several focus groups with examples of a perceived lack of engagement from adult agencies being countered with a view that those working with children are risk averse. All agencies are fully committed to safeguarding and a greater understanding of each other's responsibilities has the potential to reduce conflict and improve transition through better joint working and planning.

Recommendation one – The NSCP and NSAB commission a joint multi-agency training offer that improves the understanding of responsibilities pre and post 18. This offer should also consider opportunities to nurture relationships and understanding between professionals, improving outcomes through transition (*recommended lead - Workforce Development Groups WDG's*).

Recommendation two – The NSCP and NSAB agree a joint position on transitional safeguarding, emphasising a commitment to joint multi-agency working across both partnerships. This position statement should emphasise an expectation that all agencies should work collaboratively and hold shared safeguarding values. This clear leadership stance would empower those working with the cohort (*recommended lead - strategic leads for SAB and NSCP*).

Finding two – There is a lack of multi-agency planning and focus when young people with significant safeguarding issues approach the age of 18. This is particularly apparent when the person concerned is not a care leaver or does not have a disability.

There has evidence of a lack of focus on the transitional element and issues that are likely to arise post 18. In fact, some of the participants in focus groups raised this as a specific issue. This lack of considered risk assessment risks poor planning and support as the young person transitions into adulthood.

Information exchange is often limited if children approaching transition and there is no formal process for initiating multi-agency meetings for those outside of the local authority.

Recommendation three – The NSCP and SAB develop a multi-agency policy that improves planning for young people with safeguarding needs approaching transition. This policy should include meeting structures and information exchange principals to afford the best possible opportunity to provide holistic support to the person

concerned. The policy should be informed by professionals who already work in this area, i.e. are dealing with transition issues on a regular basis. The SAB and NSCP should seek assurance that risk assessments and multi-agency collaboration is taking place to ensure those going through transition are appropriately supported (*recommended lead – task and finish group led by senior stakeholder in SAB and NSCP*).

Finding three – There is evidence of good practice when dealing with transitional safeguarding in Norfolk. Much of this work could provide excellent learning opportunities for professionals. This scrutiny exercise has found that there is a lack of knowledge regarding the good offers and practice available to young people approaching 18. This results in a general lack of awareness of service provision at this crucial point. This is particularly apparent for staff who do not work in the LA. This inhibits planning and appropriate use of resources for young people approaching the age of 18.

Recommendation four – The SAB and NSCP commission a joint learning event that focusses on good practice in transitions taking place Norfolk. This event should be co-produced with service users, practitioners, subject experts and leaders all taking part. This will afford learning through demonstrating best practice (*recommended lead – NSCP and NSAB Workforce Development Groups*)

Recommendation five – The partners consider the creation of a dedicated transitional safeguarding expert post within MASH; this should be jointly funded. The post holder would be developed as an expert in this field offering advice and signposting colleagues to existing offers of support for transitional safeguarding issues (*recommended lead – Assistant Director(s) responsible for MASH*).

Recommendation six – Both the NSCP and the NSAB develop a briefing sheet that highlights existing service provision, signposting partners to existing offers of support for transitional safeguarding. This would also raise awareness of existing good practice (*short task and finish group chaired by Assistant Directors from Children's and/or Adult's social care*).

Finding four – Statutory guidance covering CSPRs and SARs make it extremely difficult to commission reviews that examine agency engagement with young people who have recently reached the age of 18. This is the case in Norfolk and there is evidence of strategic leads stepping outside of process to ensure multi-agency practice is reviewed following serious incidents. The circumstances rarely fulfil the criteria for commission of a SAR under the Care Act and partnerships find themselves in a position where, despite obvious benefits of a review, no learning mechanism is triggered. It is important that Norfolk agrees a policy that overcomes this issue with learning and practice improvement being the priority whatever the age of the young person.

Recommendation seven - The SAB and NSCP develop guidance on when and how independent reviews of serious incidents can be commissioned if they fall outside of existing statutory frameworks. This guidance should be based on existing practice and methodology used in Rapid Reviews and should include information sharing (*short task and finish group led by the chairs of the SARG and SPRG, with the support of the Business Managers*).

Appendix 1b – Child Sexual Exploitation & Abuse (CSEA) Norfolk Response to Casey Report - Scrutiny Findings and Recommendations (2026)

Recommendations 1 & 2

1. Operational data and collection:

- a) Explicitly identify and record group based CSEA in all relevant datasets, this is an issue for all agencies.
- b) Consistently recording ethnicity and nationality for all victims and suspects. We must empower all practitioners to seek out and record ethnicity. The Partnership should develop training that will support practitioners from all agencies to record ethnicity.
- c) Accelerated implementation of/preparation for key recommendations of the Casey review, including the unique ID for each child.

2. Strategic data and analysis:

- a) Clear data sharing provisions, agreements and routines that ensure the timely dissemination of over-arching data (including around emerging risks) to statutory partners.
- b) Ensure oversight of aggregated/strategic data between statutory partners (through Joint Strategic Analysis Group), ensuring a joined-up analysis of overall risk (e.g. bringing Police, council and NHS together within needs assessments and indicator sets where relevant).

Recommendation 3 –

The NSCP Learning & Development sub-group should review and enhance the current training offer for all partners. The revised training should focus on:

- Early identification of CSEA
- Listening to and amplifying the child's voice
- Use of appropriate, non-blaming language
- Understanding and preventing adultification
- What can we do about ethnicity, prevention and post abuse interventions
- How to ensure practitioners are comfortable seeking and recording information about ethnicity.
- Clear pathways and referral methods

Recommendation 4:

The NSCP leadership recognised the need to do more in terms of engagement with children and develop prevention / post abuse strategies. This should include:

- Developing a wider plan to educate young people in Norfolk. This plan should include a whole system prevention plan to help young people understand what is / what is not safe and to have a better understanding of what is available.
- Utilise healthy relationship advice/education already being delivered to provide preventative work.

- Develop post abuse recognition, interventions and multi-agency systems that can provide appropriate therapeutic support to children.

Appendix 2a) – Recommendations from Safeguarding Practice Reviews

Ref. Case AO (Jasmine), published January 2026

Recommendation 1: The partnership needs to conduct a specific, comprehensive mapping pathway of the mental health system in order to understand:

- What are the partners aiming to provide and for whom?
- How are services currently provided and who provides it (to include statutory and voluntary sector provision)?
- How do children and young people access services and how/when do the offers of intervention/support get withdrawn?
- What approaches do services use to engage with children and young people?
- Where does the work happen e.g. in the home, community, or at a specialist building?
- How does each service engage with the wider safeguarding network both in terms of communication and the support for other professionals working with young people accessing mental health support?

Any resulting work needs to consider the strength, speed, creativity, flexibility and effectiveness of mental health pathways in relation to the aims of the partnership and reported to the Delegated Safeguarding Partners within six months of publication of this report.

Recommendation 2: Promote the good relational practice with young people and professionals that was evident in this review through a programme of dissemination.

Recommendation 3: Use existing mechanisms to strengthen multi-agency communication, reflection and accountability across services provided for adults and children: promote the use of the Joint Agency Group Supervision (JAGS) where transitional safeguarding is featured and provide an evaluation of all JAGS that feature this age group, drawing out thematic learning. The reporting period should focus on those JAGS in the six months following the publication of this report and include detail of all participating agencies.

Recommendation 4: The partnership should develop specific resources (e.g. training and a toolkit) for working with men when interactions between fathers and staff are seen as confrontational, lacking co-operation and proving ineffective. Whilst this review was specifically about fathers, any resources produced should be mindful that any person in a care-giving role can have relationships with professionals that are seen as confrontational, lacking co-operation and ineffective.

Recommendation 5: Agencies working with children at risk of exploitation should evidence how they support staff to develop skills to map and work with the extended family network.

Recommendation 6: Each agency needs to review their processes to debrief and support staff following an unexpected death of a child or young person.

Appendix 2b) – Recommendations from Safeguarding Adults Reviews

Ref. SAR Douglas, published February 2026

- 1) NWICB should review the existing transforming care navigators' model to specifically consider how it can be extended/ replicated for families who like Douglas's are trying to navigate a range of support systems. NWICB to share the outcomes of this review with the NSAB within 9 months of publication of this report.
- 2) When assessing risk professionals must consider all members of a family, including fathers and male carers. Information about family members should not be taken on face value and professionals must be professionally curious and make the time to check the accuracy of those views. This is relevant in all cases but particularly in cases that involve acrimonious parental relationships. This approach will be evidenced through NSCP multi-agency quality assurance activities and shared to the NSAB for assurance.
- 3) The partnership should review the appropriateness of autistic people being subject to risk assessments which are based on expressing how they are feeling. The review must be informed by an awareness of the communication difficulties that many autistic people face and their difficulty in accurately expressing their feelings. This work should include specific consideration of how suicide safety planning risk is carried out with autistic people. The NSAB should seek partnership assurance evidence from individual agencies that this review has been undertaken and appropriate remedial action has been taken.
- 4) NSFT should ensure processes are in place regarding service users (particularly those who are neuro divergent) being supported and communicated with whilst they are on waiting lists and/ or part way through interventions when they need to be reallocated.
- 5) UEA, working with Children Services, SEND and other educational establishments (City College and Sixth Form providers), will lead on developing a local agreement to ensure where local young adults study at a local higher education establishment, ECHPs are (with the consent of the young adult) shared with the higher education provider ahead of them starting their course and there is a commitment to agreeing that the support identified within the ECHP is continued. This local agreement will be implemented within 9 months of the publication of this report. A copy of this this agreement will be shared with NSAB.
- 6) Practitioners should be actively seeking to identify carers using opportunities such as school, appointments, and home visits to encourage the identification of carers. When identified this should be flagged on young carers record and shared with relevant agencies. The success of this recommendation will be measured through a year-on-year increase in formally recognised young carers by Children Services who will provide NSAB with assurance evidence.