

Risk Outside The Home (ROTH) Multi-Agency Audit June 2026

In June 2026, the focus of the audits was on *children approaching adulthood* and *effectiveness of transitions support and planning*. This learning brief outlines the identified strengths and areas for development plus themes that were highlighted in accordance with the Tackling Child Exploitation (TCE) Practice Principles. There is a separate ongoing action plan/tracker that addresses the areas for development. [Click Here](#) to read more about the TCE Practice Principles.



1. Put children and young people first

Strengths:

- There was evidence that children were supported to develop an understanding of consequences of their actions meaning they were in a position to make informed decisions
- There was evidence of taking into account a child's chronological age alongside their developmental age to help explore a proportionate response

Areas for development:

- Sometimes it appeared that there was too much focus on what children were saying/self-reporting but because of the nature and complexity of situations and the coercion they might be experiencing, this might not be wholly accurate
- For one child, YUNO were surprised that they had not heard of her and there seemed to be limited consideration of her sexual health and what she might need in the lead up to turning 18 years old

2. Recognise and challenge inequalities, exclusion and discrimination

Strengths:

- There was evidence that the professional network challenged gender stereotypes around sexual exploitation which led to the arrest of a perpetrator
- Consensus was that there was curiosity about the families within which children were situated which helped to understand their lived experiences, background and identity. There was uncertainty around how this would be taken into consideration post-18

Areas for development:

- There was an example where a child was not recognised as a young carer until recently and this could have been identified earlier. This child will now be offered a transition assessment
- It was evident that there are often multiple areas of exclusion and discrimination for children; this can be tricky to navigate for example, for one child focus appeared to be on her cultural background and there was lack of curiosity regarding sexual health

3. Respect the voice, experience and expertise of children and young people

Strengths:

- Blame placed was consistently placed firmly on the perpetrators and not on the child's behaviour
- For one child, there was strong recognition around their experiences of trafficking, cultural displacement and how her vulnerability was heightened due to this

Areas for development:

- In GP records, children were not always seen alone; perhaps GPs could be better at routinely asking to see children on their own, especially 16/17 year olds approaching young adulthood
- At times information that was shared by children was accepted at face value. There was recognition that professionals need to make their own observations and notice warning flags as well

4. Be strengths and relationship-based

Strengths:

- Most of the children had a consistent lead professional who knew them well
- For one child, YPS were proactive in locating a post-18 service that would meet their needs although this was challenging given limited resources
- There was an example of a child being picked up by an adults DHI worker in lead up to their 18th birthday enabling effective transitions work to happen

Areas for development:

- From an education perspective, there seemed to be less oversight on children in post-16 education and less monitoring around their attendance which meant there were more times where their whereabouts was unknown
- For children with EHCPs who are in difficult circumstances, professionals could discuss with the EHCP coordinator whether Educational Psychology involvement in their Annual Review might be appropriate

5. Recognise and respond to trauma

Strengths:

- Good recognition that understanding and responding to trauma happening within family systems and impact on children's experiences in the community, can be complex
- There was good pieces of work which recognised children's trauma for instance police working at the child's pace, not minimising harm, taking time to understand the full picture

Areas for development:

- Recognition that sometimes disclosures can happen later on and this could be when a young person is 18 so ongoing trusting relationships are important to enable this to happen

6. Be curious, evidence-informed and knowledgeable

Strengths:

- 'Spotting the Signs' has been adapted for use with under 25s to help make sure children and young adults have the right level of support in relation to sexual health
- In social care, there was good examples of hypothesising within supervision

Areas for development:

- 'Spotting the Signs' was not completed for two children where it should have been

7. Approach parents and carers as partners, wherever possible

Strengths:

- Generally, parents were involved in key meetings for children, in safety planning and their views and concerns have informed assessments and decision making. There was usually open and honest communication with parents and attempts to support them to build insight into the needs of their children

Areas for development:

- Parents were often uncertain about what would be available for their child when they turn 18, and struggled to know where to find information; complicated by the fact that professionals often are unclear on what to advise

8. Create safer spaces and places for children and young people

Strengths:

- For one child there was a consistent focus on preparing them for independent living in a way that maintained their safety
- Sometimes consideration was being given to how safe environments can be maintained beyond 18 years, including location, support networks and professional oversight

Areas for development:

- It was felt that certain services ending for children when they are 18 years old meant that there would be less safe spaces for them to attend/spend time
- For one child, despite targeted disruption activity and identification of risky spaces, he continued to be drawn to these places and there was worry about how these places could continue to present a risk to him post-18

Agencies involved in this audit were:

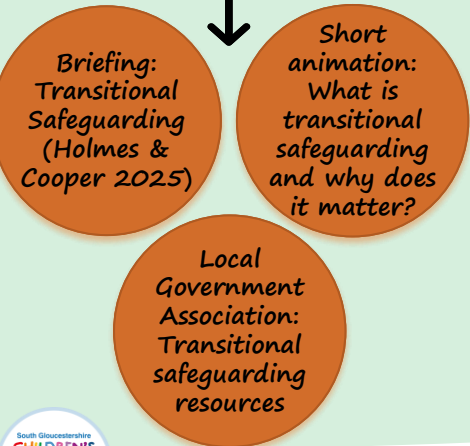
Youth Justice Service; Children’s Services; Safeguarding Advisor for Education; Police; Violence Reduction Partnership; CAMHS; BNSSG ICB on behalf of GPs; BACE; Educational Psychology; Probation; YUNO Sexual Health

Transitional Safeguarding

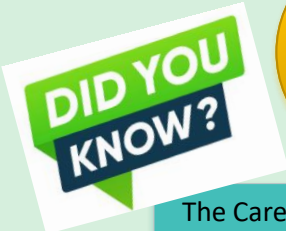
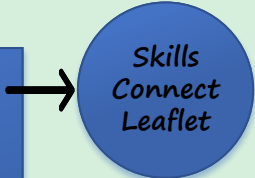
Safeguarding systems for those under 18 and over 18 operate to different thresholds, legislative frameworks and eligibility criteria. The *Children Act 1989* places a duty on local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. In contrast, statutory safeguarding duties for over 18s rely on the person having formally defined ‘care and support needs’ as set out in the *Care Act 2014*.

The current approach means that many young adults face significant risks and harms without having formal ‘care and support needs’. This can be complicated to navigate but we know that harm, trauma and human development do not stop at 18.

In their 2018 briefing called **Mind the Gap: Transitional Safeguarding – Adolescence to Adulthood**, Holmes and Smale define transitional safeguarding as an approach to: ‘safeguarding adolescents and young adults fluidly across developmental stages, which builds on the best available evidence, learns from both children’s and adult safeguarding practice and which prepares young people for their adult lives.’ It is about thinking beyond statutory duties and instead working across all partners to create an offer for young people that is holistic, flexible and person-centred, to help them make the transition to adulthood.



At these audits, staff from this service delivered a presentation to audit members to raise awareness of the free support which is on offer to residents of South Gloucestershire to help them enter training, gain employment, progress within their current career or change into a new career. For further information: [Click Here](#).



Substance misuse

The majority of the children who were selected for these audits had experienced or were experiencing issues or difficulties with substance misuse.

Substance misuse and dependence can emerge alongside a number of vulnerabilities including mental health difficulties, familial, social or financial difficulties, and experiences of trauma and abuse. It can also have more immediate links to exploitation.

You can read more about the links between drug and alcohol misuse and vulnerability to exploitation on the Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership website: [Click Here](#).

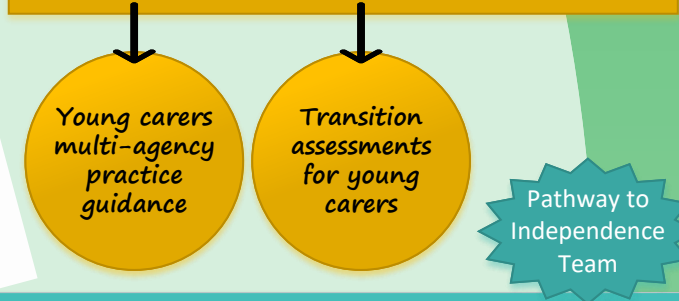
Talk Frank: Useful advice for parents and guardians to talk to their child about drugs and alcohol

The Young People’s Drug and Alcohol Service supports those who live or study in South Gloucestershire

Young Carers

One of the children audited was a young carer for her father but it was apparent that this was not identified in a timely way which created delays in her receiving support and input linked to her young carer needs.

A young carer is entitled to a transition assessment to help explore their needs as they approach 18 years of age.



The Care Act 2014 states that local authorities must carry out needs assessments for children where there is a likely need for care and support after the child turns 18 and a **transition assessment** would be of ‘significant benefit’. For information about transition assessments and how to access them: [Click Here](#). You can also explore whether the **Pathway to Independence Team** may be able to offer a service.

Other useful resources:

