

Vulnerable Young Person Process

What is the Vulnerable Young Person Process?

The vulnerable young person process (VYP process) aims to support practitioners in their decision making when working with vulnerable young people in Tameside. It is presented in the form of a flow chart, with embedded documents and website links and these additional explanatory notes.

Who should I use the Vulnerable Young Person's Process with?

The VYP process is intended for use with all vulnerable young people in Tameside and encompasses young people at all levels of the Children's Needs Framework.

What do you mean by 'young person'?

The term 'young person' generally refers to older adolescents / teenagers but the term is deliberately not restrictive by age as each young person's circumstances are different.

Who is a vulnerable young person?

Any young person could be or become vulnerable for a whole range of reasons. Their vulnerabilities may be life long e.g. due to a specific learning disability or may be for a short or prolonged period of time in their lives. As young people become more independent they often encounter additional vulnerabilities such as cyberbullying, sexual exploitation, substance misuse, mental health difficulties, homelessness, loss of education / training placement, criminality, victim / perpetrator of sexually harmful behaviour etc

Practitioners should note that a young person who is the perpetrator of risky / harmful behaviour to others is equally a vulnerable young person in their own right and should always have their needs assessed in accordance to the VYPP.

Why do we need a Vulnerable Young Person Process?

Research and findings from SCRs highlight time and time again the vulnerabilities of this age group; it is therefore essential that we have robust multi agency processes available to support practitioners to safeguard this group of young people to the best of their abilities to give young people the best possible outcomes in life.

Is this a new set of procedures?

No, the VYP process brings together existing Tameside procedures: -

- Tameside Children's Needs Framework – for children and young people with additional needs using CAF and other common processes
- TSCB Safeguarding Children Framework – for children and young people who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing significant harm

Which should be used in the first instance, and an additional multi agency function to be used in certain circumstances: -

- Vulnerable Young Person's Meeting (VYP meeting).

NB Some young people (those at level 4/5 of the Children's Need Framework) are likely to have existing care plans in place in respect of their circumstances / needs and will have processes in place for reviewing such plans.

How do I know when to use the vulnerable young person's meeting instead of the existing procedures?

Sometimes practitioners find themselves working with a young person where they have concerns that the young person is at risk of harm but this harm stems from the young person's own vulnerabilities and / or their own behaviour / lifestyle rather than from concerns about the parent / carers ability to keep them safe.

In these situations child protection enquiries may not be triggered however concerns of harm remain.

This is particularly challenging for practitioners when the young person does not recognise their own vulnerabilities or the risks of harm they face and do not want to engage in the CAF process.

Therefore in cases where child protection enquiries are not triggered and the young person will not engage in the CAF process and yet risks to the young person remain a concern a Vulnerable Young Person's Meeting (VYP meeting) should be convened.

Who can call a vulnerable young person's meeting?

Any practitioner involved with the young person can convene a VYP meeting and in doing so should: -

- Assume the role of lead professional; at least until the point of the VYP meeting when the most appropriate lead professional can be agreed.
- Inform Children's Social Care that you are convening a VYP meeting and the reasons why. (To reach the point of a VYPM the practitioner will have already consulted with Children's Social Care on the case). A Children's Social Care rep may wish to attend the meeting or alternatively will require feedback on the outcome of the meeting by the lead professional.

- Update JASPER to indicate that you are the lead professional and 'have information to share' and check to see who else is involved and / or a CAF assessment has been completed in the past.
- Convene the VYP meeting and invite relevant practitioners.

What if the young person doesn't want to attend?

In normal circumstances, and in line with good practice, the young person and carer (where appropriate) should be invited to attend the VYP meeting however there will be occasions where it will be necessary to convene a VYP meeting without the young person being present; particularly if the young person does not want to engage in the meeting.

In these cases the lead professional should make every effort to represent the young person's wishes and views at the meeting and should update the young person of the outcome of any meetings.

What happens at the vulnerable young person meeting?

The VYP meeting is the forum where practitioners (and young person / carer) should share information in order to formulate a holistic understanding of the young person's needs, their vulnerabilities and protective factors and with the information undertake an assessment of the risk of harm faced by the young person.

The group will agree a holistic, multi agency, support plan which will include a risk management plan and contingency plan for the young person. A format for the structure of the meeting is included in the flow chart and can also be accessed here.

As with any multi agency meeting the risk management plan should have a clear statement of the risk of harm and to whom and what needs to be done to reduce the risk of harm. The plan should include specific actions to reduce and manage this risk which are SMART, have named responsibilities, have clear outcomes, and includes timeframes and a contingency plan.

The plan should include a statement which describes at what point the plan will be ended i.e. how will the group know the plan has been successful?

The most appropriate lead professional should be agreed and a review date should always be set at this meeting.

The lead professional should update the young person and Children's Social Care of the outcome of the meeting.

What happens then?

The plan and the young person's circumstances should be reviewed by the multi agency group on a regular basis.

When the group is satisfied that the young person's circumstances have improve and the risk of harm is reduced then the group should agree an exit plan with the young person. The exit plan should include contact details of a lead professional they can contact, as a contingency plan, should their circumstances deteriorate.

The decision to develop an exit plan should only be made when all members are satisfied that the young person's circumstances have improved inline with the expectations set out in the plan.

What if the young person's circumstances deteriorate?

The multi agency group should have already agreed a contingency plan as part of their overall risk assessment and management plan.

The contingency plan will be different for each young person, depending on their development and circumstances but should always include a consultation with Children's Social Care who can support the group to reassess the young person's circumstances and to advise on how the case should progressed.

What if I think an agency is not carrying out their full responsibility to safeguard the young person?

If at any time a practitioner considers that the response of another agency/practitioner has not been proportionate to the level of risk or need please refer to TSCB Escalation of concerns policy <http://www.tamesidesafeguardingchildren.org.uk/publications/escalation-of-concerns>