**Adolescent Safeguarding Self-Evaluation Guidance**

**Background**

This guidance document supports the work of London authorities who have chosen adolescent safeguarding as a thematic priority for self-evaluation as part of Regional Improvement Alliance (RIA) programme for 2019/20.

The purpose of this self-evaluation is:

1. To enable authorities to robustly assess against a shared evidence base their ability to help and protect adolescents who may be at risk of harm, abuse or neglect.
2. To support work within authorities to develop these responses and should form part of the local improvement framework.

The self-evaluation should demonstrate an authority’s understanding of the risks and needs of its adolescent population and the subsequent action it has taken, or plans to take, to appropriately respond to these. The self-evaluation will support work to prepare for Ofsted annual conversations and should draw on existing self-assessments and related improvement work. Themes and priorities from self-evaluation will be shared within the RIA London Adolescent Safeguarding Group and in sub-regional learning events to support collective learning and improvement in this area.

This self-evaluation need not cover all aspects of an authority / partnership’s services to young people but should quickly lead to a focus on:

* the key challenges,
* strengths of existing practice
* areas where the authority will want to focus its energies to improve practice and impact for vulnerable adolescents.

The self-evaluation should consider both the work which supports adolescents in the context of their families **and** the wider contextual risks experienced by young people such as sexual and/or criminal exploitation, going missing, involvement in violence and offending, substance misuse and risks related to educational environments or missing education. A key challenge in this area of work is blending concepts and practice frameworks that focus on family resilience and safety with those relating to an understanding and effective response to risks outside of the family home. This is a particular feature of adolescent safeguarding and one which will probably feature within self-assessments.

**Proposed working definition of ‘adolescent safeguarding’**

For the purposes of this self-evaluation and related RIA work, we have defined ‘adolescent safeguarding’ as relating to the transitional developmental phase between childhood and adulthood. There are no hard age definitions to adolescence and it is recognised that this phase of growing up continues well beyond the age of 18 when many children’s services statutory responsibilities cease.

For practical purposes therefore, this self-evaluation framework is primarily focused upon safeguarding responses for children and young people aged 11-18 but authorities are asked to give consideration to those statutory children’s services responsibilities for young people which go beyond this age threshold.

The self-evaluation will be assisted by reference to more detailed guidance provided by Ofsted in support of the JTAI on CSE, gangs and missing children: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/680088/Child_sexual_exploitation_gangs_and_children_missing_from_home_care_or_education_joint_targeted_inspection_guidance.pdf>

**Areas for Self-Evaluation (maximum of 500 words per section)**

**A - Local context and key issues:**

1. What do you know about the risks and needs of your adolescent population?

How is this informed by key data (including trajectory over time) such as:

* Children at risk of CSE
* Those at risk of criminal exploitation, including county lines / gangs
* Incidence of serious youth violence
* Children who go missing from home or care
* Numbers of adolescents on CiN, CP plans or entrants to care
* Children in transition at 18 and vulnerable young adults
* Any ‘problem profiles’ created in relation to exploitation, missing, substance misuse, youth violence and related offending
* Analysis of the overlapping vulnerabilities of and services provided for your adolescent cohort eg SEND, CAMHS, offending, child protection etc
* Other evidence from surveys and participation activities that inform your understanding of adolescent experience in your authority

1. What strategies do you have in place to address issues relating to adolescents at risk and how effective are these?

**B - Emerging themes and areas for focus**

1. Are there particular emerging risks that you can identify from your authority’s data?
2. From your understanding of the evidence from your local area what should be the priority areas of focus for work in your authority?

**C -** **Quality of practice**

1. What do you know about the quality and impact of practice in relation to vulnerable adolescents in your authority? How do you know? What evidence can you draw upon: audit, inspection, review, feedback etc?
2. How well integrated are responses to (overlapping) adolescent risks within the local authority and between local authority services and partners?
3. Do you have a clear understanding of who are your most vulnerable adolescents and why?
4. Do you have effective early help and preventative approaches which promote adolescent safeguarding?
5. What are your improvement priorities in respect of the quality of adolescent safeguarding practice? What actions are you taking and what is the impact of these to date?

**D - Partnership**

1. Are the structures you have in place effective in responding to the challenges of adolescent safeguarding?
2. What are you doing to enhance the effectiveness of local structures and partnerships?
3. Are you confident in the contribution and capability of all key partners?
4. How effectively is information shared by safeguarding partners and do the forums you have established provide for responsive and co-ordinated approaches to the needs of individual children and of strategic oversight? How can these need to be enhanced?
5. What have you done to strengthen practice through collaboration with other boroughs / areas?

**E - Strengths**

1. Which are your areas of greatest strength in terms of response?
2. Are there examples of innovative or particularly effective practice you want to share with other authorities?

**F - Improvement Activity**

1. Where does your authority need to focus its attention in order to improve your adolescent safeguarding response over the next 12 months?
2. What are the priority actions?
3. What are your measures of success that will indicate you have made progress against your priorities for adolescent safeguarding?