



Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

Child on Child Abuse Strategy

1 Introduction

The Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership **Child on Child Abuse Strategy** sets out key objectives that will improve the awareness of and response to child on child abuse (this is sometimes called peer on peer abuse).

Child on child abuse does not just impact on children in schools. A partnership wide strategic response is required that links to existing strategies in place to safeguard children.

Child on child abuse occurs in education settings, residential settings, in the community as a feature of placed based risk and online and requires a whole system approach to raise awareness, prevention and response to keep children safe.

Central to the success of the child on child abuse strategy will be the inclusion and contribution of the voice of children and young people. Their understanding of their safety and where they feel vulnerable will be a critical feature for all agencies to know whether the steps being taken are improving the safety of children and young people.

2 Definition: What is child on child abuse?

Child on child abuse is a term used to describe many different forms of abuse experienced by children and young people. The common feature is that the individual or group of individuals responsible for the abuse are aged under 18. The definition should not create barriers to action needed to prevent and where needed respond to the lived experience of children who experience abusive behaviour from other children.

“Peer-on-peer (child on child) abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and coercive control exercised between children, and within children’s relationships (both intimate and non-intimate), friendships, and wider peer associations.

Child on child abuse can take various forms, including (but not limited to): serious bullying (including cyberbullying), relationship abuse, domestic violence and abuse, child sexual exploitation, youth and serious youth violence, harmful sexual behaviour and/or prejudice-based violence including, but not limited to, gender-based violence.

Online child on child abuse is any form of child on child abuse with a digital element, for example, sharing of nudes and semi-nude images (known as sexting), online abuse, coercion and exploitation, peer-on-peer grooming, threatening language delivered via online means, the distribution of sexualised content, and harassment.”¹

National guidance for schools² provides a similar definition, and includes these additional specific features of child on child abuse:

- “Physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery):
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- Upskirting - which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.”

3 What does the strategy seek to achieve?

The overarching purpose and aims of the strategy are to improve awareness and understanding of child on child abuse, reduce the risk of the abuse occurring and improve the responses where concerns are identified.

The [Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges](#) by Ofsted (June 2021) outlined the findings from children and young people about their experiences of sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online sexual abuse. Of significant concern was the commentary that, for some children, incidents are so commonplace that they see no point in reporting them. The frequency of these harmful sexual behaviours means that some children and young people consider them normal.

This strategy seeks to ensure that all children and young people who live in Derby and Derbyshire are confident that they know what acceptable and unacceptable behaviour towards them is, and if they have any concerns, that they feel there is a purpose to raising their concerns.

Children and young people should feel confident about who they can turn to for support and that this will lead to effective action to address unacceptable child on child behaviour and abuse.

¹ Taken from [Peer-on-peer abuse toolkit](#) (2019) Ferrer and Co

² Taken from [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (2021), DfE

4 Priorities for change: Awareness raising and prevention

Children and Young People (This element will need particular consultation)

Ensuring that children and young people understand what child on child abuse is and what to do is an essential first step. This will require that age appropriate information is made available to explain risks and this will require revisiting as children and young people grow older.

Children and young people with additional needs will require information that is suitable and opportunities to understand that a way that is helpful for them as individuals.

Parent and carers will need awareness and understanding of child on child abuse and feel confident to have conversations with their child.

Organisations

Individual organisations will need to ensure that practitioners and managers have a clear and full understanding of what constitutes peer-on-peer abuse. This will need to include the awareness of the links between the different potentially interrelated forms of child on child abuse.

Individual organisations will need to consider:

- What have we experienced as an organisation in our work with children and young people in the past in terms of child on child abuse, and have we learned from it?
- Do we take a community Place Based Risk (Contextual Safeguarding) approach to preventing and responding to child on child abuse?
- Are there particular features or types of child on child abuse that children and young people (who we work with) are exposed to, and do our policies and procedures appropriately address these? For example, are any of our children and young people exposed to gang violence? Do they carry weapons? Is prejudice-based bullying a problem?
- How are online safety issues promoted and any harms addressed? For example, how do children learn about keeping themselves safe at school and where they live (at home or in care)? Do organisations have safeguards in place to restrict harmful materials being accessed and are all staff aware of the action they should take to help keep children safe online?
- Have we completed a risk assessment to determine the risks to which children and young people (who we work with) are or may be exposed, and assess and monitor those risks? Have we put in place action plans to address any identified risks and keep these under regular review?
- Do children and young people we work with experience a broad and balanced curriculum through their education experience or support as children in need? How do we know they are aware of child on child abuse, receive relationship education (which addresses issues of consent, misogyny, community youth violence, carrying knives), and have awareness of reporting systems and support available?

- How do we know that the staff and managers have received the appropriate training, development, guidance and procedures to keep children safe from and respond to child on child abuse?
- Do we have robust policies within our organisation that set out our response to child on child abuse and links to the multi-agency DDSCP procedures?
- How our organisation's wider equalities approach to issues such as ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality and religious affiliation supports its child on child abuse policy?

5 Priorities for change: Responding to concerns

Children and Young People

Children and young people should feel that they are able to confidently report abuse, know how to report abuse and know that their concerns will be taken seriously, they will be supported and kept safe.

Examples of feedback from young people include that: 31% of Year 10+ students in Derbyshire said that they had been bullied in the previous 12 months. 11% of students said they have bullied someone else at school in the previous 12 months.³

Feedback from students at 43 schools involved in the i-vengers programme identify that 26% have seen online material that has made them feel sad, scared or worried. 28% of students had received nasty comments or content online. Their overall feedback tells us that Key Stage 2 students (7 – 11 years old) were far more likely to go online when they should be in bed, be on apps and games that parents and carers don't know about, can bypass parental controls and report having seen something online that makes them feel sad, scared or worried. They made up 100% of reported safeguarding concerns.⁴

Parents and carers should feel confident about how they respond to their child raising a concern, where to get help, support, and seek advice.

Organisations

Individual organisations will need to ensure that practitioners and managers are able to respond to concerns raised with them by a child, young person, parent or carer.

Individual organisations will need to consider:

- How our internal procedures keep children and young people safe and support multi-agency working consistent with the DDSCP Safeguarding Children Procedures.
- How our arrangements address the ongoing safety of the alleged victim and perpetrator (as appropriate) and 'all the other children (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) that include an 'individual risk assessment', a 'risk and needs assessment', a 'support plan', a 'risk management plan', a 'segregation plan', and a 'prevention plan'.

³ My life, my view – Derbyshire Youth Well-Being Survey 2021

⁴ I-vengers whole school survey 2021

- How we ensure that when responding to a concern or allegation of child on child abuse, in consultation with children’s social care, the police and other relevant agencies (where they are involved), that there is absolute clarity about how to share information about the concern or allegation with the children and young people affected, their parents, staff, and other relevant individuals.
- The data protection practices relating to child on child abuse are in line with our data protection policies and notices.
- That education settings are familiar with, and use [guidance on responding to responding to incidents of sharing of nudes and semi-nude images](#)

“Child on child abuse can be a complex issue, and even more so where wider safeguarding concerns exist. It is often not appropriate for one single agency to try to address the issue alone – it requires effective partnership working.”⁵

6 Priorities for change: Care planning

Children and Young People

A child, young person (and their parent or carer) should receive support and care following an incident of child on child abuse. They should have a clear understanding of action being taken to keep them safe and this may include being aware of how future risks from the alleged perpetrator will be managed.

The level of support will vary on a case by case basis and will include those cases being managed for example in school and those cases where criminal proceedings are ongoing.

Organisations

Individual organisations will need to ensure that practitioners and managers are able to:

- Put in place and manage arrangements to keep the child or young person safe and ensure that they receive the appropriate service(s) for their needs.
- Put in place and manage ongoing risk from the alleged perpetrator to other children and young people as appropriate to the circumstances of the individual case.
- Put in place and update awareness raising programmes that build on lessons learnt from individual incidents to help promote a safe culture for children and young people and improve the likelihood of preventing or alleviating future incidents.

How will the effectiveness of the strategy be judged?

7 The effectiveness of: Awareness raising

⁵ Taken from [Peer-on-peer abuse toolkit](#) (2019) Ferrer and Co

Asking children and young people for feedback about their experiences of learning about the risks they face, how confident they feel they are to raise concerns and know who to raise concerns with is a key feature of the strategy.

Surveys, both local and national, help organisations to understand the lived experiences of children and young people and provide an opportunity to strengthen local arrangements.

Individual organisations will include evidence as part of their annual safeguarding assurance (S11 or S175) of the progress that has been made to ensure that:

- The views of children and young people using their services are identifying how safe they feel from child on child abuse, and
- Practitioners and managers have a clear and full understanding of what constitutes child on child abuse and that appropriate measure are in place.

8 The effectiveness of: Responding to concerns

Children and Young People

Asking children and young people for feedback about their experiences if they have reported concerns or abuse and whether they felt they were taken seriously and kept safe is a key feature of the strategy.

Organisations

Individual organisations will include evidence as part of their annual safeguarding assurance (S11 or S175) of the progress that has been made to ensure that their arrangements have been reviewed to ensure that they respond appropriately to allegations of child on child abuse. (It would be expected that this includes evidence of internal assurance / audit of individual cases, as appropriate)

The arrangements for Single Assessments and Early Help Assessments don't currently include a specific section on the "Online Lived Experience of Child". The DDSCP will review these arrangements with partners to determine whether this should be included explicitly within assessment to address risk including child on child abuse.

9 The effectiveness of: Care planning

Children and Young People (This element will need particular consultation)

Asking children and young people for feedback about their experiences following raising concerns about the services they have received and how they were kept safe from future harm is a key feature of the strategy.

Organisations

Individual organisations will be provided with information about resources and services and expected to use them as appropriate.

This would include obtaining baseline evidence from [SV2](#) about the use of the CHISVA (Children's Independent Sexual Violence Advisor) service for a child who

has been the victim of rape, sexual assault or abuse. (There is a vast range of support that an CHISVA can offer, but their main role is to provide emotional support and guidance for children (of any gender) reporting current or historic sexual offences through the Criminal Justice System.)

The office of the police and crime commissioner have carried out a **Pathway Review of services in Derbyshire for victims/survivors of sexual abuse and/or assault.**

The DDSCP will periodically review the awareness by individual organisations and use of service provision to support children who have experienced child on child abuse.

Review and update of the Child on Child Abuse Strategy

The Child on Child Abuse Strategy will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis by the DDSCP Exploitation and Vulnerable Young People Group and this will include the feedback from children and young people about the impact of this strategy.

The review will include consideration of performance information and assurance evidence obtained through the DDSCP subgroups.

This document replaces all other previous published versions and should be read in conjunction with the DDSCP Procedures					
Version	Author/s Consultant	Updated by	Signed off by	Date	Review Date
1	DDSCP		EVYP Sub Group	May 2022	May 2023

Links to other strategies

The Child on Child Abuse Strategy will be reviewed alongside consideration of Local strategies such as:

[Children at risk of Exploitation Strategy 2018 - 2021 \(D&D LSCB\)](#)

National Strategies and Guidance such as:

[Peer on Peer Abuse Toolkit \(Farrer and Co 2019\)](#)

[Signs of Safety and Contextual Safeguarding \(2021\)](#)

[Tackling Violence against Women and Girls HM Government \(2021\)](#)

[Review of Sexual Abuse in schools and colleges Ofsted \(2021\)](#)

[Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges](#)

[Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2021\)](#)

[Harmful sexual behaviour framework NSPCC \(2019\)](#)

[Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people \(2020\)](#)

Online Harms/Online Safety Bill (when published)

