

7. Next Steps

The links below will offer you support and resources to embed in your establishment. Please complete the feedback form on the NSCP 7 minute Briefing confidential site and return to the NSCP. This will enable us to share good practice and continue to highlight and eliminate gaps to safeguarding children

What is Peer on Peer Abuse?

Peer-on-peer sexual abuse is sexual abuse that happens between children of a similar age or stage of development. It can happen between any number of children, and can affect any age group (Department for Education (DfE), 2018). It can be harmful to the children who display it as well as those who experience it. Boys and girls can both be victims of sexual abuse which and assailants can be the same or different gender.

Peer Sexual abuse includes, but is not limited to:

- Sexual harassment and violence
- Physical and sexual abuse
- Emotional harm
- On and offline bullying
- Teenage relationship abuse

2. Why do we need to address peer on peer abuse?

Young people can be confused about whether or not they have experienced peer sexual abuse. Reasons for this Include:

- Confusion about what constitutes 'normal' sexual activity
- They don't know whether they gave consent
- Can have a long-lasting negative impact on a child's wellbeing that can reach into adulthood.
- Effects can include – Mental Health

6. Use of the AIM assessment in Newham

AIM training has been rolled out to Newham schools, providing packs for 11 secondary and 6 primary schools. An AIM assessment is required before children who show sexually harmful behaviour move to new education settings. The team supporting the AIM rollout, provide on-going support to schools and work with partners in neighbouring boroughs to ensure that each transition takes place safely.

A register of staff who are trained to use the AIM assessment in education and care settings is being created.

5. Recognising and responding to peer on peer abuse

– Questions to discuss

- What signs and symptoms would trigger a concern?
- Responding to concerns and disclosures

Peer on peer abuse must be treated as a safeguarding matter and each child involved referred to the MASH. How would you report your concerns? Do you have an example and the outcome that was achieved?

• What training (including AIM training) have you received? How are you using this in your work with children? What knowledge and skills gaps do you have?

3. Newham Case Background

Both the assailants (in the two unconnected incidents) are male looked after children to Newham (referred to as Zed and Peter). Involved in the sexual abuse of other children in their residential care homes.

The allegation against Peter involved a female child and was responded to promptly under child protection procedures.

The allegation against Zed involved a male child who had made earlier allegations against Zed along with other children in the home. Some of the previous enquiries were held as professionals' meetings and did not robustly follow child protection procedures.

The boys were both aged 17 years at the time of the incidents. Both boys have additional health and learning needs and the complexity of their needs means that they are highly vulnerable. They have been charged by the Police and are facing criminal trials.

4. What is the learning?

1. The level of skill and knowledge in the children's workforce regarding the recognition and response to harmful sexual behaviour needs to increase.
2. The Placement of young people with complex needs in residential settings.
3. The placements and risk management arrangements.
4. Strategy meetings to address allegations of child on child abuse.
5. Updating Risk Assessments after new incidents.
6. The use of AIM Assessments (Assessment, Intervention and Moving On) to assess young people who have committed a sexual assault or harmful sexual behaviour, in Newham
7. Strengthening the scrutiny role of the IRO (Independent Reviewing Officer) and line manager oversight
- 8: Therapeutic provision.

An integrated improvement plan to respond to learning from these reviews, focusing on residential settings has been developed and at task and finish group established.

Progress will be tracked by the NSCP Child Safeguarding Practice Review group.