



TASPB

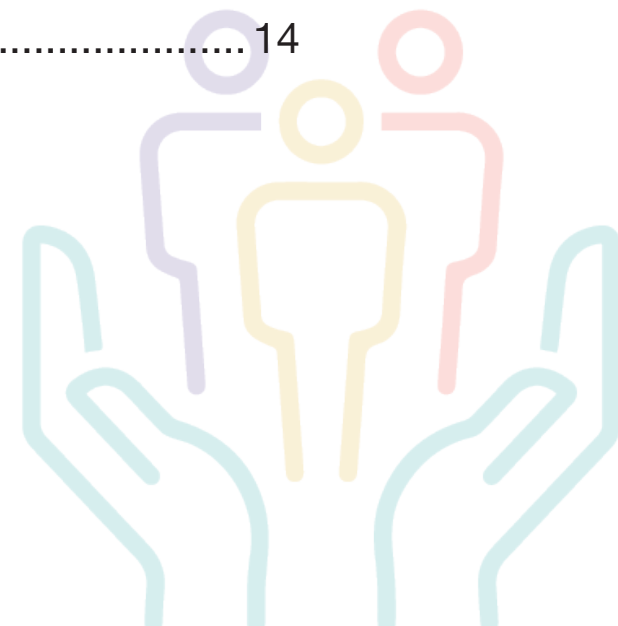
**Tameside Adult Safeguarding
Partnership Board**



Safeguarding Continuity...
working across services and systems

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Defining Transitional Safeguarding	4
3. Why Transitional Safeguarding Matters	5
4. Overarching Practice Principles	6
5. Applying Transitional Safeguarding Across Safeguarding Partnership	10
6. Preparing for Adulthood: A Distinct Transitional Safeguarding Context	12
7. Practice Expectations	13
8. Conclusion	14



1. Introduction

Transitions are a defining and continuous feature of people's lives. In adult social care and across partner agencies, individuals will experience a wide range of transitions, including:

- Moving between hospital, home and care settings
- Changes in accommodation, such as supported living, residential care or independent housing
- Changes in care provision, providers or levels of support
- Shifts in health, mental health or substance use needs
- Changes in relationships, carers or personal circumstances
- The transition from childhood to adulthood

While transitions can represent opportunity, recovery and progression, they also represent points of disruption, uncertainty and increased vulnerability.

Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) [Anne Safeguarding-Adult-Review-Anne](#) published January 2024 highlights that transitions are not neutral or purely administrative processes. Instead, they are critical periods during which risks can intensify, communication can fail, and individuals may become less visible to services.

This guidance sets out an approach to Transitional Safeguarding which recognises transitions as central to safeguarding practice. It establishes expectations for how agencies work together to ensure that people remain safe, visible and supported throughout periods of change.



2. Defining Transitional Safeguarding

Transitional safeguarding can be understood as:

An approach to safeguarding that recognises transition as a dynamic and ongoing process, ensuring continuity of protection, care and professional responsibility across changes in services, settings, relationships and life stages.

National guidance describes transitional safeguarding as an approach that works fluidly across developmental stages, drawing on both children's and adults' safeguarding systems and focusing on a person's needs rather than rigid age or service boundaries.

It is important to emphasise that:

- Transition is a journey rather than a single event
- Needs and risks do not change simply because a service or setting changes
- Safeguarding responsibilities do not end or transfer automatically at transition points

While often associated with young people moving into adulthood, transitional safeguarding applies equally to all adults experiencing change, including older adults, people with disabilities, and those with complex or fluctuating needs.

3. Why Transitional Safeguarding Matters

Evidence consistently shows that transitions are points where individuals may “fall through gaps” between services due to differing systems, thresholds and responsibilities

SAR Anne reinforces this, illustrating how:

- Discontinuity between services can lead to fragmented understanding of risk
- Information is not always effectively shared or retained
- Changes in service provision are not always accompanied by reassessment of safeguarding risk
- Opportunities for early intervention are missed when transitions are treated as operational rather than safeguarding processes

Transitions can therefore lead to:

- Reduced professional oversight
- Loss of trusted relationships
- Increased exposure to exploitation, neglect or abuse
- Uncertainty around responsibility and accountability

Understanding transitions as significant safeguarding checkpoints ensures that practice is proactive rather than reactive, and that risk is anticipated rather than discovered after harm occurs.



4. Overarching Practice Principles

A Transitional Safeguarding approach requires a consistent set of principles applied across all transitions.

4.1 Seeing the Person, Not the Service

The individual must remain at the centre of all planning. Their history, relationships, risks and strengths should follow them across transitions, rather than being lost between services.

Person-centred care is fundamental, with individuals treated as equal partners in decision-making and supported to exercise choice wherever possible.

4.2 Continuity of Relationships, Understanding Trauma and Professional Curiosity

Relationships are central to effective safeguarding. SAR Anne highlights how fractured relationships and lack of curiosity can contribute to missed opportunities to identify risk.

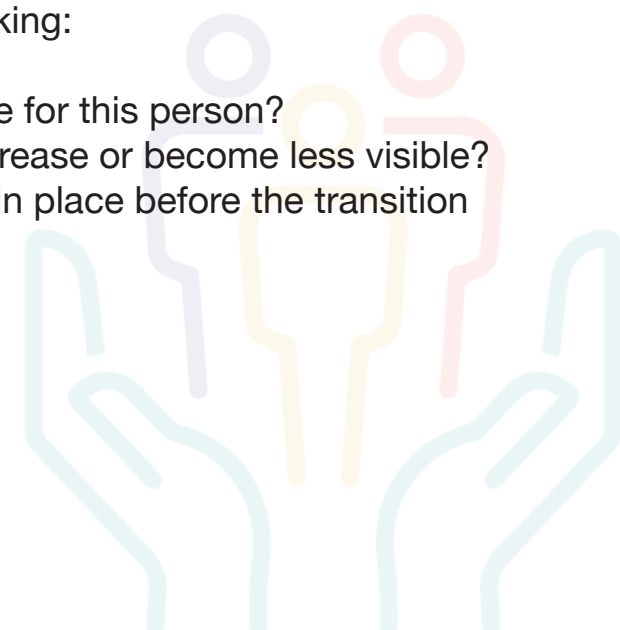
Transitions should therefore:

- Preserve trusted relationships where possible
- Recognise trauma and an approach that preserves physical and psychological safety avoiding retraumatisation
- Include warm, relational handovers rather than procedural transfers
- Encourage ongoing professional curiosity about how risk may present differently in new contexts

4.3 Early Planning and Anticipation of Risk

Transitions should be anticipated and planned well in advance, rather than managed at the point of crisis. This includes explicitly asking:

- What might change for this person?
- How might risk increase or become less visible?
- What needs to be in place before the transition occurs?



4.4 Shared Responsibility and Multi-Agency Ownership

A key learning from SAR Anne is that safeguarding responsibility must not become fragmented.

Transitions require:

- Clear understanding of roles and responsibilities
- Joint ownership of risk until safe transfer is confirmed
- Effective coordination between agencies

Safeguarding does not “sit” with one service and should not be transferred without assurance.

4.5 Communication and Information Sharing

Effective safeguarding depends on timely, accurate and meaningful information sharing.

Across transitions:

- Critical safeguarding information must be clearly communicated
- Records must reflect risks, history and protective factors
- Receiving services must have sufficient understanding to respond effectively

Failures in communication are a recurring theme in safeguarding reviews, including SAR Anne. In adult safeguarding, no single practitioner or organisation holds the full picture. To protect adults at risk, we rely on sharing information to build a complete understanding of what is happening.



4.6 Understanding Risk in Context

Safeguarding must take account of the environments in which people live and interact.

Risks may arise from:

- Care settings
- Familial relationships
- Peer relationships
- Community environments
- Housing arrangements

Family dynamics, including dependency, coercion or abusive relationships, can increase a person's vulnerabilities and should be considered when assessing risk.

A change in context (for example, moving to a new setting, changes in family circumstances, or alterations in support networks) may significantly alter risk.

4.7 Developmentally Informed and Rights-Based Practice

Transitions relate not only to services but to development and identity.

Practice must consider:

- Mental capacity and autonomy
- Executive function
- Emotional and cognitive development
- The balance between choice, control and protection

This is particularly relevant for young adults, where development continues beyond age 18.



4.8 Equity, Inclusion and Visibility

Transitions can disproportionately affect those who are already marginalised.

A Transitional Safeguarding approach ensures that individuals:

- Do not lose access to support due to thresholds or eligibility
- Remain visible to services
- Receive equitable and appropriate responses



5. Applying Transitional Safeguarding Across Safeguarding Partnership

Transitional Safeguarding applies across a wide range of adults in many different scenarios. The following are illustrative rather than exhaustive.

5.1 Hospital to Community or Care Settings

Hospital discharge represents a major transition from intensive oversight to community-based support. Best practice includes:

- Early discharge planning
- Involvement of the individual and carers
- Clear communication across services
- Ensuring support is in place before discharge

People should experience coordinated and safe transitions, with clarity about next steps and responsibilities.

5.2 Accommodation and Placement Changes

Moves between home, supported living, residential care or independent accommodation can significantly alter risk.

Practice should consider:

- Suitability of the environment and co-residents
- Exposure to exploitation or neglect
- Continuity of safeguarding plans

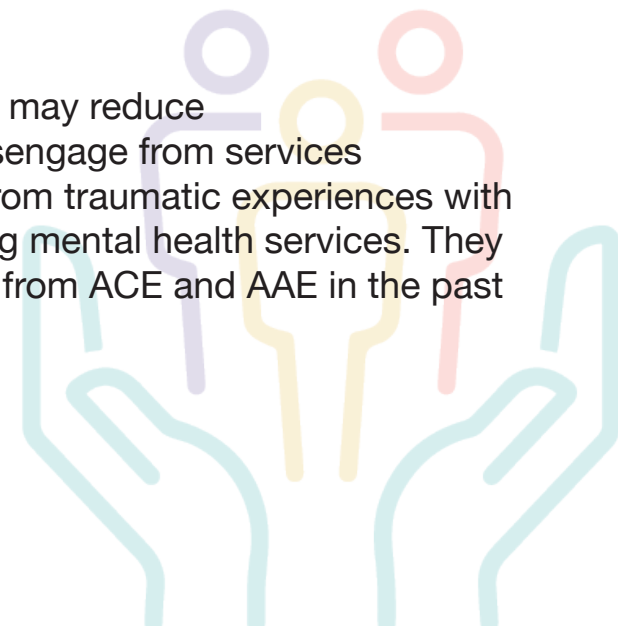
These transitions often involve loss of familiar routines and relationships, increasing vulnerability.

5.3 Mental Health and Service Pathway Changes

Transitions within mental health services may include discharge, step-down or disengagement.

These are periods where:

- Risk can escalate
- Support structures may reduce
- Individuals may disengage from services
- Adults can suffer from traumatic experiences with unwell or navigating mental health services. They may have suffered from ACE and AAE in the past



Safeguarding requires active monitoring and coordination across services.

5.4 Substance Misuse and Recovery

Periods of engagement, relapse or recovery represent transitions in risk.

Individuals may:

- Experience instability
- Become more vulnerable to exploitation
- Lose or gain support networks

5.5 Criminal Justice Transitions

Release from custody or changes in supervision arrangements can create significant safeguarding risks.

These include:

- Housing instability
- Reduced structure
- Increased exposure to harm

5.6 Domestic Abuse and Relationship Changes

Transitions in relationships may increase risk, particularly where coercion or control is present.

Changes such as separation or moving accommodation can trigger escalation of harm.

5.7 Ageing, Frailty and Increasing Dependency

As individuals' needs increase, transitions into higher levels of care may occur.

These bring changes in:

- Control and autonomy
- Care arrangements
- Exposure to institutional risks

5.8 Loss or Change of Carer

Breakdown in caring arrangements can create immediate vulnerability and require urgent safeguarding attention.



6. Preparing for Adulthood: A Distinct Transitional Safeguarding Context

The transition from childhood to adulthood is one of the most significant life stages and requires particular attention.

6.1 Understanding the Transition

Research highlights that development continues into the mid-twenties and that risk may increase as young people gain independence.

However, services are often divided at age 18, which can create a “cliff edge” in support.

6.2 Key Risks

Young people may:

- Lose trusted professional relationships
- Experience reduced oversight and support
- Face new forms of harm, particularly outside the family

6.3 Practice Approach

Effective preparation for adulthood should:

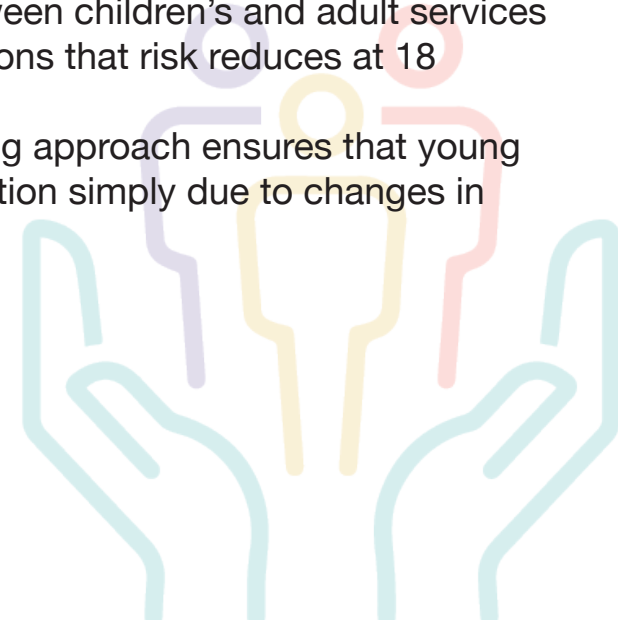
- Begin early and be planned and coordinated
- Be person-centred and aspirational
- Include safeguarding as a core component
- Ensure continuity between children’s and adult services

6.4 Learning from SARs

Safeguarding Adult reviews reinforce the importance of:

- Early identification of ongoing risk before transition
- Joint working between children’s and adult services
- Avoiding assumptions that risk reduces at 18

A Transitional Safeguarding approach ensures that young people do not lose protection simply due to changes in service structures.



7. Practice Expectations

All practitioners should:

- Recognise transitions as potential safeguarding risks
- Ensure safeguarding is explicitly considered in all transition planning
- Maintain professional curiosity
- Share information effectively
- Escalate concerns where continuity is not assured

Leaders and partnerships should:

- Align systems across agencies
- Monitor outcomes at transition points



8. Conclusion

Transitional Safeguarding reframes how we understand safeguarding across adult social care. Rather than viewing transitions as administrative processes, they must be recognised as checkpoints of potential vulnerability requiring active, coordinated safeguarding responses.

SAR Anne provides a clear reminder that when transitions are not effectively managed:

- Risks can be overlooked
- Responsibility can become unclear
- Individuals can become less visible to services

By embedding Transitional Safeguarding, agencies can ensure that:

- Safeguarding is continuous, not episodic
- Responsibility is shared, not transferred
- People remain visible, understood and protected



