



# Safer Options Approach

A whole system response to  
reducing exploitation and  
serious violence



# Agenda

- ◇ What is Safer Options?
- ◇ What is the evidence base for the Safer Options approach?
- ◇ How do I fit into this work?
- ◇ Safer Options partnership – ROUTES Hospital Pathways
- ◇ Safer Options partnership – Education Inclusion Managers
- ◇ Safer Options partnership – Community Mentoring
- ◇ What does 2021 hold for Safer Options?

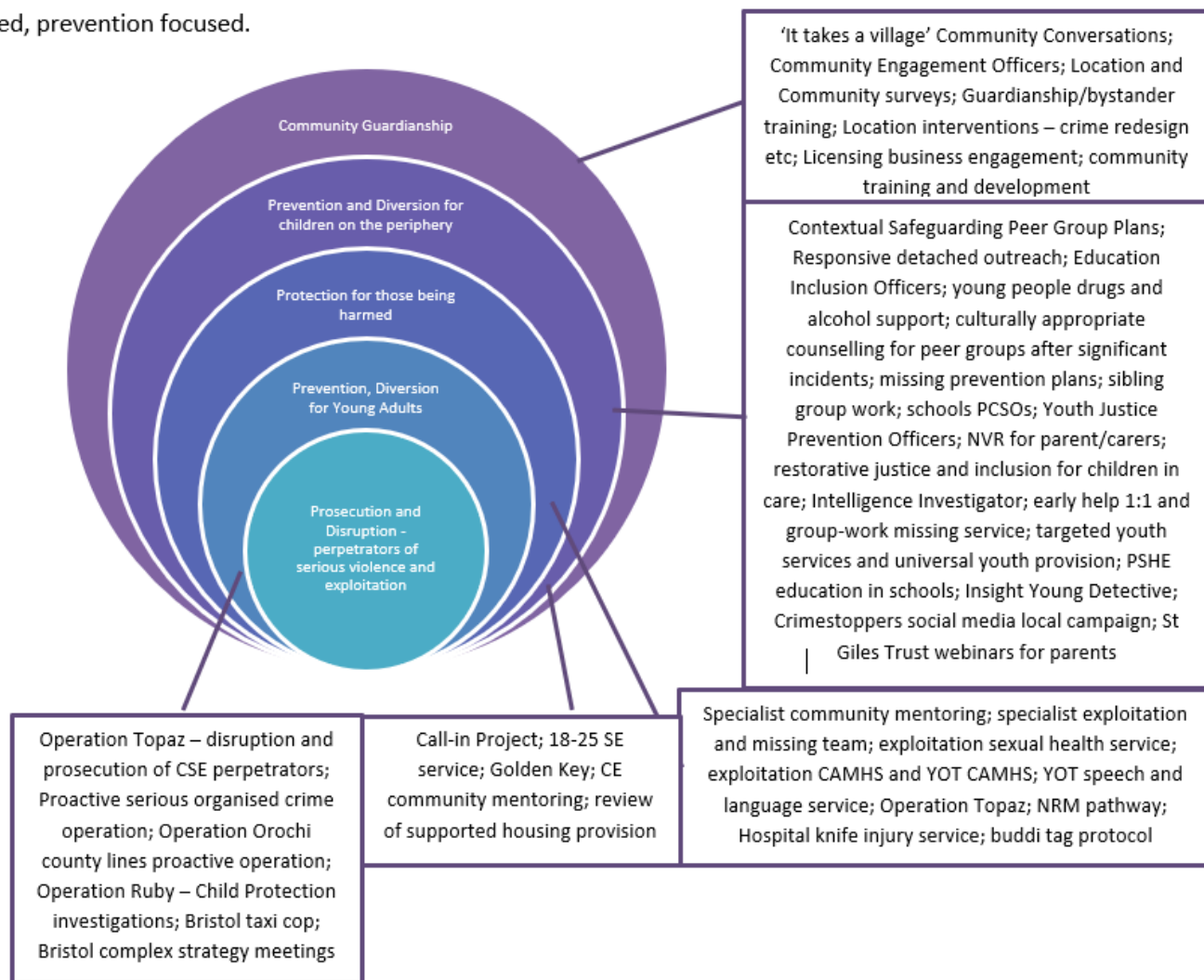
# What is Safer Options?



- ❖ Safer Options is the name we gave to a coordinated whole system response to prevent serious violence and exploitation. It is every intervention and change made intentionally by communities, professionals and organisations to contribute to reducing serious violence and exploitation. Safer Options is designed to consider what changes can we make which is most likely to reduce and prevent serious violence in the city sustainably.
- ❖ The Safer Options Hub is the name we gave to the team of specialist practitioners whose job it is to support change across the partnership system.
- ❖ Safer Options Meetings are the weekly multi-agency meetings which happen in each of the three localities to coordinate our resources to reduce exploitation and serious violence. This meeting should focus on places, peer groups and prevention not planning for individual children (this is a work in progress!)
- ❖ You cannot 'refer to' Safer Options, but there may be resources linked to Safer Options that can be accessed to enhance a plan for a group or individual

## ▲ **Safer Options (Violence Reduction Unit)**

Whole system response to CCE, CSE, Missing, Serious Violence and Knife Crime Concerns; intelligence led, evidence informed, prevention focused.



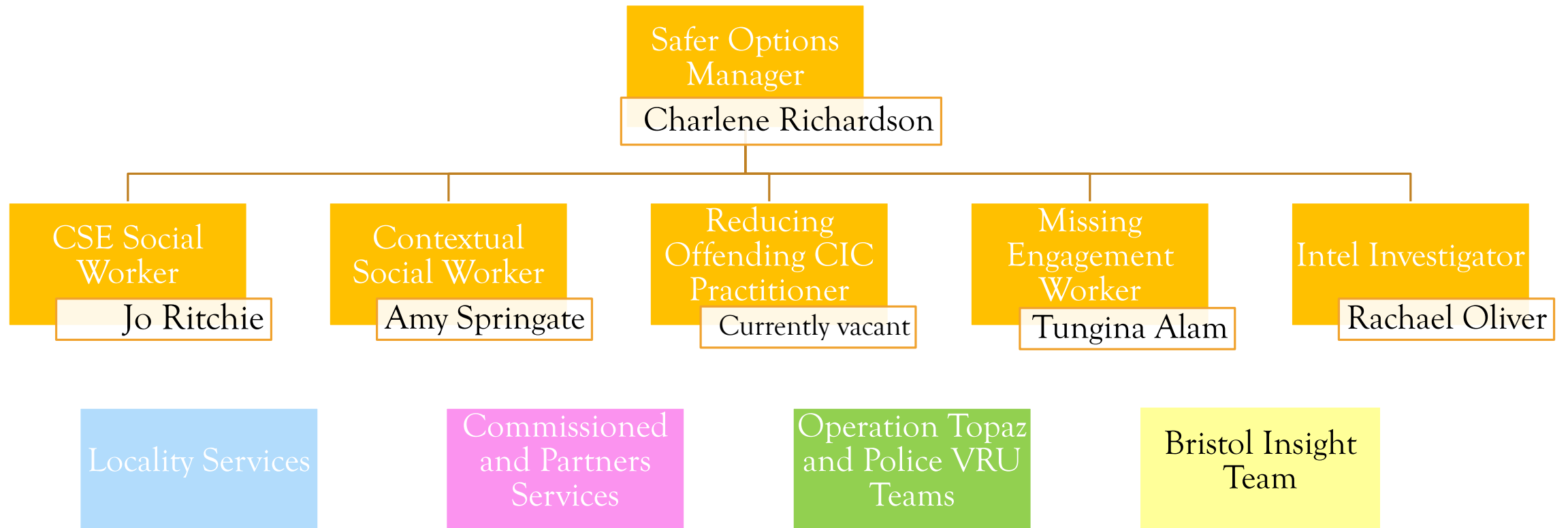


# What's the History of Safer Options?



- Launched in 2018 as a community-led response in East Central to increasing serious violence and child criminal exploitation involving young people
- Scaled up to a citywide response in 2019 after funding from the Home Office and introduction of an Avon and Somerset-wide Violence Reduction Unit
- Integrated with our CSE and Missing response in 2020

# Who are the Safer Options Hub







# Safer Options Hub Key Deliverables

- ◇ Coordinate the multi-agency partnership response to ensure we deliver the Strategic Plan
- ◇ Working with localities and grass-root organisations to build community solutions and safe community guardianship
- ◇ Work with intel team, VRU officers and Op Topaz to identification of children at risk of CSE, CCE and peer-on-peer abuse and emerging concerns through intelligence, disclosures and data trends
- ◇ Peer network mapping and intelligence products to support identification and response to organised and complex abuse
- ◇ Support organisations to bid for funding to bring new resource into the city
- ◇ Undertake contextual safeguarding neighbourhood and peer assessments and specialist interventions in partnership with the locality teams
- ◇ Workforce development
- ◇ Brokerage lead for VCSE trusted relationships, CSE/CCE, Missing and preventative services
- ◇ Placement stability: foster carer, children's homes and supported accommodation consultation and support and innovation
- ◇ Missing prevention interventions for children in care and oversight for all missing children
- ◇ Develop creative and innovative solutions to prevent exploitation and serious violence
- ◇ Identify cross-border/cross-locality groups and ensure clarity of accountability and response

# Key Principles



- ❖ **Safeguarding is everyone's business:** It will take all of us, committed to making change over a sustained period to have an impact. This is not the work of a small team but a whole system.
- ❖ **Children lives are not lived in silos:** They are exposed to multiple changing harm in their communities, peer groups and homes. How children are harmed fluctuates. We need an agile system ready to respond.
- ❖ **Retaining focus on early intervention and prevention whilst managing the highest risk:** We need to balance the risk management through our child protection system, protecting children currently being harmed, with supporting our communities to build sustainable preventative solutions so that other children are protected from harm in the future.



# National Child Safeguarding Review Findings

## **Support for community-led and public health solutions:**

‘...the response to children who are at risk of significant harm and exploitation from within their communities must be formulated in the light of that wider context. It cannot be solved by focusing on the family unit alone. Work to develop effective ways of working at a community level should continue and we should recognise that this may challenge the current approach from local agencies and require a deeper look at the skills required in multi-disciplinary teams.’ (National CSPR ‘It was hard to escape’)

## **Expectation of statutory social care leadership:**

‘Our view is that the lead agency co-ordinating support for families and children and managing the nature and level of risk should be children’s social care. They should do this within a clear multi-disciplinary framework locally which sets out accountability and roles and responsibilities. Above all, local agencies need to be clear on the skills and knowledge needed to make effective interventions with children and families and the community.’ (National Panel CSPR ‘It was hard to escape’)



# The Safer Options Practice Framework



# Safer Options Framework

## Individual Safeguarding

Ensure safeguarding and prevention for individual children is high quality within existing statutory and early help frameworks. **Recognition through to Response.**

## Tackle the Causes

Develop Public health responses which tackle the underlying causes and gets the maximum benefit for the largest number of people. **Community-led solutions; Education Inclusion; Perpetrator Disruption.**

## Coordinate Responses to Hotspots

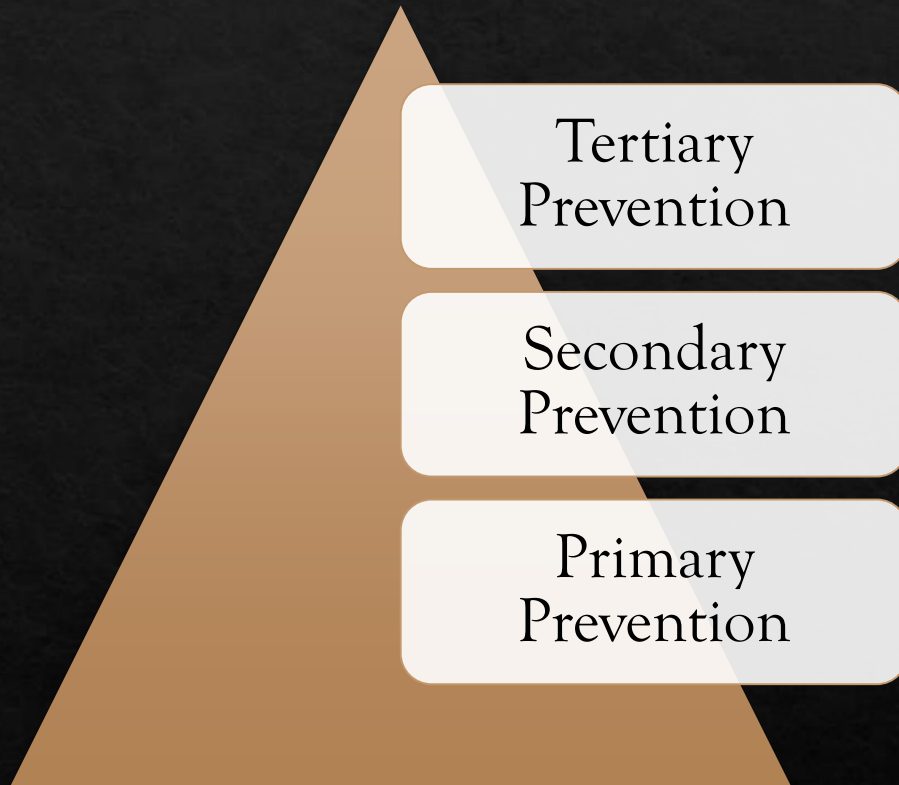
Use Contextual Safeguarding to have a child-welfare and assessment led, multi-agency problem solving response to places and groups of concern. **Clear lead professional; Brings in new partners; Builds sustainable change**

# Public Health Approach

- ◆ A public health approach reframes the issue as one where the focus is on promoting wellbeing and tackling underlying causes, rather than on legal and penal responses.
- ◆ The emphasis in traditional public health is to get the maximum benefit for the largest number of people.
- ◆ The emphasis is on prevention, on 'upstream' interventions that are aimed at the causes of the problem, not at its treatment
- ◆ A whole system-wide approach is needed, including action by all parties and stakeholders (such as, in the case of alcohol, industry, primary care, education, and a wide range of government departments)
- ◆ There is an emphasis on collective responsibility for health and a major role for the state (not just individual responsibility)
- ◆ There is an emphasis on working in partnership with the population being served. Public health is undertaken with and for communities
- ◆ There is a focus on tackling underlying inequalities as a major cause of health inequalities
- ◆ Interventions are data driven. Understanding the characteristics and needs of the population are key, and actions should be evidence-based



# Public Health Response



Eg Support to children leaving custody; YOT; ROUTES; relocation; Hospital pathway

Eg Reducing school exclusions and use of ALP; specialist community support; parenting groups; knife reduction programmes

Eg PSHE lessons; help with alcohol/drug misuse; support with primary to secondary transitions; community development

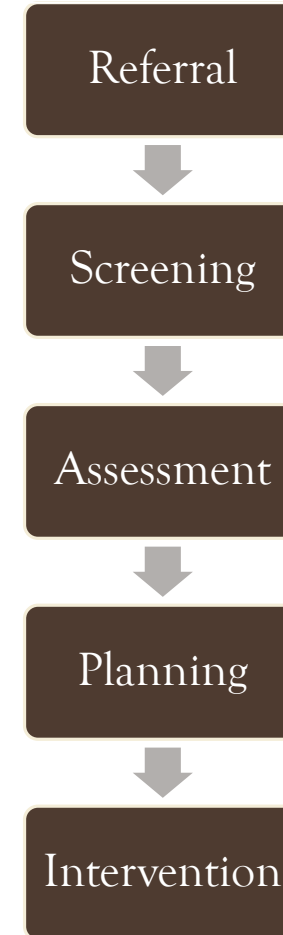
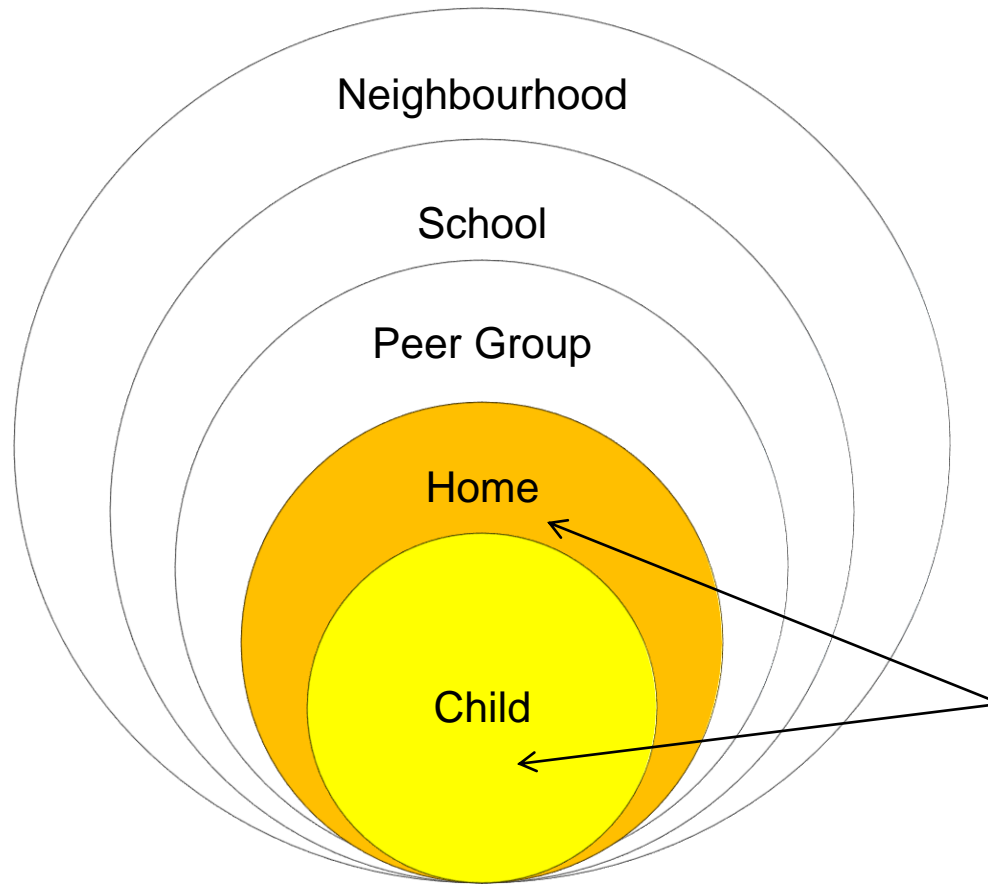
# Definition of Contextual Safeguarding (Firmin, 2017)

Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to *understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families.*

It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their *neighbourhoods, schools and online* can feature violence and abuse.

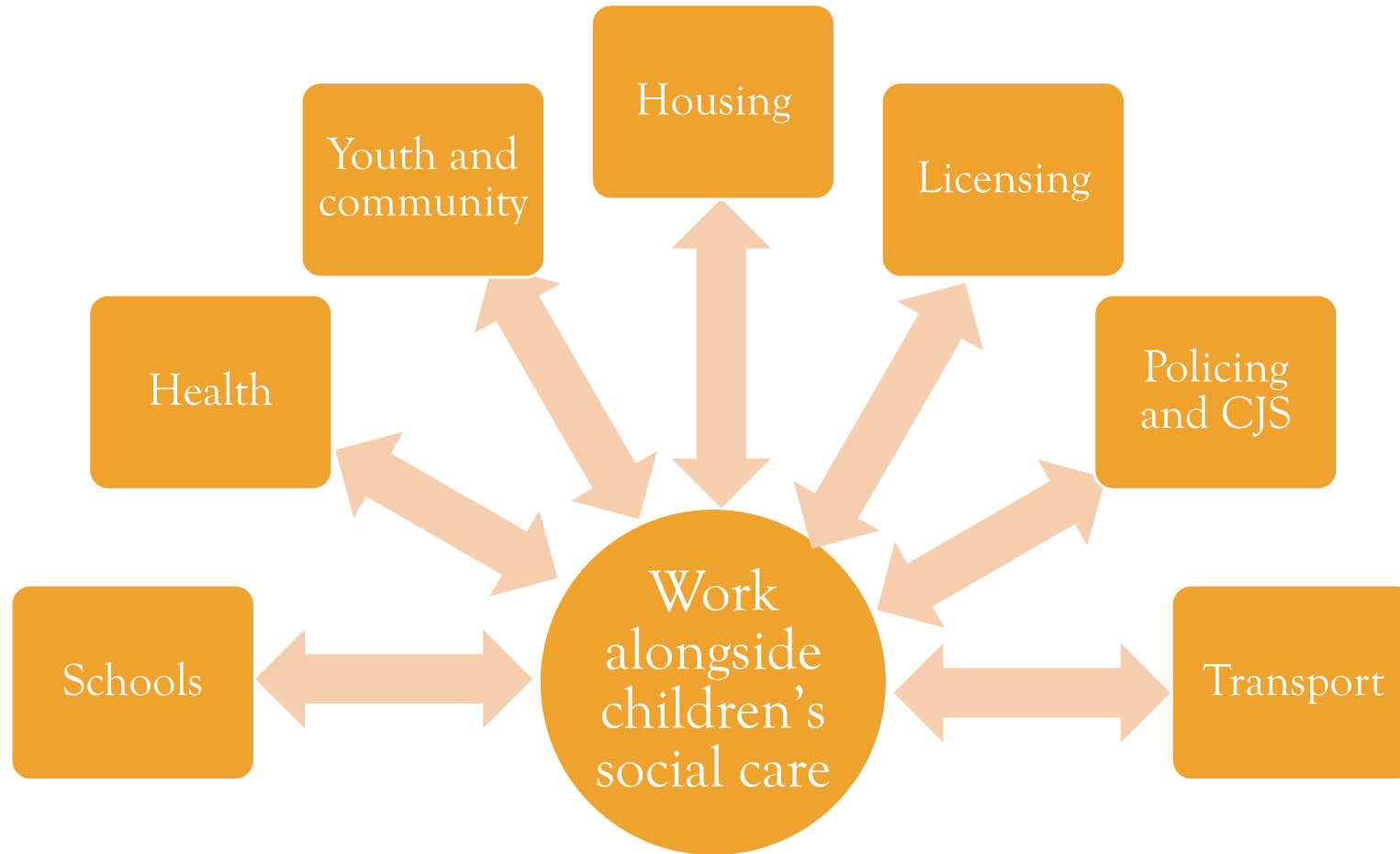
Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of *extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships.*

# Traditional reach of child protection

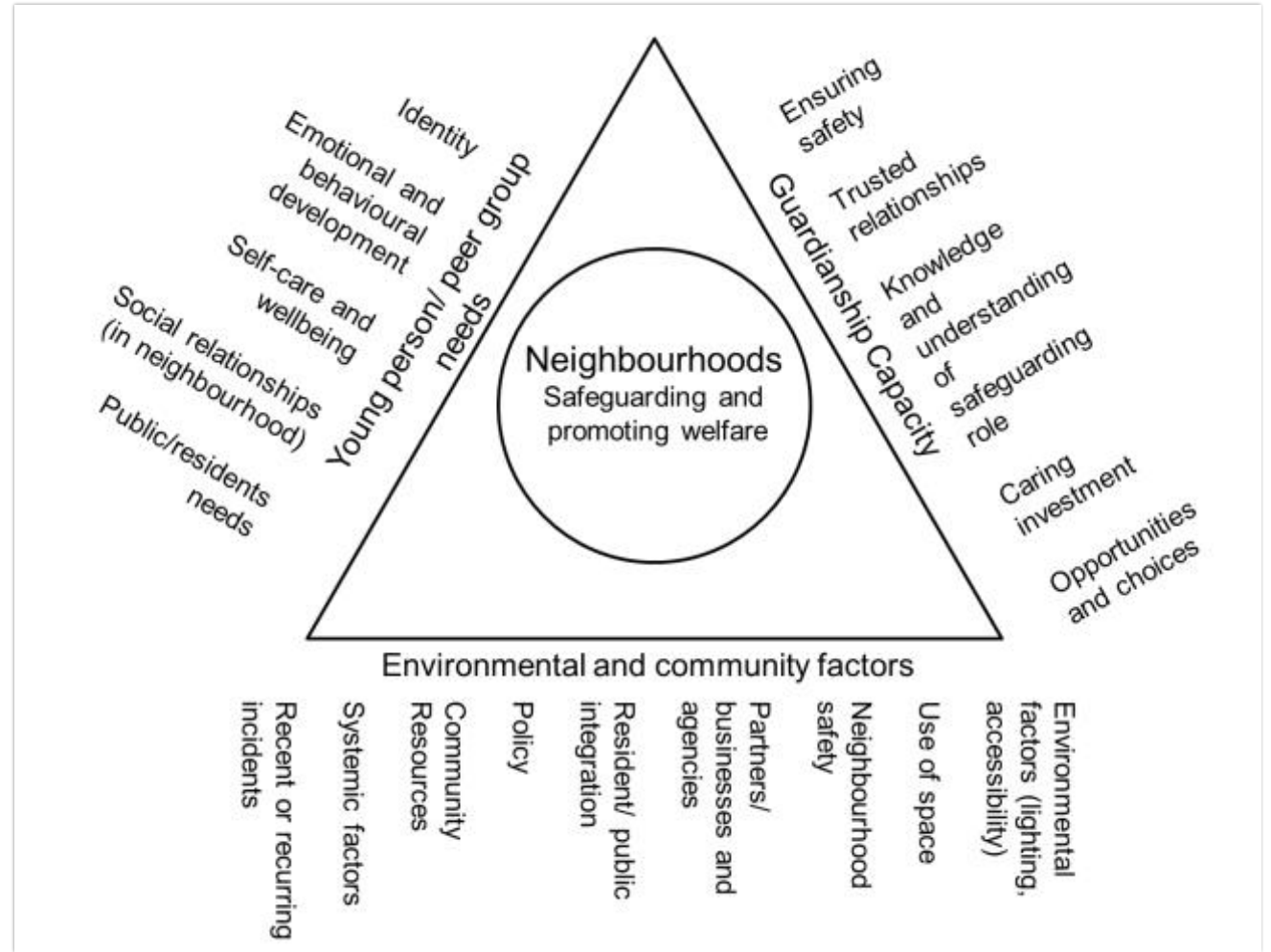




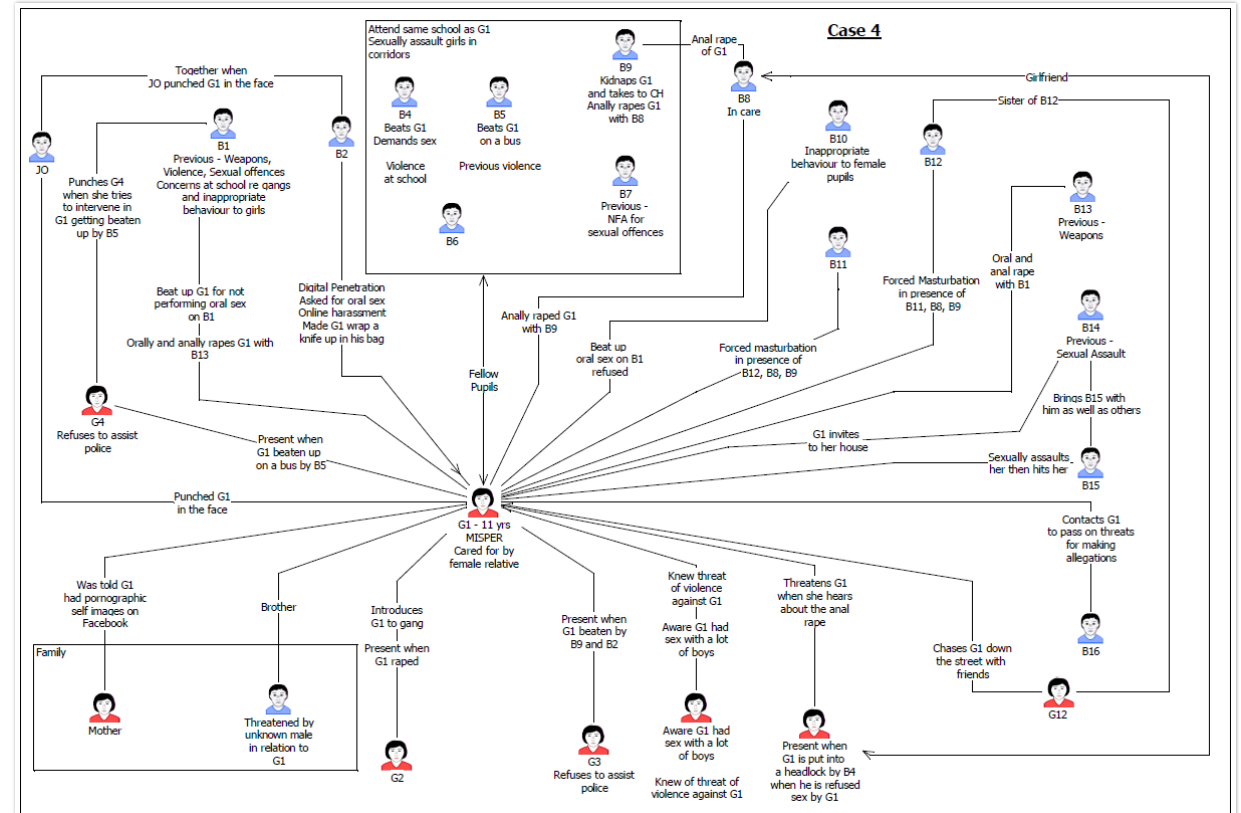
To: 'Everyone's business' = creating safe spaces



## Considering Places/ Spaces/ Neighbourhoods within assessment(s)



# Mapping and assessing peer relationships





# Safer Options Projects and Innovations

- New Pathways
- Neighbourhood Assessments
- Community Mentoring
- Targeted Group work
- Multi-Agency Detached Youth Work
- Training & Awareness
- Parent Support Groups

# Sinitta Watkins – ROUTES Service



# Education Inclusion Managers

Aim: *‘To secure the best educational outcomes for Bristol’s most vulnerable children’*

Early Intervention & Safer Communities

Ross Moody (North)  
Calum Paton (East Central)  
Ingrid Hooper (South)

*“Having an Education Inclusion Manager has been a massive step forward in our attempts to navigate the education systems and advocate effectively on behalf of the children we work with, many of whom have previously been lost in the system between providers.”*

Alex Campbell, Deputy Service Manager, East-Central CYPS



# Role and Responsibilities

- ◆ Offer advice and signposting to Bristol education providers and childrens services
- ◆ Undertake Weapons in Schools assessment, allocate intervention and support
- ◆ Develop policy and working practices in partnership with external agencies
- ◆ Support any vulnerable young person through the Bristol Inclusion Panel process
- ◆ Advocate for CCE/SYV cohort at BCC and multi-agency meetings
- ◆ Provide training to schools and safeguarding around CCE, CSE and SYV

# Weapons in Schools Pathway

In the event that a child is found in possession of a weapon on a school site, Education Inclusion Managers support settings by making an initial assessment of the incident, allocating support to the child and advocating on their behalf to maintain their school place.

In the event that a young person cannot remain in their original setting, EIMs advocate on their behalf to ensure that they receive optimal outcomes at BIP as well as supporting their transition.

EIMs are integral to YOT Out of Court Disposal decision-making in the event of a weapon in school incident.

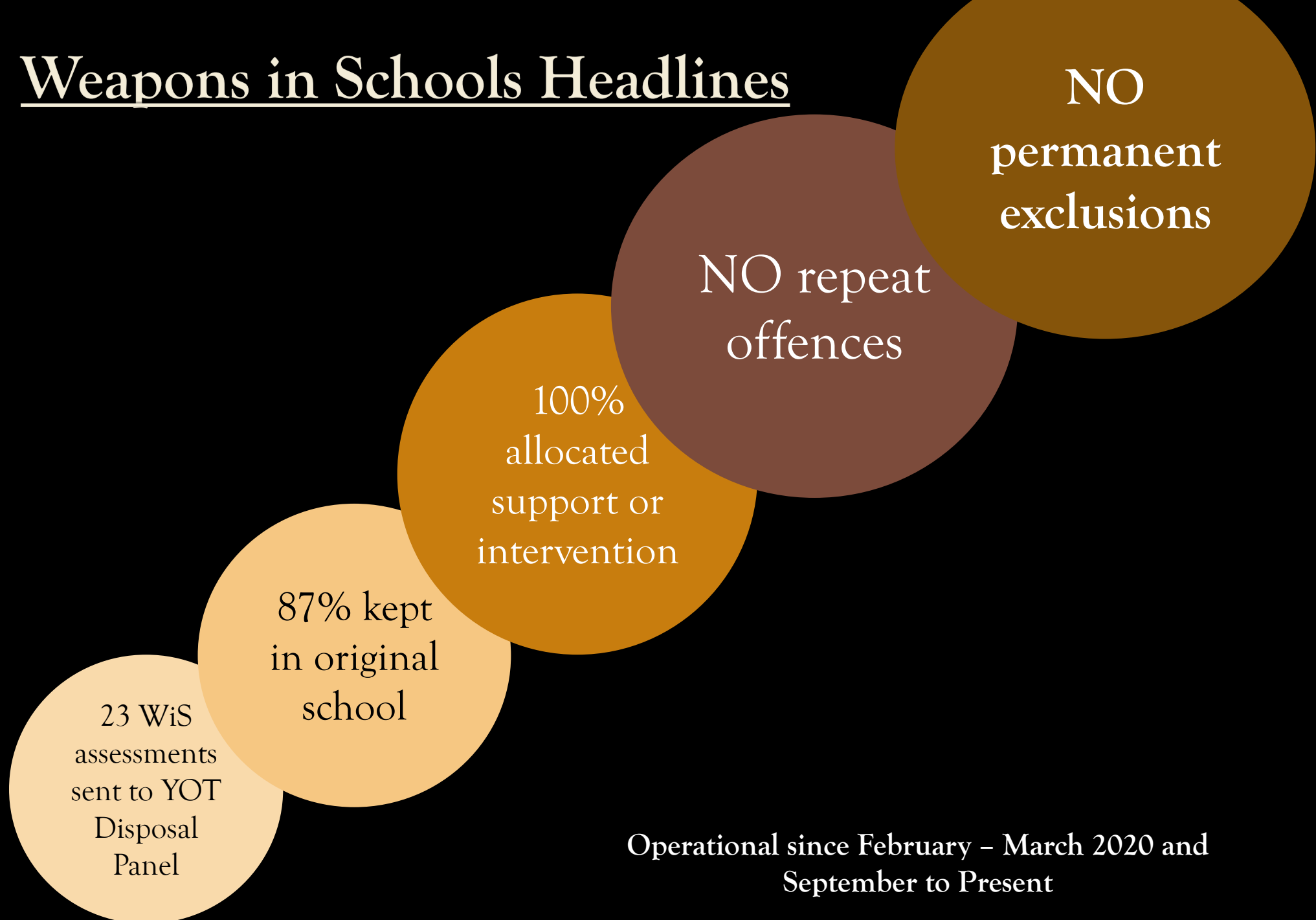
*“It has been made clearer, with contact and intervention via Ingrid, how Ashton Park School should deal with any weapons brought into school.”*

**Mike Mantegna:** Assistant Head Teacher, Ashton Park School

*“If and when such incidents occur we take a pragmatic approach that has the best possible outcome for the student as well as the school.”*

**Dan Goater:** Assistant Head Teacher, Bedminster Down and The LAMP Alternative Learning Hub

# Weapons in Schools Headlines





# Impact in Schools

A robust package of support and intervention offered to every educational setting where a Bristol child is on roll

Each EIM is embedded within their locality, with strong relationships established with all secondary, post-16 and ALP providers (48 settings)

In consultation with schools, EIMs have identified and developed CCE / SYV training and resources, tailored to their community's needs\*

*“Up until the appointment of the Education Inclusion Manager communication and understanding of contextual safeguarding issues in the community was not very good. Since Ross has come into post for the North there has been a much-improved response to school concerns regarding community behaviours. He is very proactive trying to get the right support for families and school.”*

Dorian Coxon: Deputy Head Teacher, Orchard School

\*14 Sessions of direct delivery to 7 settings + 44 (of 48) supported sessions of CCE / SYV training

# Horn Youth Concern

## Community Mentoring

- We have mentored over 20 young people.
- Prevented them from involving drug and crime activities.
- Helped them make positive contribution to local communities, and to society.
- Addressed school exclusion.
- Empowered them go back to education.

## Detached Youth Work

- Tackled grooming of young people.
- Addressed anti-social behaviour through sports and personal developmental workshops.
- Helped local communities reduce fear of crime.

## Employment opportunity and a role modelling programme for the youth

- Improved employability skills of young people.
- Provided opportunities to empower them gain interpersonal, social and professional skills.
- Helped them create CVs.
- Created links between professionals, business people and young people to foster positive relations and promote role modelling.

# How can you be involved?

- ◆ Attend training on CCE and CSE – improve your skills at recognising and responding to exploitation
- ◆ Review the accessibility of your service for children experiencing serious violence, CCE and CSE
- ◆ Share intelligence through the police portal <https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/forms/vul>
- ◆ Share good ideas or projects you'd like to work with us on at [Safer.Options@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:Safer.Options@bristol.gov.uk)

# What's Next For Safer Options in 2021

