



IMPROVEMENT EAST



Eastern Region ADASS and ADCS Transitions Conference

11th February 2026

10:30 – 15:00

AGENDA			
	Time	Item	Lead
Arrival and Refreshments 9.30 -10:00			
1	10:00	Introduction to the day	Emma Mortimer, Principal Social Worker, Central Bedfordshire
2	10:05	Welcome & Open	Jo Fisher, Director of Childrens Services in Hertfordshire
3	10:15	Keynote Speaker: Transitional Safeguarding	Dez Holmes, Strategic Director Practice & Programmes, National Childrens Bureau
11:20 – 11:40 Break			
4	11:40	Regional Transitions Work – from July 2025	Julie Thompson, ADASS East, Jo Hough, Inclusion East,
5	12:00	Learning from Lived Experience: Care Leavers Video and workshop	Emma Mortimer, Principal Social Worker, Central Bedfordshire
13:00 – 14:00 Lunch and Networking			
6	14:00	Sharing Workshop	Julie Thompson, ADASS East
7	14:45	Thank you and Event close	Rob Persey, Director of Adult Services
15:00 Close			



Opening



Jo Fisher,

**Executive Director for Children Services,
Hertfordshire & Chair of the National
ADCS Regional Improvement &
Inspection Policy Network**



Welcome to the first joint ADASS and ADCS Conference focused on Transitions

Transitions are a priority area for ADASS and ADCS, as well as for the adults and children and families Principal Social Workers networks in the Eastern Region.



Transitions

- Transition should give continuity of support as a young person moves into adulthood
- Governed by the **Care Act 2014** and **Children and Families Act 2014**.
- NICE guideline Published in 2016 'Transition from children's to adults' services for young people using health or social care services'
- **Ofsted's PfA Thematic Review Report Dec 2024 stated:**

'We have been talking about Preparing for Adulthood (and transition) for decades now, but it seems to continue to be a challenge for young people and their families and for those trying to support them'. Recommendations included:

- Strengthen national guidance to support young people as they move their support from children's services to adult services, building on what we know works and guidance we already have.
- Better partnerships across statutory organisations. The Department for Education, Department of Health and Social Care, Department for Work and Pensions, NHS England and housing and community should work together in a more strategic and forward planning way to make the best use of the limited resources available and to avoid duplication and repetition.



Navigating Transitions Together

- Co-production enhances support for young people in transitions.
- Engaging families ensures continuity and understanding of needs.
- Shared decision-making promotes effective service delivery.
- Collaboration between stakeholders is essential for successful transitions.
- Feedback loops help refine the transition process continuously.



Boundary Spanning Leadership in Transitions

- Boundary spanning leadership fosters collaboration among diverse stakeholders.
- It encourages communication across different sectors and services.
- Promoting shared goals enhances support for young people's transitions.
- Effective practice navigates organisational boundaries to improve outcomes.
- Building trust is essential for successful partnerships.



Transitions Matter

Transitions come at a critical life stage for young people with care needs.

Good Transitions promote independence and ensure continuity of support.

Poor transitions can lead to gaps in care and poorer outcomes.

In the Eastern Region we recognise we have some areas of great practice

BUT there is recognition that there is still a lot to be done

And today is an integral part of our joint regional improvement journey



Keynote – Transitional Safeguarding



Dez Holmes,

Strategic Director Practice & Programmes, National Childrens Bureau

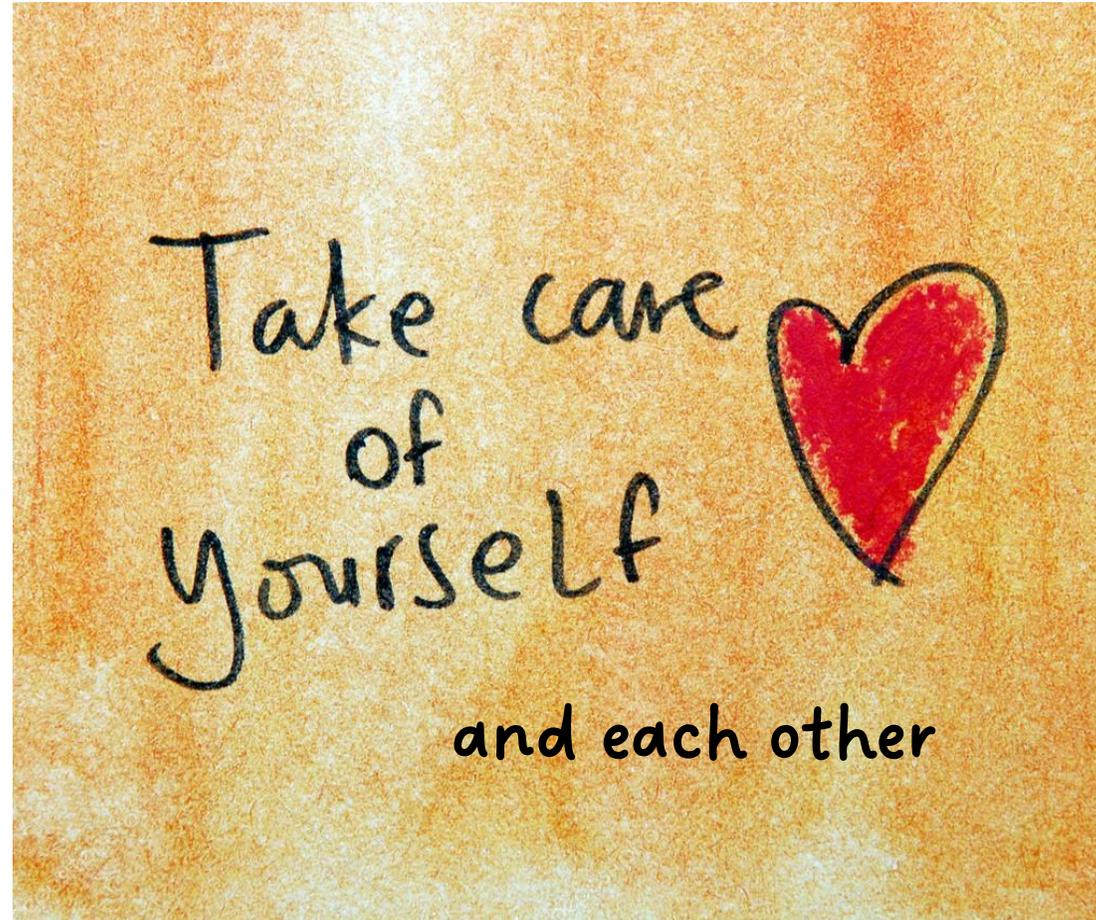


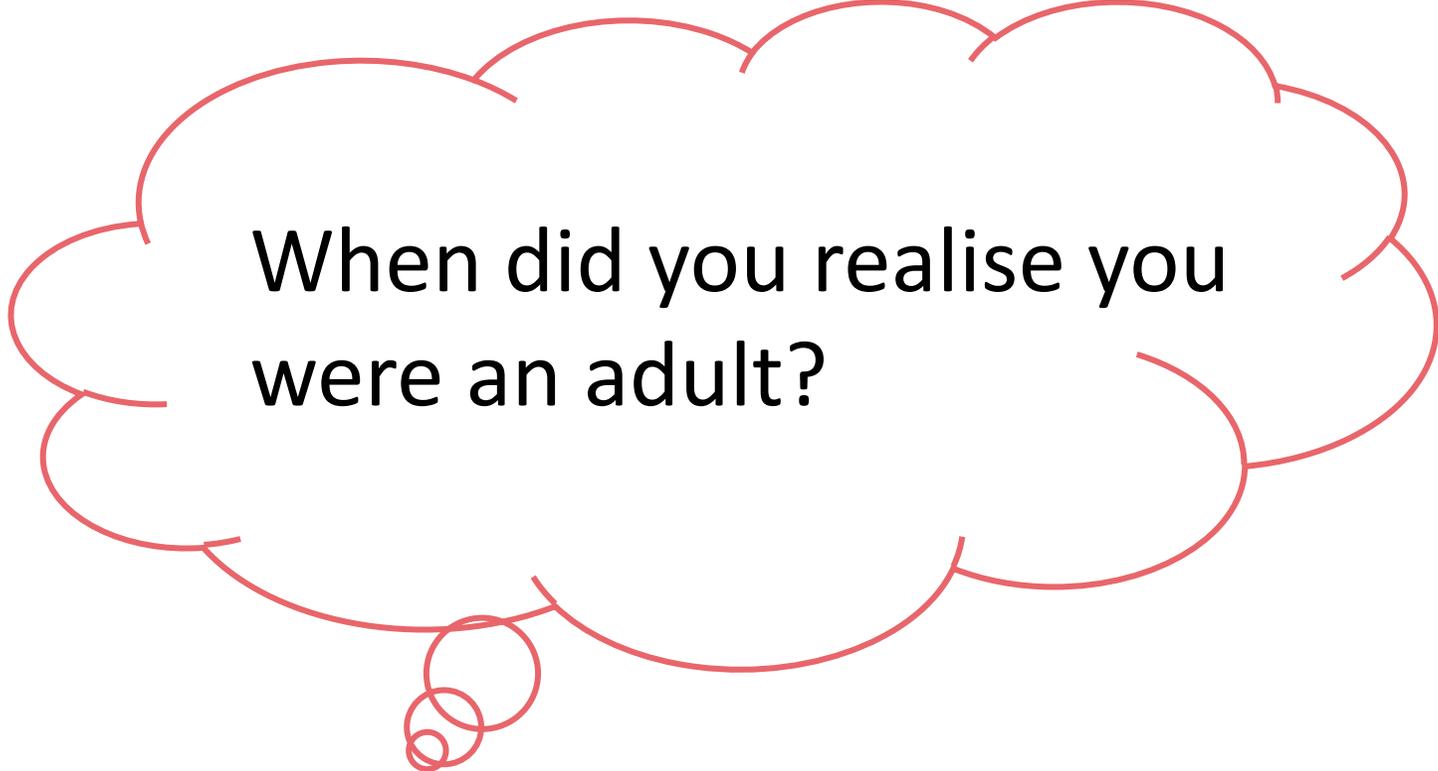
Transitional Safeguarding



Dez Holmes

Director, Research in Practice





When did you realise you
were an adult?



The traditional binary approach to safeguarding has not served young people well. Safeguarding systems for those aged under 18 and over 18 operate to different thresholds, legislative frameworks and eligibility criteria.

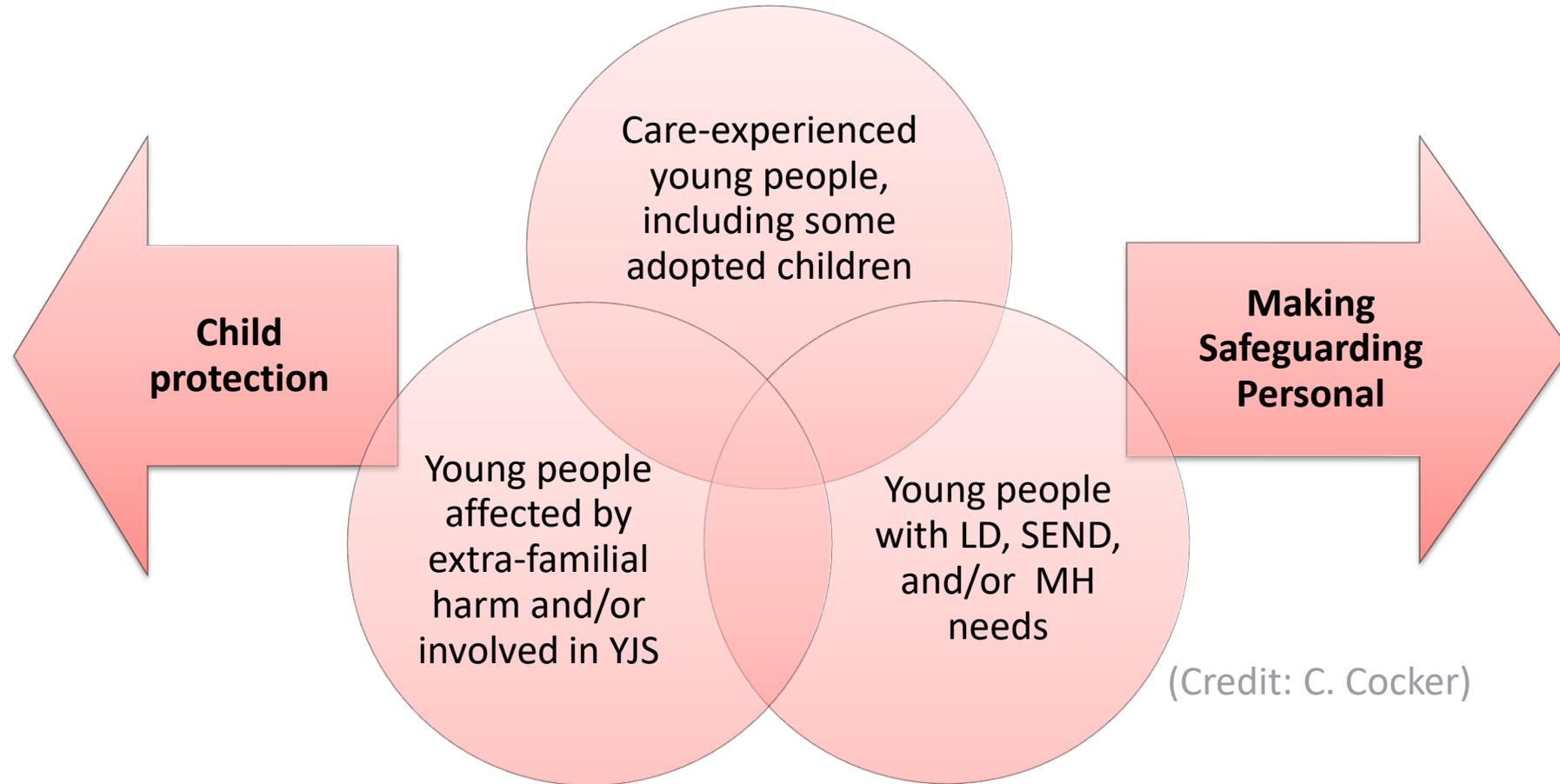
This can mean that many young people face a 'cliff edge' as they approach age 18 and risk being left without support during this critical life-stage. (Winterbottom et al, 2023)

“J is a young person ensnared in an exploitative relationship and engaged in criminal activity as part of this. Upon turning 18, overnight, they will cease to be defined as a victim of child abuse and may instead be viewed as an adult with capacity to make such choices. Their circumstances and vulnerability are entirely unchanged by their birthday, but they are suddenly, no longer ‘everybody’s business’.

The potential impacts of exploitation and trauma – such as mental ill-health and substance misuse – might escalate far enough to constitute ‘care and support needs’ which in turn may mean J is deemed eligible for safeguarding support as an adult. But they will likely experience much more harm and pain first, and may receive a criminal justice response before their safeguarding needs are recognised.

Should J become a parent, it is very possible that children’s safeguarding services might intervene, but this will likely be centred on the safeguarding risks facing their child.”

(Holmes & Smith, 2022)



'young people' / 'youth' as 'persons between the ages of 15 and 24'
(United Nations, 2007)

Transitional Safeguarding means...

‘safeguarding adolescents and young adults fluidly across developmental stages which builds on the best available evidence, learns from both children’s and adult safeguarding practice and which prepares young people for their adult lives’

(Holmes & Smale, 2018)

- › Transitional Safeguarding is a concept for **whole-system** change, underpinned by six key principles. (Holmes, 2018; 2022).
- › ‘early help for grown-ups’
- › ‘young people’

What Transitional Safeguarding is not

- › Transitional Safeguarding is not a set of defined activities. It does not seek to dictate practice through the use of prescribed tools, definitions of harm or methods of working.
- › Transitional Safeguarding is not simply ‘transitions’ or ‘service transfer’
- › Transitional Safeguarding is not an intervention, nor a service.
- › Transitional Safeguarding is not a type of harm
- › *Transitional Safeguarding refers to activity that has often fallen outside of the traditional notions of both ‘transitions’ and ‘safeguarding’, where these have sometimes been interpreted through a lens of eligibility, rather than in the wider sense of human experiences and needs.*

(Department of Health and Social Care, 2021, p.10)

Why Transitional Safeguarding?

- › The current binary approach bears significant **human and economic costs**
- › Harm, trauma and development **don't stop at 18**
- › **Beyond statutory duties** – holistic, flexible, person-centred
- › We need a system not a service... drawing on the rich expertise across the multi-agency partnership and communities - **whole place whole person**
- › Because **binaries reinforce binaries**: childhood Vs adulthood; victim Vs perpetrator; vulnerable Vs culpable
- › **Safeguarding is a verb, not a noun**

I was in care all my life and you did keep me really safe. You wrapped me up tight in bubble wrap... but I'm 19 now and I kind of feel like I can't move my arms.

(Max, care-experienced young adult)

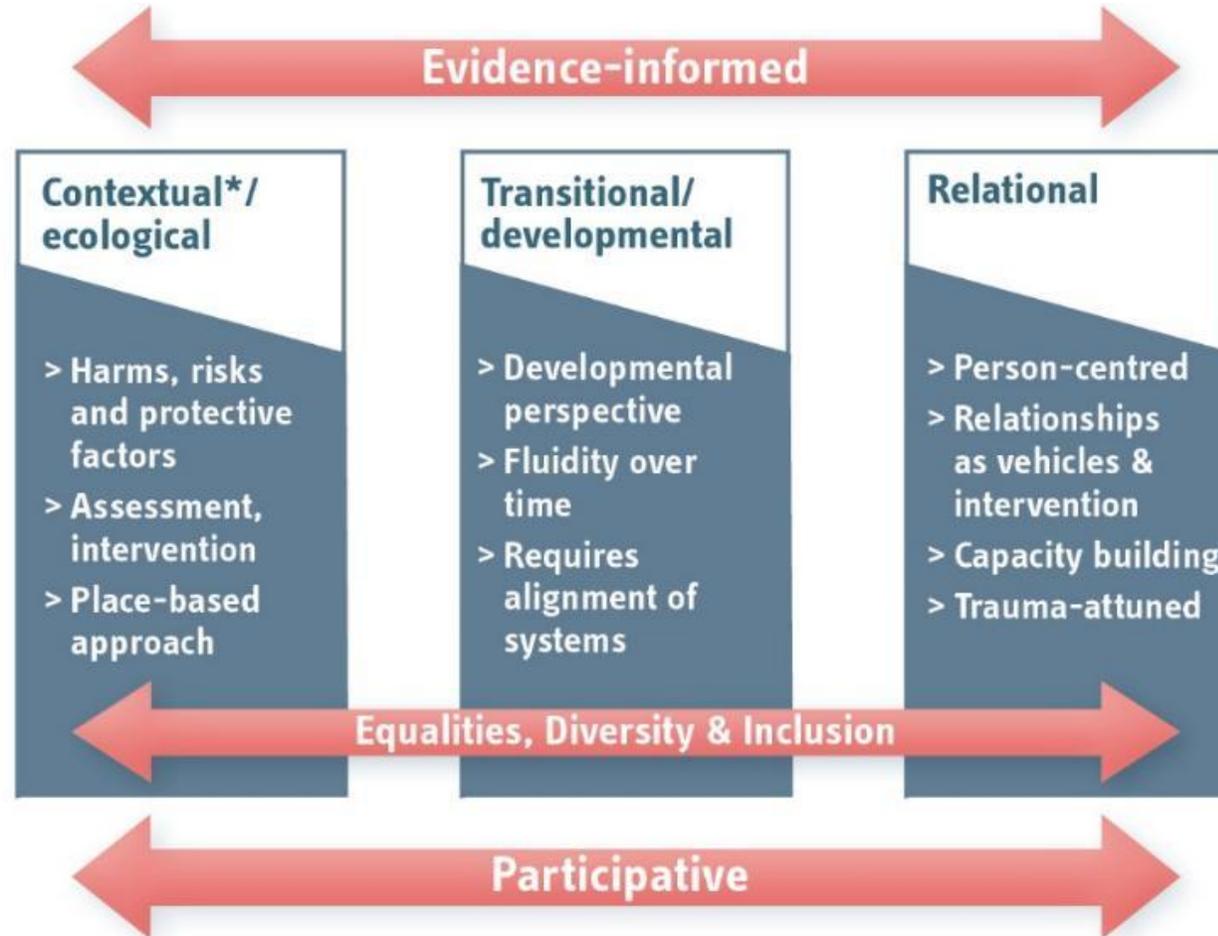
Now I've left care I get really lonely. That's a big thing for my safety I think, but no one talks about it as safeguarding. Unless you're worried about my child, I won't hear from you [children's services] again.

(Aisha, care-experienced young adult)

I couldn't wait to get to 18, I thought that once I was an adult everything would change. It hasn't worked out that way. I really wish I was a kid again so that you could lock me up.

(Kelly, young adult)

Key (non-negotiable) principles



See Firmin's work:
www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk

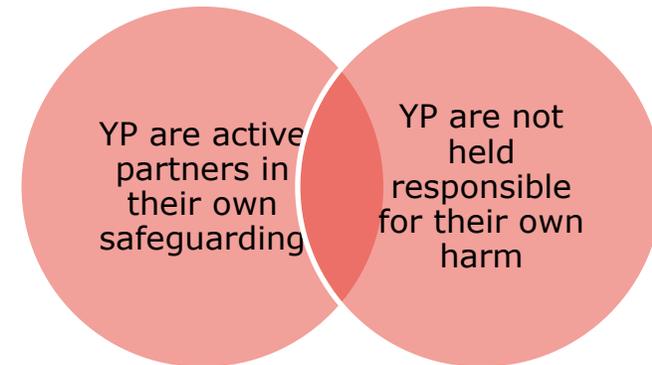
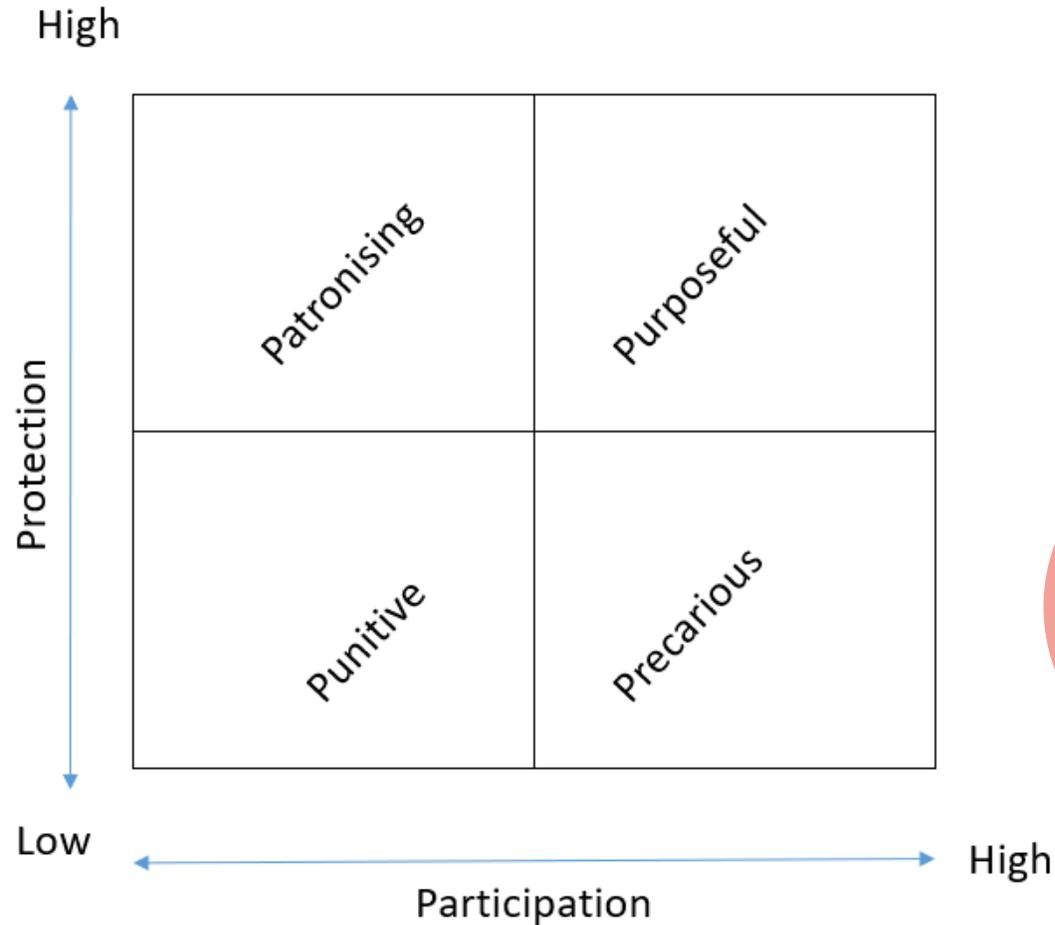
Care Act 2014 and Transitional Safeguarding

(DHSC, 2021)

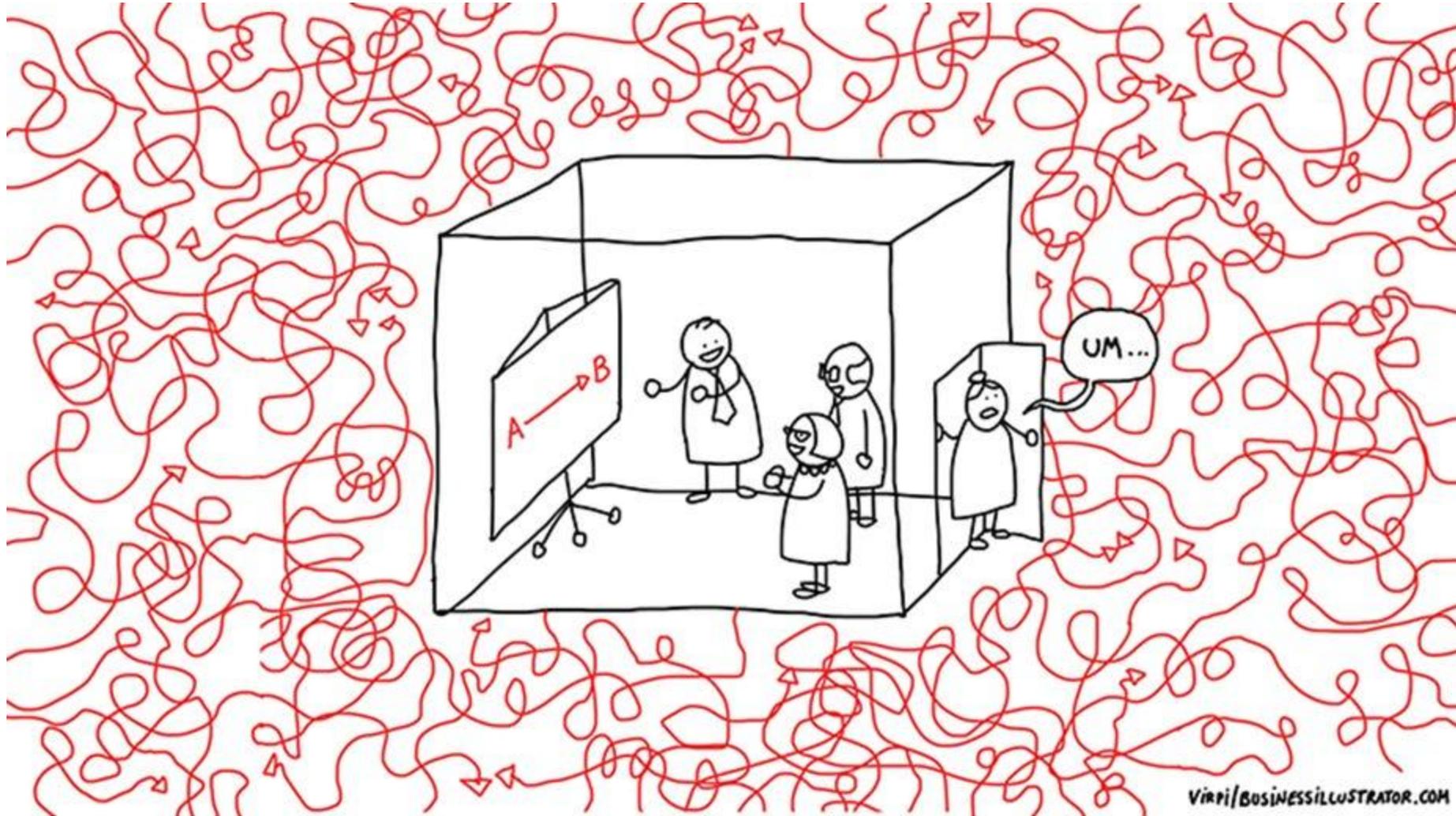
- **Prevention principle** emphasises importance of preventing or delaying or reducing the need for care and support and can be applied to young people whose experiences mean they may need support to live safely.
- The **wellbeing principle** applies equally to those who do not have eligible care and support needs but come into contact with the system in some other way. Resonates with the need for an accessible offer of support for young people making the transition to adulthood.
- Requires that decisions take account of the individual's circumstances, rather than a person's age, appearance, condition or behaviour. Important in ensuring **proportionate and least intrusive responses**, AND in ensuring that needs and vulnerabilities are recognised.
- A focus on eligibility at the expense of prevention?

Balancing protection and participation

(Holmes, in Cocker et al, 2024)



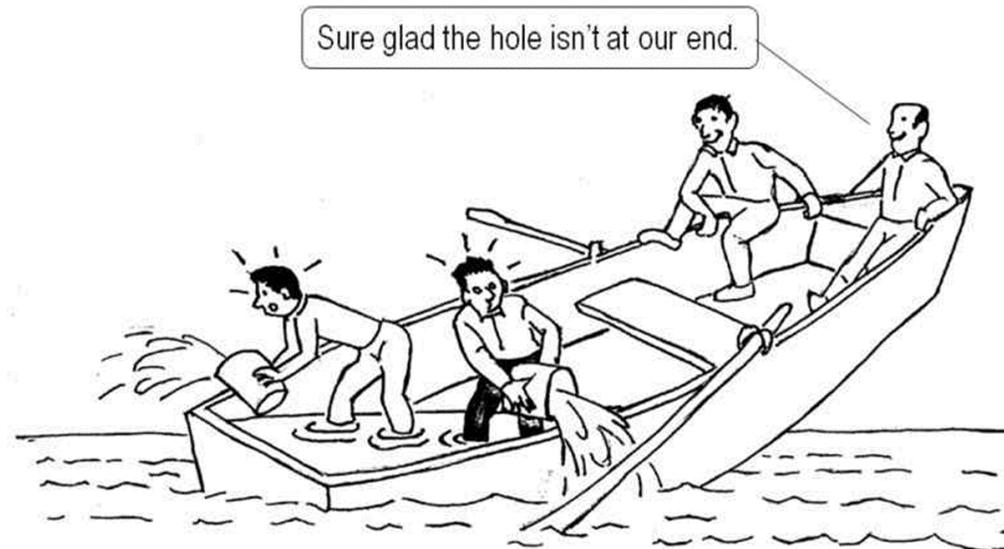
research in practice



Linear approaches to problem solving are not an effective approach to ‘wicked’ issues...

*systems leadership is characterised by [some] key attributes: it is a **collective** form of leadership, ... ‘leadership as **participation**’ rather than ‘leadership as performance’, and although it is individuals and not systems that produce change, systems leadership by definition is the concerted effort of many people working together at different places in the system and at different levels, rather than of single leaders acting unilaterally.... Systems leadership **crosses boundaries**, both physical and virtual, existing simultaneously in multiple dimensions. It therefore extends individual leaders well beyond the usual limits of their formal responsibilities and authority. (Ghate et al, 2013)*

- > Boundary-spanning - reaching across borders, margins, or sections to build relationships, interconnections and interdependencies in order to manage complex problems. (Williams, 2002; 2011)
- > It's not the same as traditional service management...
- > 'think like a system - act like an entrepreneur' (Conway et al, 2017)



What's helping local areas make the change

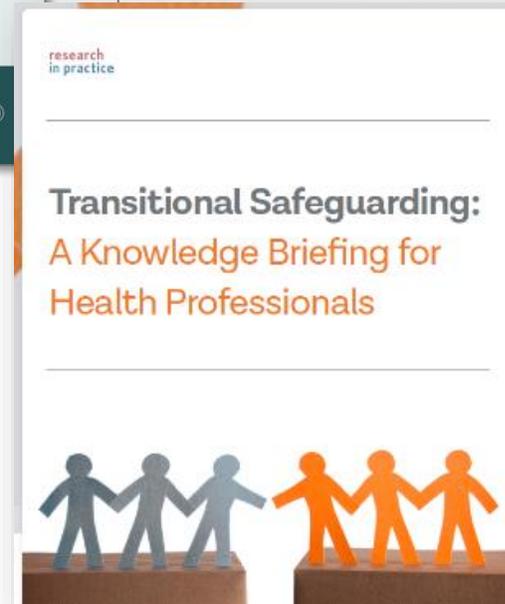
- > Clear, credible, explicitly owned local leadership of the agenda
- > Expansive definition of 'partnership' – inc communities
- > 'A system not a service' - A salad not a soup
- > Active knowledge and skills exchange (Cocker et al, 2021)
- > Culture of innovation ('the soft stuff is the hard stuff')
- > Practice informed strategy
- > Collective, place-based problem solving (rather than problem displacement)
- > Building the local case – data, inc people's lived experience

- > Deliberative learning from parts of the wider system where transitional approaches are more embedded
- > ‘Drawing down’ best practice from safeguarding adults: rights-based approaches, MSP, wellbeing focus...**Making Safeguarding Personal for young people?** (Cocker et al, 2021)
- > Considering how Contextual Safeguarding and other innovations might inform safeguarding of young adults
- > Design an offer, not a service
- > Start small, start somewhere...



research
in practice





- Transitional Safeguarding (2018) original briefing:
<https://www.researchinpractice.org.uk/all/publications/2018/august/transitional-safeguarding-adolescence-to-adulthood-strategic-briefing-2018/>
- Updated briefing for leaders (2025) [Transitional Safeguarding briefing for sector leaders: Strategic Briefing \(2025\) | Research in Practice](#)
- A short animation explaining what Transitional Safeguarding is and why we need it:
<https://vimeo.com/794130649>
- The role of adult social work & adult safeguarding to the Transitional Safeguarding agenda (2021):
https://www.researchinpractice.org.uk/media/5420/67346_dhsc_trans-safe-report_bridging-the-gap_web.pdf
- Transitional Safeguarding and justice: <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2022/03/Academic-Insights-Holmes-and-Smith-RM.pdf>
- [Transitional Safeguarding in youth justice and probation services: A scoping study](#) (HMIP, 2025)
- The relationship between Contextual Safeguarding, Complex Safeguarding and Transitional Safeguarding (2019):
<https://www.researchinpractice.org.uk/children/publications/2019/january/safeguarding-during-adolescence-the-relationship-between-contextual-safeguarding-complex-safeguarding-and-transitional-safeguarding-2019/>
- <https://www2.local.gov.uk/our-support/partners-care-and-health/safeguarding-resources/transitional-safeguarding-resources>

Enjoy your Break



Please come back by 11:40am



Regional Transitions Work – from July 2025



Julie Thompson,

ADASS East



Jo Hough,

Inclusion East



Preparing for Adulthood Summary of Work

First ADASS and ADCS Joint Transitions Event for Leaders – July 2025

- Opened by DCS Dheeraj Chibber, Luton Borough Council and Closed by DASS Kate Walker, Bedford Borough Council. Speakers from Impower, Bedford Borough Council and Parent Carers.

Recommendations supported by regional DASS and DCS

- Transitional Safeguarding Conference
- Regional Protocol for Preparation for Adulthood and Transitions
- Learning and Development Offer for Transitional Safeguarding

Working arrangements

- Oversight Group: Principal Social Workers from Adult and Childrens Services, Parent Carers, Curators of Change, Improvement East, Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS), Parent Carers Forum.
- Protocol Task & Finish Group: Parent Carers, Improvement East and ADASS

Lived Experience – Central Bedfordshire

Central
Bedfordshire



Enjoy your Lunch



Please don't forget to complete your Evaluation Form!
See you at 2pm!



Improvement East Participation Workshops for 14-25 Year Olds

Finding your voice workshop 12th March 6:00-6:45pm

Please book via this link to the ticketing website:

<https://buytickets.at/improvementeast/2063581>

Virtual escape room workshop 24th March 11am-12noon

Please book via this link to the ticketing website:

<https://buytickets.at/improvementeast/2063614>

Employment Pathways workshop 25th March 5:00-5:45pm

Please book via this link to the ticketing website:

<https://buytickets.at/improvementeast/2063600>

Making work, work for you workshop 26th March 1:00-2:00pm

Please book via this link to the ticketing website:

<https://buytickets.at/improvementeast/2063622>



Sharing Workshop



Julie Thompson,

ADASS East



Sharing Workshop - Identifying Good Practice and Potential Solutions for Improving Transitions

Using the insights from this morning's session, along with your own professional experience, work together to describe the practice you would like to see in transitions.

Instructions

- Collaborate Work - together as a group to discuss ideas and develop practical, creative solutions. Be prepared to explore challenges and work through barriers to arrive at meaningful proposals.
- Build on Insights - Use what was shared earlier today, as well as your own knowledge, experiences, and examples of existing good practice.
- Be Clear and Specific - Write your ideas clearly and legibly so they can be typed up afterwards. Include key details, such as the organisation, the location, the aspect of preparing for adulthood or transitions your idea relates to
- Share Existing Good Practice- please note down any examples, such as resources, approaches, or information including where they are currently in place and how they could be made more widely accessible.



Event close



Robert Persey,

**Executive Director of Adults and Health
at Thurrock Borough Council**



Thank You and Safe Travels

