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Background

When young people reach the age of 18, the laws and services that often apply to them change, even though their needs can remain the same. Transitional safeguarding acknowledges this and works towards ensuring young people continue to receive the support they need to remain safe and independent. This approach is based on a person's stage of development rather than their age, blending elements of both child and adult safeguarding to support young people to safely transition from childhood into adulthood.



**Diogelu Gwent
Gwent Safeguarding**

7 Minute Briefing: Transitional Safeguarding, An Introduction



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What's needed?

Typically, safeguarding in Children's Services treats transition as a fixed boundary at 18, where childhood ends abruptly and assumptions about choice and capacity shift immediately.

Safeguarding needs an adolescent-focused approach that recognises adolescence and early adulthood as distinct, addressing unique risks, behaviours and developmental needs.

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Suggestions for further reading/ resources ...

[Transitional safeguarding | adolescence to adulthood | Research in Practice](#)

[transitional-safeguarding-briefing-for-sector-leaders-sb-all-web.pdf](#)

[Safeguarding during adolescence – the relationship between Contextual Safeguarding, Complex Safeguarding and Transitional Safeguarding \(2019\) | Research in Practice](#)

[Collaborative working to support Transitional Safeguarding | Research in Practice](#)

Wales Safeguarding (Adult) Procedures: Consent [Safeguarding Wales](#). Information Sharing: [The Caldicott Principles - GOV.UK](#)

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How does it fit? Children and Adult

Safeguarding children prioritises child protection, but this often fails to meet adolescents' needs as vulnerabilities can persist into adulthood. Systems and processes can leave young people at increased risk during a critical developmental stage.

Transitional safeguarding aims to address this. Transitional safeguarding does not expect that formal services will remove or lessen risk for all young adults.

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Gwent Safeguarding Boards

Gwent Safeguarding Board's transitional safeguarding journey is still in its infancy but is now moving into a second phase (2026). This will involve other areas in Gwent building on the learning from an initial pilot in Newport and beginning to operationalise transitional safeguarding within the systems, processes and local practice in other areas.

Gwent Safeguarding Boards has launched a video outlining its vision and journey so far: [Gwent Safeguarding Transitional Safeguarding](#)

Currently in development:

- Transitional Safeguarding Board
- Gwent Multi Agency Protocol
- Evaluation Research Project Proposal

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Consent and Capacity

Gaining consent is key to enabling engagement in any safeguarding process. The Mental Capacity Act 2005 applies from age 16.

However, safeguarding concerns can be shared without consent (under GDPR/ Data Protection Act) in certain circumstances - for example, if seeking consent could increase risk, the young person appears under the influence of someone/ something (substances), they are assessed as lacking capacity.

Understanding consent/capacity involves balancing autonomy and people's rights, with protection and managing risk.

Wales Safeguarding Procedures [Safeguarding Wales](#) sets out when consent is appropriate or can be overridden.

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Which services can support this?

Transitional safeguarding can be supported by services addressing exploitation, housing, substance misuse, life skills, healthy relationships, and preparation for adulthood.

"Those working with adults should be curious about the childhood of the adult they are supporting. And those working with children should be ambitious about the adult they are helping to create." (Dez Holmes, 2021)

Is this about children's safeguarding s.47 enquiries or adults safeguarding enquiry s126.?

Transitional safeguarding is about safety generally, not just formal investigations.