

## Harmful Sexual Behaviour

### What is Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)?

Sexual behaviour between children is considered harmful if the child is being coerced or threatened or if one of the children is older. When establishing if a child's sexual behaviour is harmful, we must not only take their age into account but also their physical, intellectual and emotional development.

Sexually harmful behaviours are likely to include elements of:

- Coercion
- Secrecy
- Power imbalance possibly involving significant difference in age and developmental factors
- Degradation and threats
- Compulsive behaviours
- Age inappropriate knowledge or experience
- Use of bribes, gifts and removal of inhibitors, for instance through the use of drugs or alcohol.

### Preventing harmful sexual behaviour in children and young people

Preventing harmful sexual behaviour in children and young people is an interagency safeguarding issue.

The borough of Waltham Forest has identified a professional to lead on the issue of harmful sexual behaviour amongst those under 18 years of age.

- The Borough's Harmful Sexual Behaviour Strategy (**available for logged-in users to download below**) provides a clear vision and strategic partnership objectives that promotes shared understanding, early intervention, prevention and risk management.
- There is an established referral process for Educational Placements and Services within the Borough to enable them to access support, guidance, consultation, assessments and evidence based interventions for children and young people. Schools should be aware of the AIM Education Guidance (AIM – Assessment, Intervention, Moving on) to be able to identify concerns and then to act on them. Both primary and secondary schools in Waltham Forest should use these guidelines when an incident has occurred to determine the level of concern and response needed to the behaviour. See the Work-Flow Chart for the Emergence of Harmful Sexual Behaviour (**available for logged-in users to download below**).

Please click on the links below to see:

- [Useful resources and links for professionals around harmful sexual behaviour](#)
- [Waltham Forest Council's resource for parents/carers and young people](#)

### Contact

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