



HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY

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1. Introduction to the Policy

This policy sets out the framework, principles, and procedures that **Byram House** follows to identify, respond to, and manage concerns about harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) displayed by children and young people in our care. The policy applies to all staff, agency workers, volunteers, and contractors working at Byram House, whether at 62 Deighton Road, 66 Deighton Road, or elsewhere.

The Home is Byram House, which comprises the two residences at 62 Deighton Road and 66 Deighton Road. This policy applies equally across both residences.

Sexual development is a normal part of growing up, but for a small minority of children, their sexual behaviour can become problematic or harmful to themselves or others. HSB includes a continuum of behaviours, from those considered inappropriate for a child's age to abusive and violent acts. Increasingly, this behaviour is also taking place online through social media, messaging apps, and gaming platforms.

The home has a dual responsibility: to protect children from being sexually harmed by other children (peer-on-peer sexual abuse), and to ensure that children who display HSB receive appropriate support, intervention, and safeguarding. This policy outlines how the home will meet both responsibilities in a balanced and co-ordinated way.

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Define HSB and help staff recognise it;
- Ensure that all incidents of HSB are reported and managed consistently;
- Facilitate a co-ordinated multi-agency approach to support both the victim and the child displaying the behaviour;
- Maintain the safety and welfare of all children at all times; and
- Comply with all relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including the **Sexual Offences Act 2003**, **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026**, the **Children and Families Act 2014**, and the **Online Safety Act 2023**.

2. How this Policy Benefits the Home

This HSB Policy benefits Byram House in the following ways:

- **Legal Compliance** – It ensures the home meets its duties under the **Sexual Offences Act 2003**, **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026**, the **Children’s Homes (England) Regulations 2015**, the **Online Safety Act 2023**, the **Equality Act 2010** (protection from harassment on grounds of sexual orientation and gender reassignment), and the **Human Rights Act 1998** (right to private life, freedom from inhuman or degrading treatment).
- **Child Protection** – It ensures incidents of peer-on-peer sexual abuse are treated with the same seriousness as abuse by adults, and that all children are protected from significant harm.
- **Clarity for Staff** – It provides clear definitions of HSB (including problematic sexual behaviour (PSB) and abusive HSB), as well as a continuum to help staff assess the seriousness of behaviour.
- **Professional Guidance** – It aligns with **NICE guideline NG55** on harmful sexual behaviour, which recommends that professionals use risk assessment tools such as the **Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool**.
- **Multi-Agency Framework** – It ensures that the home works with local safeguarding partners, the police, Youth Offending Service (YOS), Child and Adolescent Harmful Behaviour Services (CAHBS), education, and health.
- **Dual Focus** – It balances the needs of both the victim and the child displaying the behaviour, reflecting that children who sexually harm others often have considerable unmet needs themselves.
- **Risk Management** – It provides a clear process for risk assessment and planning, including the possible relocation of a child to ensure safety.
- **Training Framework** – It requires annual training for all staff on recognising and responding to HSB, using the Brook Tool, and co-operating with multi-agency partners.
- **Inspection Readiness** – The SCCIF 2026 expects the home to manage HSB effectively. This policy will support a positive inspection outcome.
- **Online Harms** – The Online Safety Act (fully implemented in July 2025) requires regulated services to protect children from illegal and harmful content, and the home will educate children and incorporate online risks into the HSB risk assessment.

3. Definitions & Legislation

3.1 Definitions

Term	Definition
Home	Byram House, the children's home registered with Ofsted, comprising two residences at 62 Deighton Road and 66 Deighton Road.
Company	IMS Care LTD, the registered provider and legal entity responsible for operating Byram House.
Byram House	The name used throughout this policy to refer to the home and its staff.
Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)	One or more children engaging in sexual discussions or acts that are inappropriate for their age or stage of development. HSB can be harmful to the child themselves or to others.
Problematic Sexual Behaviour (PSB)	Sexual behaviour that is developmentally inappropriate or socially unexpected, but without an overt element of victimisation or abuse.
Peer-on-Peer Sexual Abuse	A form of HSB where sexual abuse takes place between children of a similar age or stage of development.
Child-on-Child Sexual Abuse	A form of HSB that takes place between children of any age or stage of development.
Under-13	A child under the age of 13 is deemed incapable of giving consent to sexual activity under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.
Sexting (Youth Produced Sexual Imagery)	The creation and sharing of sexual images or videos by young people under the age of 18.

Upskirting	Taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks for sexual gratification, or to cause distress.
Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool	A widely used tool that identifies a range of sexual behaviours, from infancy to adulthood, and distinguishes their seriousness using a traffic light system (green, yellow, red).
Continuum of HSB	A framework (often based on the work of Hackett) that places sexual behaviours on a continuum from normal to inappropriate to problematic to abusive to violent.
Dual Protection Strategy	A safeguarding approach that ensures the protection of the alleged victim and the provision of appropriate support to the child displaying the behaviour.

3.2 Key Legislation and Statutory Guidance

Legislation / Guidance	Key Provisions	Relevance to this Policy
Sexual Offences Act 2003	Sets age of consent at 16. Offences include sexual activity with a child under 13 (strict liability), under 16, abuse of position of trust, and child sexual exploitation.	Any HSB incident involving a child under 13 must be reported to the police as a statutory referral. Staff must also consider reporting for children aged 13–16 where abuse or exploitation is suspected.

Children Act 1989	Section 47 – duty to investigate where a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.	HSB may trigger a Section 47 enquiry and requires the home to co-operate fully with the local authority.
Children Act 2004	Strengthened the safeguarding framework, establishing Local Safeguarding Children Boards (now safeguarding partners).	The home must follow local safeguarding partnership procedures for peer-on-peer abuse.
Equality Act 2010	Protects individuals from discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender reassignment.	Staff must adopt a non-judgmental approach. Homophobic or transphobic abusive behaviour is a form of HSB and discrimination.
Online Safety Act 2023	Fully implemented 25 July 2025. Requires regulated online services to protect children from illegal and harmful content, including sexual material and grooming.	The home must ensure children are educated about online safety. Online HSB (e.g., sharing nudes/semi-nudes) is subject to the same reporting duties as offline HSB.
Children’s Homes (England) Regulations 2015	Regulation 23 – health and wellbeing. Quality standards – promote positive relationships, safeguard children, and manage behaviour.	The home must have policies for managing HSB and must notify Ofsted of serious incidents (Regulation 40).
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026	Strengthened guidance on hidden harms such as child sexual abuse and teenage relationship abuse.	The home is required to contribute to multi-agency risk assessments and

	Emphasises a multi-agency approach, including children’s social care, police, health, and education.	planning for both the victim and the child displaying HSB.
NICE guideline NG55: Harmful sexual behaviour among children and young people (2016, updated)	Recommends the use of multi-agency approaches, risk assessment tools (e.g., Brook Traffic Light Tool), and individualised care plans.	Staff should use the Brook Tool to help assess concerns. The home must work with CAHBS or similar specialist services.
Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026 (proposed)	Expected September 2026. Includes strengthened guidance on peer-on-peer abuse, online safety, and the use of the Brook Tool.	Staff must maintain an attitude of “it could happen here” and never dismiss HSB as “banter” or “growing up”.
SCCIF for Children’s Homes 2026	Effective 1 April 2026. Inspects the home’s ability to manage HSB, to promote safe relationships, and to support children who have been sexually harmed.	Inspectors will evaluate the home’s policies, staff training, and incident management.
Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026	Royal Assent 29 April 2026. Includes provisions for multi-agency child protection teams and a compulsory home education register.	The Act enhances information sharing duties, which will improve the home’s ability to identify and respond to HSB.

UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes Advice (2024)	Provides guidance for professionals on responding to incidents of sexting (youth-produced sexual imagery).	This advice must be followed for any HSB incident involving "sexting".
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4. The Policy

4.1 Policy Statement

Byram House is committed to the safety and welfare of all children. We take a zero-tolerance approach to harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) and peer-on-peer sexual abuse. All staff are required to maintain an attitude of "it could happen here".

We recognise that HSB can happen both offline and online, and the home will respond consistently regardless of the context. We will ensure that:

- All concerns are identified early and responded to promptly;
- The home works in partnership with local safeguarding partners, the police, health, education, and specialist services;
- The child who has been sexually harmed receives immediate protection and ongoing support;
- The child who displays HSB receives a tailored multi-agency intervention that recognises their needs and the risk they may pose; and
- Every incident is properly recorded, reported, and used to improve practice and planning.

The home will use the **Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool** as an initial guide. Behaviour that is 'red' (indicating a serious, age-inappropriate, or potentially harmful behaviour) will trigger a formal child protection response and immediate notification to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

4.2 Recognising Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)

HSB exists on a continuum, ranging from inappropriate behaviour to problematic, abusive, and violent behaviour. The following examples are illustrative:

Behaviour	Status
Being curious about bodies; asking age-appropriate questions; playing with friends of opposite gender	Normal / Green
Frequent use of explicit sexual language; mutual touching with peers of the same age	Problematic / Yellow
Sending/receiving nudes or semi-nudes (under 18); sexual activity with a child under 13; sexual coercion; sharing pornography with younger children	Abusive / Red
Sexual assault; rape; encouraging other children to participate in sexual acts; online sexual grooming	Violent / Abusive

Staff must be aware of:

- Sexual behaviour that is compulsive, secretive, or aggressive;
- A significant age or developmental gap between the children involved;
- Use of coercion, threats, force, or bribery;
- Use of technology (including sexting, online grooming, sharing of sexual images);
- Behaviour that is causing distress to other children or staff.

Staff must never assume that a behaviour is “just part of growing up” or dismiss it as “banter”. An attitude of professional curiosity must be maintained.

4.3 Immediate Response to Concerns or Disclosures

If a child makes a disclosure of HSB (whether as a victim or a witness), or if staff observe an HSB incident:

1. **Ensure immediate safety** – Separate the children involved if there is a risk of further harm.
2. **Do not conduct an investigation** – Do not ask leading questions or interview the children. Establish the basic facts to safeguard the child.
3. **Do not destroy any evidence** – For online incidents (sexting), staff must not view, share, copy, or delete any images. The device should be preserved and secured.
4. **Reassure the child** – Explain that they have done the right thing by telling you, and that you are there to help them.
5. **Do not promise confidentiality** – Explain that you need to share the information with the registered manager and the DSL to keep them safe.
6. **Report immediately** – Verbally inform the registered manager and the DSL without delay. Follow the procedures in section 4.4.

4.4 Reporting and Safeguarding Referrals

The DSL (or nominated deputy) must take the following actions in all HSB incidents:

1. **Notify the local authority** – Contact the Kirklees MASH (01484 456858) within **one working day** of the concern being raised. For emergencies (immediate risk of harm), call 999.
2. **Notify the police** – If a criminal offence is suspected, including any sexual activity involving a child under 13, the police must be contacted on 101 (or 999 in an emergency). The police will take primacy for the criminal investigation.

3. **Notify the child's social worker** – For both the alleged victim and the child displaying the behaviour, inform the respective social worker immediately.
4. **Refer to Ofsted** – If the incident meets the threshold for a **Regulation 40 notification** (e.g., serious harm, police involvement, child taken to hospital), the Registered Manager will make the notification within **24 hours** of the incident.
5. **Inform the Responsible Individual (RI)** – The RI will be kept informed of all serious HSB incidents.
6. **Refer to specialist services** – Where appropriate, refer the child displaying HSB to the local **Child and Adolescent Harmful Behaviour Service (CAHBS)** for a specialist assessment.

For sexting incidents (youth-produced sexual imagery), the home will follow the **UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes Advice (2024)** . This includes:

- Not viewing the image;
- Securing the device;
- Making a referral to the police and MASH.

4.5 Multi-Agency Working and Risk Assessment

All HSB incidents will be managed through the local safeguarding partnership's framework.

Strategy Meeting: For all serious HSB incidents, a **strategy discussion/meeting** will be convened by the local authority, involving the home's Registered Manager, the police, a social worker for each child, health, education, and a CAHBS or similar specialist. The meeting determines:

- Whether the incident meets the threshold for a Section 47 enquiry;
- Who will conduct the criminal/child protection investigation;
- The need for immediate protective action (e.g., relocation of one child);
- Whether the aim is for the child displaying HSB to remain in the home (see section 4.8);
- The initial risk assessment and plan for each child.

Risk Assessment (Individual): A specialist risk assessment will be completed for the child displaying HSB. This will be conducted by a qualified professional (e.g., CAHBS, psychologist). The home's own risk assessment (ISP) will be updated based on the findings, and will include details about supervision levels, access to other children, use of electronics, and any restrictions that are necessary and proportionate.

Dual Protection Strategy: The home will robustly protect the alleged victim and support the child displaying the behaviour. Children who have been sexually harmed will have their own risk assessment and safety plan, which may include measures to prevent further contact with the child displaying the behaviour.

4.6 Support for the Victim

The home will ensure that any child who is the victim of HSB receives immediate and ongoing support:

- **Medical support** – The child will be offered a health assessment, including screening for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), pregnancy testing, and first aid.
- **Emotional support** – The child will have access to a counsellor or psychologist, as well as support from their key worker. The home will arrange advocacy support.
- **Safeguarding plan** – The child's individual safety plan will be reviewed to prevent further contact with the child displaying the behaviour. This may include placement in an alternative bedroom, changes to staff supervision, or temporary separation from the child displaying the behaviour.

The child must never be blamed or stigmatised. Staff will challenge any victim-blaming attitudes from other children or adults.

4.7 Support for the Child Displaying HSB

The home will ensure that children who display HSB are not criminalised unnecessarily. However, public protection is paramount.

Support includes:

- **Referral to a Harmful Sexual Behaviour Service** – The local designated CAHBS will conduct a specialist assessment and provide therapeutic intervention. This is often a condition of the child remaining in the home.
- **Individualised care plan** – The child’s needs, including any history of trauma, abuse, or neglect, will be addressed. Research shows that children who display HSB have often experienced significant adversity themselves, and early intervention can reduce the risk of future offending.
- **Supervision and restrictions** – The home will implement proportionate measures to manage risk, such as increased one-to-one supervision, limits on access to other children, and monitoring of electronic devices.
- **Education** – The child will be supported to understand healthy relationships, consent, and online safety.

If the child is subject to criminal proceedings, the home will work with the Youth Offending Service (YOS) to support the child throughout the process.

4.8 Managing the Risk of Recurrence in the Home

In some cases, the child who has displayed HSB will remain in the home. This is a high-risk situation that requires the active involvement of the local authority, CAHBS, and police.

The home will only agree to the child remaining if:

- A multi-agency risk assessment has been completed, and the plan is approved by the relevant strategy meeting;
- All parties (including the placing authority for the victim) have given their written agreement;
- The measures in the plan are clearly documented and implemented (including supervision levels, restrictions, and contingency arrangements);
- The home has sufficient resources, including appropriately trained staff, to manage the risk.

Where the risk cannot be managed safely or the plan fails, the home will request the immediate relocation of the child displaying HSB. This decision will be made in consultation with the placing authority and the local authority.

The home must also notify Ofsted of any serious incident, including where a child who has displayed HSB remains in the home.

4.9 Confidentiality and Information Sharing

The home will share information on a need-to-know basis only. The child's right to privacy must be balanced with the duty to safeguard others.

The following will be informed, as a minimum:

- The child's social worker (both children);
- The placing authority;
- The Kirklees MASH;
- The police (where a criminal offence is suspected);
- The child's parents (unless doing so would place the child at greater risk);
- The Responsible Individual and the Registered Manager;
- Ofsted (Regulation 40);
- The relevant HSB service (CAHBS).

Staff will not share information about an incident with other children (except to the extent necessary to protect them from immediate risk).

4.10 Staff Responsibilities and Record Keeping

- **All staff** have a duty to report any suspicion of HSB immediately to the Registered Manager and the DSL.

- **Recording** – Staff will record all direct observations, disclosures, and actions in an **Incident Report** on Clear Care (within the same shift or 24 hours). This includes details such as the time, location, individuals involved, the nature of the behaviour, and any witnesses.
- **Physical intervention** – The use of physical intervention to separate children during an HSB incident must be recorded in line with the Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy and the Incident Reporting Policy.
- **Evidence preservation** – In online HSB incidents, staff will not access, copy, or delete any content from a device. The device will be secured in a sealed bag and handed to the police.
- **Training** – All staff will receive annual training on this policy, the Brook Tool, and local HSB procedures.

Staff are required to read and sign this policy annually and to complete all mandatory training.

5. How the Home Trains its Staff About this Policy

Byram House provides structured training to ensure all staff understand and can implement this Policy effectively.

Training Element	Frequency	Method / Content
Induction	Upon appointment	Face-to-face training covering: definitions of HSB and PSB; the HSB continuum; online harms; the Sexual Offences Act 2003; age of consent; immediate response to disclosures; the Brook Traffic Light Tool; reporting to MASH and Ofsted; the role of specialist HSB services (CAHBS); and the dual-site operation (62 & 66 Deighton Road).
Annual refresher	Every 12 months	Classroom or virtual session covering updates to legislation (Working Together 2026, Online Safety Act 2023), case studies on peer-on-peer abuse, and refresher on reporting thresholds.

Brook Tool training	At induction and biennially	Practical training on using the Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool to assess concerns.
Online HSB (sexting) training	Annually	Training on responding to incidents of youth-produced sexual imagery (UKCIS guidance 2024), preserving evidence, and when to report to the police (Home Office counting rules).
Safeguarding and reporting	At induction and annually	Training on notifying the MASH, Ofsted Regulation 40, and working with the police and YOS.
Multi-disciplinary working	As needed	Training on the local strategic framework, CAHBS referrals, and strategy meetings.
Record keeping and data protection	At induction and refresh	Training on completing incident reports, preserving evidence, and sharing information on a need-to-know basis (GDPR).

Staff are required to:

- Read and sign this policy annually;
- Complete all mandatory training;
- Immediately report any suspicion of HSB to the DSL;
- Never promise confidentiality to a child in these circumstances; and
- Maintain an attitude of “it could happen here”.

6. Related Policies and Guidance

This policy must be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Sexual Health and Relationships Policy
- Internet Policy for Adults, Children and Young People
- Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy
- Incident Reporting Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCCIF) for Children's Homes 2026
- Local safeguarding partnership procedures (Kirklees)
- NICE guideline NG55
- UKCIS Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes Advice (2024)
- Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool

7. Policy Approval and Review Details



Byram House

Policy Name	HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY	
Home	Byram House	
Reviewed by	Danyaal Iqbal / Mustafa Amin	Deputy Manager / Registered Manager
Approved by	Stacey Wagstaffe	Responsible Individual
Date	May 2026	