



Community Engagement

November 2018

Hackney Contextual Safeguarding Team with the University of Bedfordshire



Community engagement

Background

Contextual Safeguarding (CS) is an approach to safeguarding that supports practitioners to recognise and respond to the harm young people experience outside of the home.¹ This community engagement guidance forms part of the *Contextual Safeguarding neighbourhood assessment toolkit* and has been developed by Hackney Children and Families Service with The University of Bedfordshire. This part of the toolkit has been designed to support practitioners to consider ways to engage with, and account for, the views of local residents and the community as part of a neighbourhood assessment.

Speaking with and engaging residents and community members is important for identifying harm and potential stakeholders that can support interventions. Within the Hackney neighbourhood assessment the Contextual Safeguarding team used a variety of ways to engage with the community and account for their views. This guidance provides a range of examples of community engagement activities. While the neighbourhood assessment used a range of methods to assess the neighbourhood, community engagement allowed the team to draw out any common themes or worries that local residents had in relation to their community and supported the team to understand the priority or weighting of each concern.

The document provides three examples of community engagement:

- Presence in the local community
- Focus groups with young people
- Poster distribution
- Community mapping

Presence in the local community

Over a period of three months, a practitioner in the Contextual Safeguarding team spent one afternoon per week in a local community centre in the area where the neighbourhood assessment was being conducted. This was a location that had been the site of a number of significant harmful incidents. The community centre was a multi- purpose space which facilitated the delivery of local services, such as the local library, employment services, a local social enterprise, as well as other short courses, community groups and work-space for local businesses. The purpose of having a practitioner based in the centre was to: facilitate partnership working in the area, familiarise the local community with the children and families service, provide an accessible member of the project team that the community could engage with and gain local knowledge that they may not have otherwise been privy to.

There were a number of benefits of having a practitioner situated in the area where the neighbourhood assessment was being conducted. This supported to the practitioner to:

- observe the community and how the space was used
- build relationships with key stakeholders and community members.
- be included in informal conversations about local issues and local concerns
- access key contact information as a result of building good relationships with organisations.

As a result of building relationships in the area the practitioner was invited to join meetings with other key stakeholders that they would not otherwise have known about.

¹ Visit www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk for more information.

Stakeholder engagement

Central to ensuring the neighbourhood assessment included the experiences and voices of local people already working in the community, and to ensure the work was complimentary to on-going activities, a number of stakeholders were engaged throughout the assessment. Furthermore members of the assessment team attended a range of meetings held in the community. Appendix B provides an overview of some of the stakeholders engaged during the assessment and the routes in which the assessing practitioner made contact. These provide an example of some of the stakeholders or forums practitioners could consider when conducting a neighbourhood assessment. Practitioners became aware of most of the stakeholder meetings as a result of spending time in the community and speaking with those living or working there. Being situated in the community is essential to learning about and engaging with local stakeholders.

Poster distribution

The project team approached key businesses and organisations in the assessment area, to briefly explain the key project priorities and asked if they would be happy displaying a poster on their window/other display (Appendix A). Businesses and organisations on the whole were open to this, as they expressed some concerns about young people in the area. Taking the poster to them directly allowed the team to engage with businesses and gather additional qualitative contextual information which further informed the neighbourhood assessment. Following the poster distribution the project team were contacted by a person who had seen the poster and wanted to make a referral for concerns they had.

Community mapping

During a community day the Hackney Contextual Safeguarding team engaged local people in a number of ways. Using a large black board the team wrote "Ideas for keeping young people safe in your community" and asked local residents to contribute ideas. This allowed the team to both gain community input into intervention ideas and also provided a sense of what the community felt was missing in the current work happening locally.

The team also used a large print out of a map of the local area and invited community members to place green, amber and red pins in various places depending on level of perceived safety. This gave the team a sense of areas to focus on or to explore further. The team also adapted this activity for use with younger children, asking them to draw/ stick items on the map of their community (e.g. baddies, places to play, police officers etc.)

The team found that the blackboard was a useful conversation facilitator and gave them an understanding of what was working well and what was missing locally.

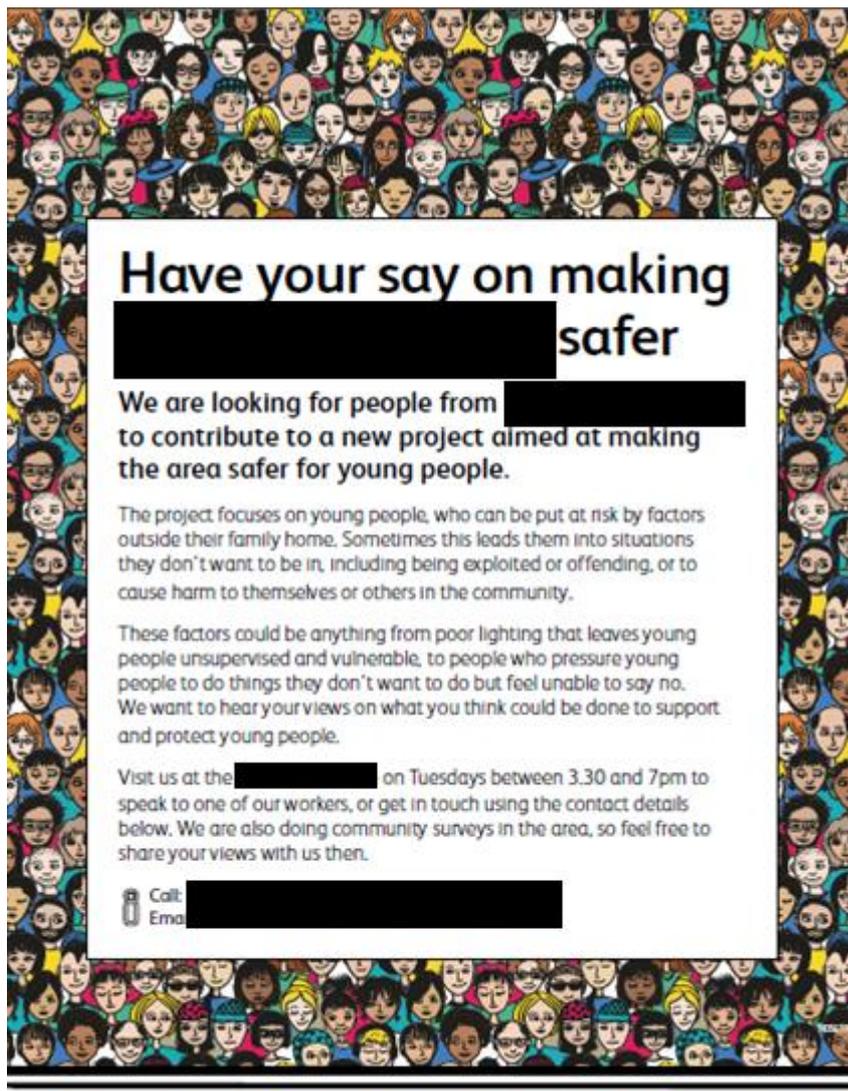
Group work with young people

Young people were engaged in several ways within the neighbourhood assessment through group work. One session was held in the local community centre, which was located within the assessment area and had been the location of an incident. Within this group session young people were engaged in a discussion about where they felt safe and unsafe and why this was. They were then asked to discuss what changes they would make and how they would like to be involved. An example session plan can be found in Appendix B. For those young people that did not want to participate in the group, a smaller informal survey was designed including questions such as:

- Do you live in the area? How long have you lived in the area?

- Do you like the area? What do you like about it?
- Is there anything you don't like about this area?
- Do you feel safe in [area name]? If you do, what is it that makes you feel safe?
- What do you consider to be your area? Can you mark it on a map?
- How do you know when you're not in your area any more? What does it feel like?
- If you could make any changes to the this area, what would they be? E.g. more shops? Less mobile phone theft?

Appendix A: Poster



Have your say on making [redacted] safer

We are looking for people from [redacted] to contribute to a new project aimed at making the area safer for young people.

The project focuses on young people, who can be put at risk by factors outside their family home. Sometimes this leads them into situations they don't want to be in, including being exploited or offending, or to cause harm to themselves or others in the community.

These factors could be anything from poor lighting that leaves young people unsupervised and vulnerable, to people who pressure young people to do things they don't want to do but feel unable to say no. We want to hear your views on what you think could be done to support and protect young people.

Visit us at the [redacted] on Tuesdays between 3.30 and 7pm to speak to one of our workers, or get in touch using the contact details below. We are also doing community surveys in the area, so feel free to share your views with us then.

Call: [redacted]
Email: [redacted]

Appendix B: Stakeholder examples and meetings

Key Meetings:	Advertised
Ward Forum	Published on Hackney Website/ invited by other internal professionals
Community police-led knife sweep	Advertised on Twitter
Community consultation event - 'Estate Walkabout'	Advertised on a community notice board on the Estate
[Estate name]working group meeting (Professionals)	Invited following Partnership Tasking meeting held by Community Safety
Meeting with' Residents engagement and participation team'	Approached via email following conversations with residents (TRA)
Information Hub sessions	Invited following working group/ action plan meetings

Key Stakeholders:	Contact via
Local ward councillors	Met at knife sweep event/ present at Ward Forum
Tenants and residents association (Former Chair)	Met during observations/ outreach
Tenants and residents association (Chair)	Met at community knife sweep event
Local regeneration board (Chair)	Met at community walkabout event
[Area name] Neighbourhood Panel (Chair)	Recommended to meet by Residents engagement and participation team, met at community walkabout event
Residents engagement and participation team	Recommended to meet by TRA
Safer Neighbourhoods Team (Police)	Met at Community Knife Sweep event

GP surgery staff	Present at Ward Forum, met during observations/ outreach
School staff (DSL)	Met with colleague during initial child and family assessment
Housing/ Estate team	Met during community walkabout event, attended nightingale working group together
ASB team	Attended nightingale working group together, present at Community Information Hub sessions
Young Hackney	Conducted joint outreach session, attended outreach team meeting, attended Nightingale working group together
Streetscene/ Public Realm	Approached via email
Immediate Theatre	Recommended to contact by resident (TRA), attended Nightingale working group
Access to Sport	Recommended to contact by resident (TRA)

Appendix C: Group work plan

1. Date		2. Time(s)	
3. Unit/Club			
4. Project Title	Contextual Safeguarding pilot in- consultation with young people who attend the Youth Hub		
5. Staffing (Indicate FT/PT/Vol)			
6. How was need identified?	<p>The young people who attend the youth hub live or frequent the [area].</p> <p>It will be important to include their views in the Contextual Assessment for the location pilot.</p>		

<p>7. Method (Please circle all appropriate)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group work at the Youth centre - Where young people do not wish to join in group activity, one-to-one conversation/survey can take place instead <p>Group work will be based on the initial stages of the STAIRS model:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scoping: what are the problems, how have they come about? - Targets: young people identify their goals or what they would like to change - Activators: young people identify what is allowing these problems to occur (e.g. what are the reasons they do not feel safe walking through an unfamiliar area late at night?) - Intervention: what needs to happen to change this? - Review/Revise: has it worked? Does something else need to be done? - Sustainability – how can this be maintained? Who will maintain this?
<p>8. Activity/session plan including young people's involvement</p>	<p>Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brief explanation of Contextual Safeguarding and the location pilot, e.g. getting young people's and residents views - Explain what will happen with the information: it will be used, anonymously, in the CS location pilot. No names will be used, only ages and gender where necessary. <p>Mapping exercise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Young people point out areas they like/prefer a map of the area. This could include where they live, where they choose to socialise or shop. Explain why they've chosen these. - Young people point out areas they dislike and why. Expand on this further by asking where they feel safe to meet friends or travel through, and places they would avoid. - If they feel confident to share areas where they know incidents have happened, including assaults, drug dealing, stabbings, they can point these out. N.B. briefly clarify confidentiality policy before asking this and remind them they can talk to members of staff if they are worried about anything. (Also, have contact details of e.g. NSPCC, Childline or FAST). - Any disclosures made should follow local safeguarding procedures <p>Finish - Refreshments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pizza will be ordered to arrive at the end of the session as a thank you to the young people.

9. What learning outcomes will the young people achieve?

The learning is mainly for the Contextual Safeguarding team but the session will also:

- Raise young people's awareness of Contextual Safeguarding and importance of their involvement in development of new systems
- Remind young people of who they can contact if they have concerns about friends