

## **Hackney Children and Families Service (CFS)**

### **Peer Group Mapping Information Sharing Protocol**

Sharing information is vital for safeguarding & promoting the welfare of children and young people and for providing effective and efficient services that are coordinated around the needs of a child or young person and their family. In Hackney we encourage a culture where information is shared with confidence as part of normal service delivery.

#### **What is Peer Group Mapping?**

A peer group is a social group of people with similar social status who share similar interests and are often close in age. In Hackney, in certain defined circumstances as outlined in this paper we collect, record and share information about the peer group relationships of the young people we work with: this is what is meant by *peer group mapping*.

Peer relationships are most often a protective factor and a source of support, lessening or managing the risks that a young person may face in adolescence. But for some young people, peer relationships may be a source of risk. For instance, they may be vulnerable to bullying, violence, or sexual or criminal exploitation by their peers. When working to safeguard young people and to promote their welfare, the Council may need to consider the impact of peer group relations, rather than simply looking at the child in the context of their family. Through carrying out peer mapping exercises, practitioners can identify and understand peer group strengths and risks. Peer mapping achieves this by:

- Giving an understanding of the nature, scale and seriousness of the risks posed by or to identified peer groups, individuals and locations.
- Providing a picture of the roles and relationships between individuals, including the amount of influence and control individuals have within a network.

- Supporting the identification of effective safeguarding interventions and other suitable multi-agency opportunities (e.g. group work; disruption; environmental change).
- Focusing awareness on information gaps, and how to inform these by information gathering.
- Providing a foundation for the ongoing support to the peer group/location within a multi-agency partnership context.

A practitioner may decide to map a peer group of young people already known to CFS or a peer group not previously known to the service following notification of a significant event that presents a safeguarding concern to a group of young people.

### **Information Sharing**

Information sharing in relation to peer group mapping may take two forms:

- Within the Council. For instance, between social workers working with different young people that are all part of the same peer group.
- Outside of the Council, where information may be shared with or by multi-agency professionals, such as health, education, the police.

Personal data that may be used includes, but is not limited to:

- Name, address, age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, disability (as relevant)
- Details of harmful or high-risk relationships (e.g. gang affiliation, suspected perpetrators of child sexual exploitation)
- Criminal convictions or offences
- Publicly available social media information, such as posting on the internet
- Social care history

## **Parental Notification**

A record will be made on the Children and Families Service recording system of young people deemed relevant<sup>1</sup> on a peer group map. Relevant young people and their parents will be notified of the personal data used for peer group mapping and any identified risks to that young person unless;

- there is good reason to do otherwise: for instance, there would be a risk to their immediate safety if the information were shared with their parents
- where to do so will be impossible or would involve disproportionate effort
- where to do so would render impossible or seriously impair the objectives of the plan to safeguard.

Information regarding young people appearing on the peer group map will only be shared with parents of other children that appear on the map *if* consent is given *and* it is safe and appropriate to do so for the purposes of a peer group intervention.

## **Lawful basis for processing information in peer group mapping**

The Children and Families Service (CFS) may map peer groups insofar as it supports its statutory function to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and as detailed in The Children Act 1989, The Children Act 2004 and as per any applicable national frameworks as to how such duties are to be carried out, such as *Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018)*.

Seeking the consent of children, young people or others to process their information for the purposes of peer group mapping may alert them, thereby contributing to the identified risk(s) or diminishing CFS' ability to safeguard.

The lawful basis on which CFS may process information regarding peer groups without consent is Article 6 (1) (e) of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR):

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<sup>1</sup> Young people connected or involved in the peer group who are at risk of harm or who present a risk of harm to others.

*processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the controller.*

This lawful basis applies to the processing of information that supports the aforementioned statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

Information used in peer group mapping may constitute special category data, defined in Article 9 of GDPR as *'personal data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, or trade union membership, and the processing of genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person, data concerning health or data concerning a natural person's sex life or sexual orientation...'*

Special category data processed for peer group mapping will only be processed without the subject's consent where it is necessary for reasons of substantial public interest as per Article 9 (2) (g) of GDPR and in accordance with provisions in the Data Protection Act 2018 Schedule 1, Part 2 (6) (1) (b) and the Data Protection Act 2018 Schedule 1, Part 2 (18):

*Statutory etc. and government purposes*

*6(1) This condition is met if the processing—*

*(b) is necessary for reasons of substantial public interest.*

*Safeguarding of children and of individuals at risk*

*18(1) This condition is met if—*

*(a) the processing is necessary for the purposes of—*

*(i) protecting an individual from neglect or physical, mental or emotional harm, or*

*(ii) protecting the physical, mental or emotional well-being of an individual,*

*(b) the individual is—*

*(i) aged under 18, or*

*(ii) aged 18 or over and at risk,*

- (c) the processing is carried out without the consent of the data subject for one of the reasons listed in sub-paragraph (2), and*
- (d) the processing is necessary for reasons of substantial public interest.*
- (2) The reasons mentioned in sub-paragraph (1)(c) are—*
- (a) in the circumstances, consent to the processing cannot be given by the data subject;*
- (b) in the circumstances, the controller cannot reasonably be expected to obtain the consent of the data subject to the processing;*
- (c) the processing must be carried out without the consent of the data subject because obtaining the consent of the data subject would prejudice the provision of the protection mentioned in sub-paragraph (1)(a).*
- (3) For the purposes of this paragraph, an individual aged 18 or over is “at risk” if the controller has reasonable cause to suspect that the individual—*
- (a) has needs for care and support,*
- (b) is experiencing, or at risk of, neglect or physical, mental or emotional harm, and*
- (c) as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the neglect or harm or the risk of it.*
- (4) In sub-paragraph (1)(a), the reference to the protection of an individual or of the well-being of an individual includes both protection relating to a particular individual and protection relating to a type of individual.*

This policy should be read in conjunction with the CFS Privacy Notice <https://hackney.gov.uk/cfs-privacy> alongside the applicable retention, rectification and erasure protocols.