



## Business survey

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# Business survey

## 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.<sup>1</sup> This business survey 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 engage with, and account for, the views of businesses as part of a neighbourhood assessment.

Research shows that young people encounter harm in a range of neighbourhood contexts. Sometimes young people may experience harm in areas where businesses operate, for example shopping centres, takeaways or on the street. Businesses often have oversight of these areas or an understanding of the issues there, they may also act as potential guardians for young people.

Speaking with, and engaging, businesses is important for identifying harm and potential stakeholders that can support interventions. This business survey has been developed by practitioners to include their views within neighbourhood assessments.

The document includes:

- Guidance for carrying out a business survey
- Appendix A: an example business survey

## Carrying out a business survey

Before carrying out a business survey it is important to identify the specific area to be targeted. In some instances this may be very small – for example the businesses surrounding an area where an incident occurred, or large – for example a shopping centre or street. Using a map or Google street view can help to plan the area to be visited and what businesses are operating.

The business survey used by Hackney was carried out by two children and family practitioners who visited the area at different times of day – particularly the morning when it was felt that businesses had more time to speak with them.

When entering the business it is important to explain who you are and the purpose of the visit. It is helpful to emphasise that the survey relates to children and young people, to mitigate any concerns the business might have and to prevent discussions focused on other business concerns that do not relate to safeguarding. In Hackney, the practitioners found that a conversational approach worked well so it is worth memorising the questions beforehand. Some of the questions asked will depend on the answers provided and different questions may be asked to different businesses. Practitioners in Hackney didn't take notes but recorded their thoughts after visiting the business on their phone as audio notes.

Appendix A provides an example business template that can be modified.

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<sup>1</sup> Visit [www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk](http://www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk) for more information.

## **Business survey findings**

The survey findings varied between businesses, their location and individual views held by those interviewed. While some businesses may not necessarily appear to appeal to young people, some may hold information that may be particularly helpful. For example a laundrette owner had observed drug dealing involving young people outside his business. A chemist provided information that under-18s had tried to obtain prescription drugs without a prescription.

The survey highlighted that there were stakeholders in the area that may otherwise be overlooked in traditional safeguarding training or engagement. One fried chicken shop takeaway owner explained how he had negotiated with the local secondary school to allow students to enter his shop at lunchtime. This was based on the understanding that he would liaise with the staff member responsible for lunchtime duty, whose phone number he was given. Previously students had been banned as a dispersal measure. The shop owner reported positive relations with local young people and said that on the rare occasions when tensions arise, he gives extra free chicken wings which costs him little but keeps his younger customers happy.

More than one business - all of them food stores/corner shops - replied that they had had a young person enter the shop in danger. A deputy manager in a branch of a supermarket gave an example of a 15-year-old boy running into the shop with three stab wounds and another of an unaccompanied 3-year-old. She said local young people knew her by name and trusted that she'd act to keep them safe, she suggested that the shop had bright lighting and was open 24-hours which she felt meant young people felt safe.

Many of the businesses engaged stated that they could not afford the time away from their business to attend training on safeguarding. However, several stated that they would be open to alternative ideas, e.g. video training. Some businesses took the contact numbers for local youth services and the duty number for Children & Families service so they could know where they could direct young people or report safeguarding concerns (while always being clear in these cases to call the police if there is an emergency)

Have you used the business survey? Please get in touch with any suggestions or comments:  
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### Appendix A: Business survey template

Date	<i>Of visit</i>
Time of visit	
Practitioner completing survey	
Business name	
Type of business	<i>Shop/ takeaway/ etc</i>
Person engaged/ role (if known)	<i>Owner/ worker/ security guard etc.</i>
Location:	<i>Details of the location – with detail regarding the area, adjacent buildings etc. Mark on map if possible.</i>

<b>Questions</b>	
<b>What do you like about the local area?</b>	

<p><b>What are your concerns, if any, about your local area? (Or if you could improve anything about the local area what would it be?). Any trends you have noticed? Times of day?</b></p>	
<p><b>Are many of your customers young people?</b></p>	
<p><b>What is your experience of your younger customers?</b></p>	
<p><b>Have you ever been in a situation where you have seen a young person in danger/at risk in your shop / business? What happened? What did you do?</b></p>	

<p><b>Do you know about activities or services for young people in the local area?</b></p>	
<p><b>What are your business opening hours? And how long have you been in the area?</b></p>	
<p><b>Would you be prepared to undergo free training by Hackney council to learn how you can learn to keep children and young people in your community safe?/your younger customers safe?</b></p>	
<p><b>Other comments</b></p>	