

Context Safeguarding Conference

Terms of Reference

2019



Background

As well as threats to the welfare of children from within their families, children may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families. These extra-familial threats might arise at school and other educational establishments, from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online. These threats can take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple threats, including: exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as county lines; trafficking; online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. Extremist groups make use of the internet to radicalise and recruit and to promote extremist materials. Any potential harmful effects to individuals identified as vulnerable to extremist ideologies or being drawn into terrorism should also be considered.

Assessments of children in such cases should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life and are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. Children who may be alleged perpetrators should also be assessed to understand the impact of contextual issues on their safety and welfare. Interventions should focus on addressing these wider environmental factors, which are likely to be a threat to the safety and welfare of a number of different children who may or may not be known to local authority children's social care. Assessments of children in such cases should consider the individual needs and vulnerabilities of each child. They should look at the parental capacity to support the child, including helping the parents and carers to understand any risks and support them to keep children safe and assess potential risk to child.

(Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018)

Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse.

Contextual Safeguarding Theory suggests that in order to support vulnerable adolescents at risk in 1 settings outside of their home environments, a local response needs to be developed that identifies, assesses, and intervenes in all of the context of adolescent vulnerability where the abuse and exploitation of young people can take place (Appendix 1).

With Contextual Safeguarding rather than removing children from environments where harm may happen a contextual approach tries to identify the ways in which professionals, adults and young people who have influence over the context can support the change of social conditions of environments in which abuse has occurred. A Context Safeguarding Conference brings agencies together to review the findings of a Context Assessment and develop an intervention plan to reduce identified risk using four domains (Appendix 2).

Aims of the Context Safeguarding Conference

The Context Safeguarding Conference seeks to:

- Bring together a multi-agency group representing key stakeholders within a statutory child protection framework and consider the assessment of an extra-familial context and the risks/strengths identified within it.
- To consider and task relevant and appropriate interventions to address the risks and build upon the strengths identified, to be delivered by children and family services and partner agencies.
- Share intelligence, data analysis and current interventions already in place the contexts under discussion and together define priority areas to respond to risks, build upon strengths and intervene effectively across associated peer groups, schools and public spaces.

Membership and attendance

	Name Role/Organisation
Children's Social Care	Practice Development Manager/Independent Chair
	Lead social worker for neighbourhood assessment
	Clinical Supervisor, Contextual Safeguarding Project
	Assistant Head of Service, Early Help and Prevention
	Screening and Referrals Manager (MASH)
	Practitioner, Contextual Safeguarding Project
	Vulnerable Adolescents Analyst, Contextual Safeguarding Project
	Team Leader - Early help and prevention
Other Council Departments	Enforcement Team Leader, Chief Executive's Directorate
	Housing – London Borough of Hackney
	Head of Regeneration
	Head of Parks and Green Spaces
	Head of Community Reassurance
	Head of Safeguarding Children and Families, Hackney Council for Voluntary Service
Education	ASB & Estate Safety Manager
	School Improvement Lead, Hackney Learning Trust

	Interim Head of Wellbeing and Safeguarding, Hackney Learning Trust
	Head Teacher, Safeguarding Schools Lead, Learning Trust
Health	Safeguarding Lead, Health Centre
Police and Community Safety	DCI Hackney Borough Public Protection and Reactive Crime Police Unit
	Police in Schools Officers, Met Police
	Head of Community Safety, Community Safety
Local Businesses and community organisations	Café owner
	Supermarket Manager
	Takeaway
	Chair of [Area] Community Organisation
	CEO [area] Development Trust

Members are required to ensure representation at the Context Safeguarding Conference in their absence.

Frequency and length and venue

The duration of the conference will be for approximately 2 hours. The meeting will take place at a site agreed by Hackney Children and Families Intervention and Support Services and those who manage the context under discussion. A date for a review will be agreed at the close of the conference.

Structure of the meeting

The meeting will be chaired by an Independent Chair and use a similar framework to that used in Hackney's Child Protection Conferences whilst incorporating the contextual safeguarding framework below to steer the discussion and consider the assessment that has been undertaken. (Appendix 2)

Role of the Lead Practitioner

The role of the lead practitioner is to present key issues (themes, patterns, trends, risks, vulnerabilities, strengths, capacity to safeguard) that have been identified during the assessment process. The lead practitioner should provide clarity on the methods undertaken to gather the information throughout the assessment process and should also clearly express the views of the young people impacted by extra-familial risk in said context (and their parents/carers) during this meeting. The lead practitioner should provide analysis and clear rationale of the context weighting factors that have emerged during the assessment and should make suggestions about an agreed way forward/outline plan. The Lead Practitioner will have oversight of the plan and be responsible for ensuring that objectives are met and actions are completed within the required timeframe.

Expectation of Partners

Partner agencies and organisations in attendance must provide reports/detailed briefings and information about the context in question. All partner agencies identified must attend and if unavailable, they must send another representative from their organisation to present their information. Partners should also be expected to contribute towards the conference plan, action tasks within their respective organisations and complete these within a set and agreed timescale.

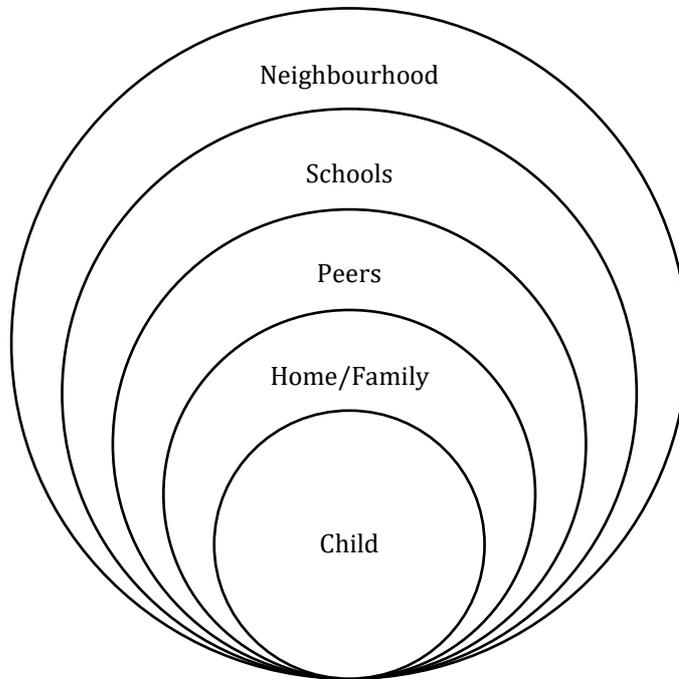
Information Sharing

Information and intelligence shared at the Context Safeguarding Conference will be bound by the Information Sharing and Confidentiality Statement used to guide child protection conferences (see separate document).

Governance and Accountability

This meeting will be chaired/facilitated by an Independent Chair. The Independent Chair must ensure that there is sufficient time during the meeting (no less than 30 min) for professionals in attendance to discuss the suggested outline plan and to contribute to it. The Independent Chair must also ensure that an action plan is finalised before and shared (verbally) with all before the meeting concludes. Identified themes, trends and learning that cannot be addressed by the partners at the meeting will be shared with the Council and feed into planning at various strategic forums including the Community Safety Partnership and the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children's Board. At the end of the conference, a date should be set for a review meeting to take place no later than 3 months to the present date. The Independent Chair will make a decision in consultation with partners regarding which agencies will be required to attend the review meeting. Arrangements for inviting the partners and key stakeholders to the review meeting should be facilitated by the lead practitioner or allocated team. In the event further concerns arise during the implementation of any agreed plan, the Lead practitioner might need to consider smaller, more frequent meetings in between dates for the Context Safeguarding Conference review meeting in order to add concerns to be addressed to the plan and to follow up on any progress that has been made. If more regular meetings have been held during the intervention phase, the review conference must still go ahead on the date agreed in order for the Independent Chair to have full oversight of the context plan. In the event the meeting needs to be moved, express consent must be obtained by the Independent Chair and a Review Meeting should be scheduled to take place within two weeks of the missed date.

Appendix one: Context of Adolescent Safety and Vulnerability (Firmin, 2013)



Appendix 2: Contextual Domains (Firmin, 2017)

