

CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING SUBGROUP

Terms of Reference

Context: Extra-familial harm and contextual safeguarding

Traditionally, the focus of children's safeguarding has been on risks to children which exist within a family context such as domestic abuse or neglect. However, Contextual Safeguarding recognises that adolescent children spend increasingly greater amounts of time outside the family and in other 'contexts' (neighbourhoods, retail centres, parks, open spaces and online).

These are often outside of the influence of families but can influence them.

We refer to these as Extra Familial Risks or Harms and include violence affecting young people, gangs, criminal exploitation and county lines, and child sexual exploitation. Children may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation in peer groups, the wider community, or online as well as by adults.

Whilst risks relating to radicalisation and terrorism are often extra-familial in nature, they are responded to via Lambeth's Prevent and Channel processes and therefore sit outside the remit of the LSCP Contextual Safeguarding Subgroup.

1. Core Principles

The LSCP Contextual Safeguarding Strategy Group is informed by 'Contextual Safeguarding' principles:

"During adolescence young people are increasingly exposed to harm that occurs in extra-familial contexts such as schools, high streets, parks and transport hubs. This harm often happens in a young person's extrafamilial relationships – such as with peers and adults unconnected to their family - that form online and offline. Peer, and other forms of extra-familial, relationships grow in importance during adolescence more generally – and can act as a source of support and protection for young people during this period of development. For all these reasons, agencies tasked with safeguarding the welfare of young people need to engage with extra-familial contexts and relationships, as well as parents and carers, when responding to (or seeking to prevent) harm beyond families." Firmin & Knowles, 2020.

In July 2018 the Government's statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' was updated and refers to contextual safeguarding as a mechanism to respond to risk and harm occurring outside the family home. The updated national guidance is clear that the assessment and management of these cases should focus on the context of the child.

In 2020, Lambeth launched a 10-year strategy, Lambeth Made Safer, which takes a public health approach to reducing serious violence against young people. There are inherent synergies in this strategy with contextual safeguarding approaches. When we effectively

safeguard our young people from extra-familial harm, they will inherently be safer and at a reduced risk of violence.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the LSCP Contextual Safeguarding Subgroup is to:

- Set the strategy to safeguard children and young people from extra-familial harm
- Prioritise the activities and actions in the strategy to have the most significant impact
- Hold each Partnership agency to account for their agreed activities in the strategy - Quality assure and evaluate the strategy against the agreed outcomes - Ensure strategic alignment with other relevant Lambeth initiatives.

3. Membership

- Chair
- Deputy Chair

The membership of the subgroup will remain small and include senior leaders from partner agencies and services, including:

- Lambeth's Director of Education or designated representative
- Lambeth's Director of Children's Social Care or designated representative
- Lambeth's Director of Children's Commissioning
- Head of Community Safety or designated representative
- Assistant Director Youth Justice and Partners, Lambeth - CAMHS Service Director or designated representative
- Designated Doctor for safeguarding children
- Designated Nurse for safeguarding children
- GSTT and KCH reps
- Second Police rep (Either Public Protection or Local Investigations)
- Voluntary sector representative
- Lambeth's Housing representative
- LSCP Independent Scrutineer

The Chair should have a clear understanding of the remit of this subgroup and the remit of the other LSCP subgroups to enable effective cross working relationships and avoid duplications.

Where there are cross-cutting issues between subgroups, the chair of the subgroup from where the issue is first identified should initiate a meeting with the other subgroup chair(s) to discuss the resolution of the identified issue. Both chairs should feedback the outcome of such discussions to members of their respective subgroups.

4. Governance

The subgroup reports to the LSCP Executive and will provide regular written reports. The management and operational delivery of the contextual safeguarding strategy will be designed/agreed by the subgroup.

5. Meeting frequency

The Subgroup will meet quarterly.

6. Information sharing

Government guidance puts preserving life and promoting safety as key considerations when seeking to balance confidentiality and disclosure. Information sharing about children, young people and adults can be based on the legal authority of:

- a) Children Act 1989
- b) Crime & Disorder Act 1998
- c) Human Rights Act 1998
- d) Care Act 2014
- e) Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- f) Data Protection Act 2018
- g) General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018 Article 6(1)(e)

In addition, the LSCP operate under the Pan-London Data Sharing Agreement, January 2021.