

Communication – Context - Curiosity

Contextual harm could stem from or be exacerbated by the geography or a physical aspect of the space. It could be caused by the groups and individuals who access that space. The harm may occur because there are no guardians in that context, or guardians are unaware of the harm, or their responsibility. Usually, a variety of these contextual factors may be present. Plans and interventions aiming to address Risk Outside The Home need to consider how to bring about change with these contexts. Intervening beyond the home is important because:

- ☐ If we protect a child from a context but leave the context unchanged it is likely other children will be harmed.
- ☐ Communities and neighbourhoods should be safe spaces
- ☐ Ignoring contexts can result in too much responsibility being placed on children.
- ☐ Ignoring contexts can result in young people having limits and restrictions placed on their life
- ☐ Interventions that focus on the child but not the source of harm tend to be less successful

Context Weighting

Successful plans will target interventions at the right context and address the source of the harm. The Contextual Safeguarding Network have produced a Context Weighting Tool (accessible via their website)

“As you incorporate contexts into assessments you need to prioritise where to target your response. One way to achieve this is thinking through which contextual factors – and contexts themselves – have the greatest influence over the problem you are trying to address and targeting those first. In other words – asking yourself ‘what context (or contextual factor) needs to change first for safety to increase for that child, family, peer group, etc’. We call this process ‘Context Weighting.’” Contextual Safeguarding Network

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Example Interventions

The Contextual Safeguarding Network have a range of information and examples of practical interventions which have been used to address harm in the community:

- ☐ Multi-agency tailored youth offer
- ☐ Licensing regulations
- ☐ Individual work with parents
- ☐ Removing perpetrators
- ☐ Increasing physical safety in a location
- ☐ Engaging community safety
- ☐ Business engagement
- ☐ Context conferences

Interventions focused on young people should not place all of the responsibility on them to stay safe, but might focus on

- ☐ Addressing vulnerabilities or risk factors.
- ☐ Recognise they are young people, and do not treat them as adults.
- ☐ Consider the use of positive diversionary activities.
- ☐ Interventions should be contextually informed

Disruption

The source of the harm needs to be disrupted. Sometimes the source of harm may be adults which will require a police response. However, sometimes the source of harm may be other young people. When this is the case, it is important, we recognize they also need a welfare/safeguarding response – this may also involve the police as part of the intervention.

- ☐ Practitioner should send information to Force Intelligence where appropriate. This can help the police build a clear picture of the risks and support their interventions
- ☐ Report concerns directly to the police. The police have a wide range of powers to directly intervene when there is evidence of crime and child protection concerns.
- ☐ Missing, Slavery, Exploitation and Trafficked (MSET) provides a multi-agency approach to supporting young people and disrupting the sources of harm.