



Newcastle City Council Risk Outside the Home (ROTH) Procedures 2025



Newcastle Risk of Harm to Children outside the Home (ROTH)

Procedures:

Risk of harm outside of the home is referred to by a number of different terms, such as extra-familial harm and contextual safeguarding. Within Newcastle, we made the decision to use the term “risk outside the home” or “ROTH” when referring to this risk. We define risk outside of the home as risk to the safety of a child that is present within their community, or from their peer network. This can occur in a wide range of settings such as an educational establishment, in the community, both locally and across geographical and cultural boundaries, and across social media in any situation whereby the child interacts with others outside of their family. The risk encompasses:

- child at risk of sexual exploitation from peers or adults
- child at risk of criminal exploitation from peers or adults
- child who is missing repeatedly from a home of safety
- peer on peer abuse
- exploitation by criminal gangs or other organised crime groups both locally and across county lines
- antisocial behaviour
- serious violence gang culture
- trafficking
- child at risk of being exposed to extremist ideologies and may be vulnerable to radicalization online

Risk of harm outside of the home occurs often just prior to and during their adolescent years, because at this age social networks widen in a child’s community spaces and places. Children transition from the relative safety of the family to the growing influences of the outside world.

Who are these procedures for?

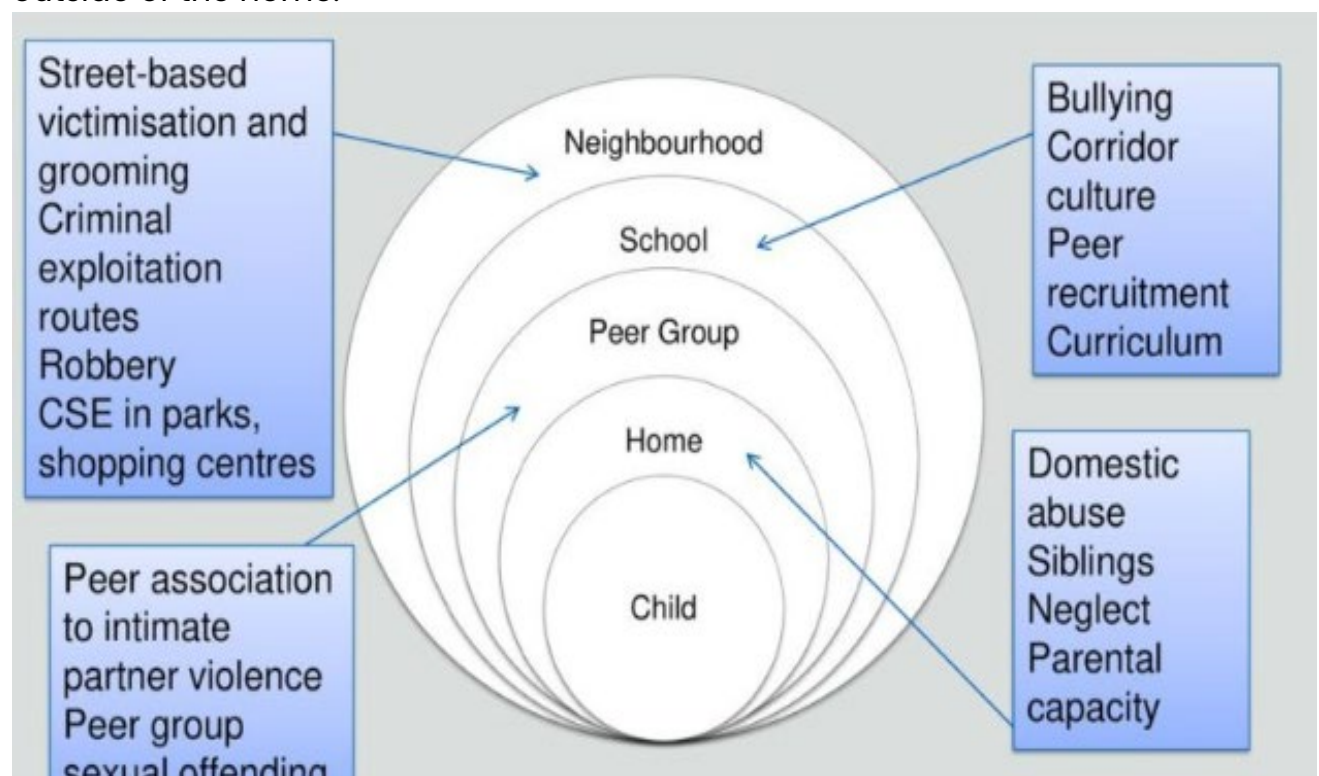
These procedures apply to children at risk of harm outside the home from age 10 years up to the age of 18. They should be cross referenced with our current Early Help, Child in Need, Children in Care and Child Protection procedures in Newcastle (located in tri-x).

They are for all of us to use; children, parents and carers and professionals working with children and adults who may be at risk of being a victim or being a person of risk to a child or child within the community. The procedures have been developed to draw on all of our knowledge and experiences to help to support our children to be safe within their communities, and to help create the sharing of information between our communities to identify environments and children who could be at risk or are already being exposed to risk of harm outside of the home.

These procedures highlight the shared responsibility of creating community safety, working with all community stakeholders to reduce the risk of harm and exploitation outside of the home. We all have a shared responsibility to provide safety for our children.

What is risk outside of the home?

It builds upon the learning from the contextual safeguarding network research and work undertaken by Dr Carlene Firmin in researching risk outside of the home.



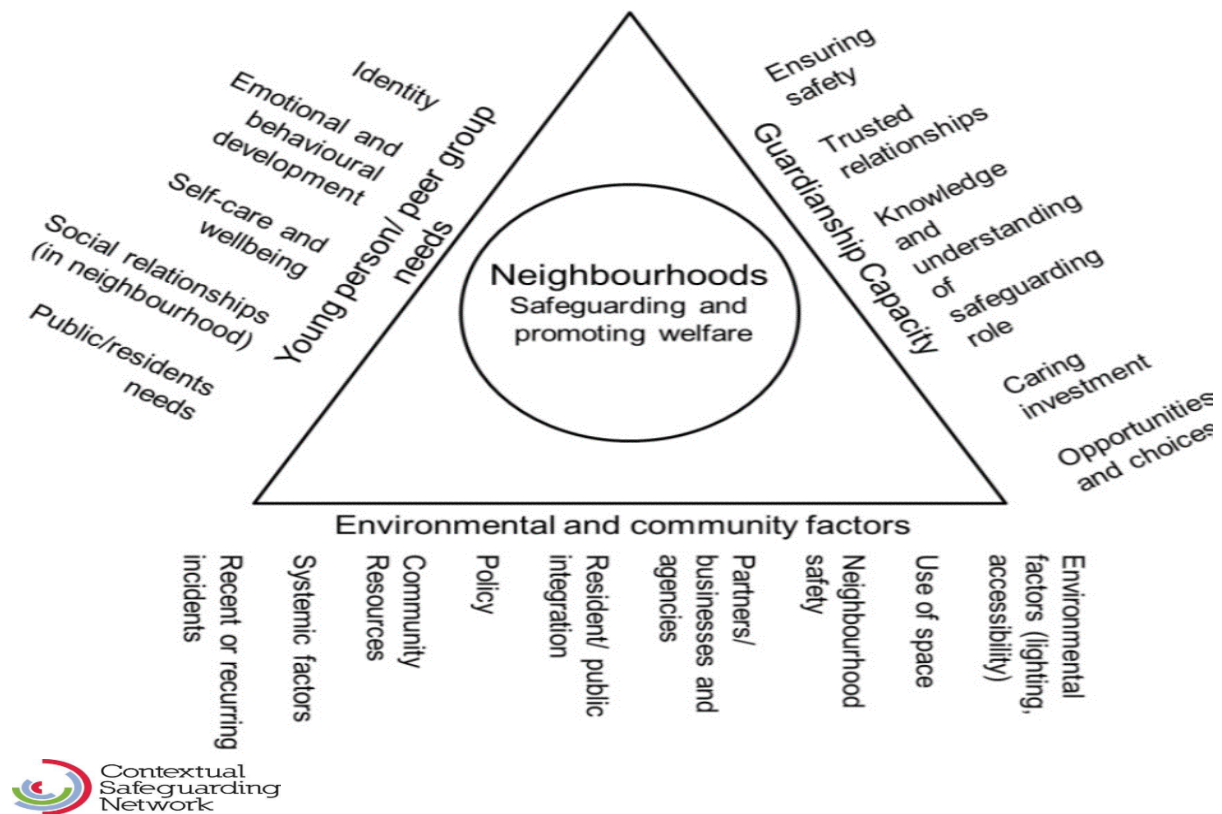
So why do we need a different approach to risk of harm outside of the home?

The current child protection approach within England has been developed to assess risk posed to children within their families. The ROTH approach is best adopted when families have limited capacity to safeguard a child given it is contextual and aims to seek to support the child and their family to work in partnership to overcome these risks. The overall aim is to reduce risk outside the home, while strengthening the home as a place of safety and stability for the child.

Working together can help to overcome blaming practice that often isolates the family as well as the child and therefore increases the risk of harm to the child. Research has highlighted that parents of children who are at risk of harm outside the home often feel blamed and isolated for their experiences and consequently, rather than working with us to improve safety for their children, they often disengage from safety building. These procedures are therefore a mechanism for having a practice model for children and families to improve our own information gathering of potential environments that children in Newcastle could be at higher risk of harm from. Every contact is an opportunity to understand what risks are presenting for children outside of their home and to improve our intelligence gathering around emerging risks within our community.

So what does this mean in practice?

It means within Newcastle that upon the point of referral, we start looking beyond the behaviour of concern and have an approach that balances out between the environmental (ecological) and the behaviour-based risks that children are exposed to.



At the core of this approach is the importance of the relationship that children have within the environments that they socialise with, both physically and virtually. So, building a meaningful relationship is key to establishing an overview of what the risks are. Sharing information and gathering intelligence is essential to formulating the bigger picture for children at risk of harm.

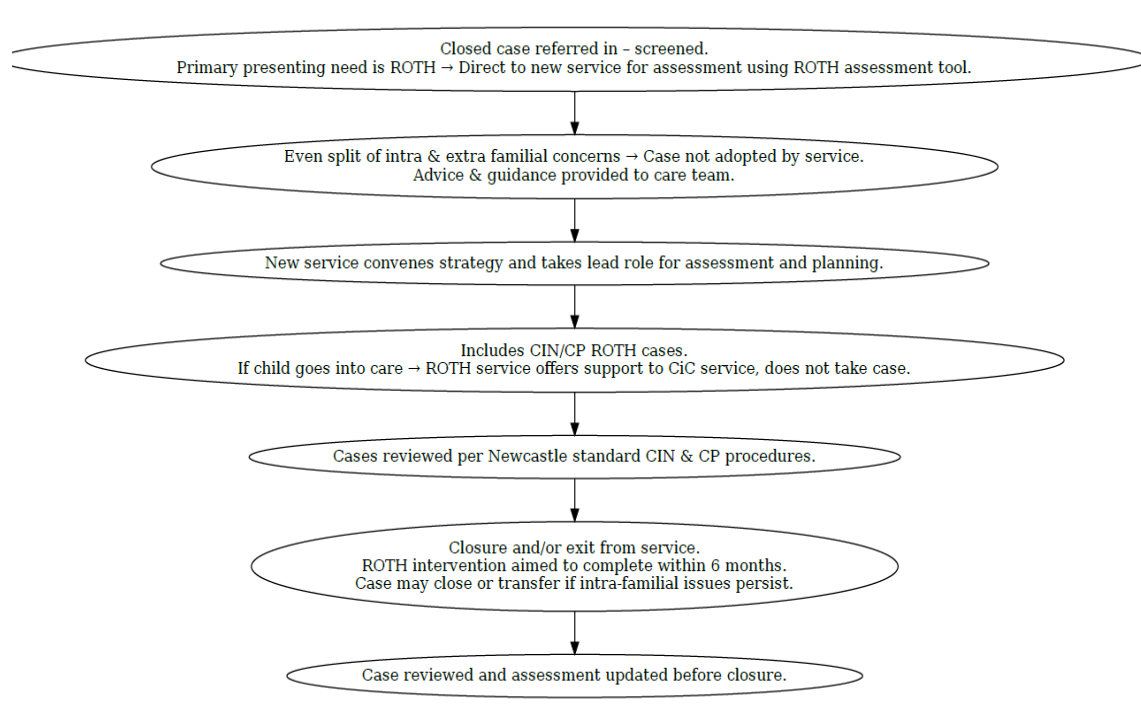
As outlined above, all existing pathways should fully consider the fact that a child may be at risk of harm outside the home. These include:

- Early Help
- Youth Justice
- Child in Need
- Child Protection
- Child in our Care
- Channel Panel

(See ROTH Pathway in Appendix 1)

Pathway into the ROTH Service Flowchart

The below pathway illustrates the process by which closed cases referred in can access the new ROTH service:



To ensure that children and families are directed to the appropriate service, it is essential that referrers who are concerned about ROTH, complete the exploitation screening tool, (see Appendix 2) when making referrals into the Front Door. This would support good decision making in the MASH.

Early Help

All contacts are screened at Managers Triage by Early Help and Children's Social Care. Following this, a decision is made in terms of what level of involvement is required from children's social care or Early Help, if at all. They then either remain in Early Help or are escalated into Children's Social Care.

If the case is then referred to Early Help and they are concerned about harm outside the home the Exploitation screening tool should be used; scoring 5 out of 15 questions automatically meets the threshold for a discussion between Early Help and CSC Managers within the Front Door and the ROTH

Team Manager/Assistant Manager. From there cases would be referred to Social Care if required. Where this is not the case, they would look at offering the family advice and signposting, or potentially allocation to an internal Early Help worker where any continued or escalating risks would be regularly reviewed and where required the case can be escalated back to Social Care.

Child in Need

At the point of any referral for a child the ROTH screening tool should be completed. This will identify and indicate ROTH risks to the child and will confirm the appropriateness of being supported by a Child in Need Plan.

Where we identify a child as being susceptible to ROTH, then the expectation would be that a Child in Need meeting is convened within 2 weeks of referral. Care Team meetings are held every 4 weeks and reviews are held quarterly. At each review, consideration will be given to either stepping up intervention to child protection, continuing with a Child in Need Plan or stepping out to Early Help or closure.

Visiting pattern for children identified as being at risk due to ROTH for the first 3 months should be proportionate to the presenting needs and risks. This will be reviewed by the Team manager within the 3-month Child in Need review.

Youth Justice

For all children referred to the YJS regardless of the stage, an Assetplus or Out of Court assessment will be completed, of which the ROTH screening is a required element. As part of the assessment process, all checks are undertaken on the children to identify if there is current EH or Social Care involvement.

If there is no social care involvement and the screening scores 5+, then a referral via the front door will be undertaken.

Where there is social care involvement, the YJS will incorporate appropriate work into the plan to complement the existing CIN/CP/CIC plan.

For those children who score 5 to 9, then the YJS will incorporate appropriate actions into the intervention plan. Often, the child will have both safety and wellbeing concerns to others as well as to themselves, so may be part of the internal Risk Management Procedures.

National Referral Mechanism (NRM referrals)

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support.

Modern slavery is a complex crime and may involve multiple forms of exploitation. It encompasses:

- human trafficking
- slavery, servitude, and forced or compulsory labour

An child could have been a victim of human trafficking and/or slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Victims may not be aware that they are being trafficked or exploited, and may have consented to elements of their exploitation, or accepted their situation. If you think that modern slavery has taken place, the case should be referred to the NRM so that the relevant competent authority can fully consider the case. You do not need to be certain that someone is a victim.

Referrals to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) are monitored and processed by trained specialists within the Home Office, specifically through two separate entities known as the Competent Authorities.

The two Competent Authorities are:

- **The Single Competent Authority (SCA):** Handles the majority of NRM cases across the UK.
- **The Immigration Enforcement Competent Authority (IECA):** Responsible for adult case

The ROTH service will be responsible for supporting social workers to complete NRM's and for liaising with/updating the SCA, and for tracking the progress of referrals and updating Eclipse in relation to decisions.

Channel Panel

Where a child has been referred to Channel, there will be evidence that there are concerns regarding potential radicalisation. This rarely occurs without the involvement of others encouraging and motivating the child to behave and act out their beliefs. This usually takes place online and is deemed a form of exploitation. If the child is adopted by Channel, then an exploitation screening should be completed and based upon the score, a referral into the front door will be undertaken. Where the child is already known to either Early Help, Social Care or Youth Justice, then the pathway associated to their service area will be followed.

Child Protection

A Risk Outside the Home Conference should be arranged when following a ROTH strategy meeting, it is believed that significant harm outside the home is suspected or experienced by the child.

Standard CP decision making steps are followed, but where the child is deemed to be at risk of suffering predominantly extra-familial harm, then the guidance in the below flowchart should be followed:

[ROTH Guidance Flowchart \[LINK\]](#)

When it's been agreed that a Section 47 enquiry is required and the ROTH criteria has been met, then the Independent Reviewing Team should be notified in keeping with the current Conference notification process, that there is a requirement for a Child Protection Conference to be arranged. The timescale for notification remains within 24 hours from the strategy and the date for the ROTH Conference will be planned to be held on day 15 in line with Newcastle Council Conference procedures.

At any point a ROTH Conference can become a standard Child Protection Conference on the basis that information gathered or assessments completed have concluded that risk is both intra and extra familial.

Any changes with regards to the type of Conference must be communicated by the lead social worker to the Independent Reviewing Team by day 5 of the enquiry and consultation should be held throughout when extra familial harm is identified as the leading risk with the ROTH Team Manager/Assistant team Manager.

The Risk Outside the Home Conference has the same responsibilities and duties that are set out within the Newcastle procedures for Child Protection Conferences. However, the model provides children, parents and carers and other multi-agency stakeholders with an alternative approach to safeguarding children when the risk is extra-familial. Where it would differ is that the child and any known professional identified by the child as offering support and safety would be invited to engage as 'safeguarding partners'.

As stated, the Initial Conference must be convened within 15 working days of the strategy discussion that decides that the threshold is met for a child protection enquiry to be undertaken. If the Conference agrees that the threshold for a Risk Outside the Home Child Protection Plan is met then an initial core group meeting is required within 10 days of commencement of a ROTH Child Protection Plan, then fortnightly thereafter. As stated above Newcastle follows the standard Child Protection processes for ROTH cases.

The ROTH Conference Chair will continue to provide scrutiny and oversight of the plan for the child, at the mid-way point with the named social worker, family and child where appropriate.

Siblings

Where a child lives with siblings or other children, consideration should always be given to their individual needs. Therefore, when dealing with a ROTH child protection concern, siblings and any other children within the family home should be considered within mainstream procedures in relation to their own individual needs/risk and strategies convened only where deemed appropriate. If siblings have identified risks and needs of their own that are not ROTH related, then the siblings will need to have another identified social worker. These will need to be considered on a case by case basis.

Prior to the ROTH Child Protection Conference

The Conference chairperson would seek to contact the child in person prior to the Conference being held. The Conference chairperson would seek to talk to the child and meaningful adults such as parents and carers. On the day of a ROTH Conference, parents, carers and children would be invited into the agreed venue 30 minutes prior to the start to talk through the practical arrangements for the ROTH Conference and provide further opportunity to answer any questions and establish a rapport with the child and family.

ROTH Child Protection Plan

The child would be encouraged to complete a child's plan.

[Roth CP Plan \[LINK\]](#)

This plan is to be created with the child in the conference. The plan is to be used to identify the safety that the child sees within their network. The plan is written to the child in language that they can understand in an age-appropriate format.

Who needs to be at a ROTH Conference?

Greater effort would be given to extend invitations to the community network, and this would include any community person that we believe brings safety and reduces the harm to a child when in the community. The inviting of this wider community network would be an action that would need to be assessed and discussed with the family during the period of the child protection investigation. For example, it may be when we know that a child at risk in a community area, that we seek to invite community police offer for that area, a youth worker, housing or antisocial behaviour officer etc. The list is endless, as it will be determined by parental agreement, the child, and our professional knowledge of the area.

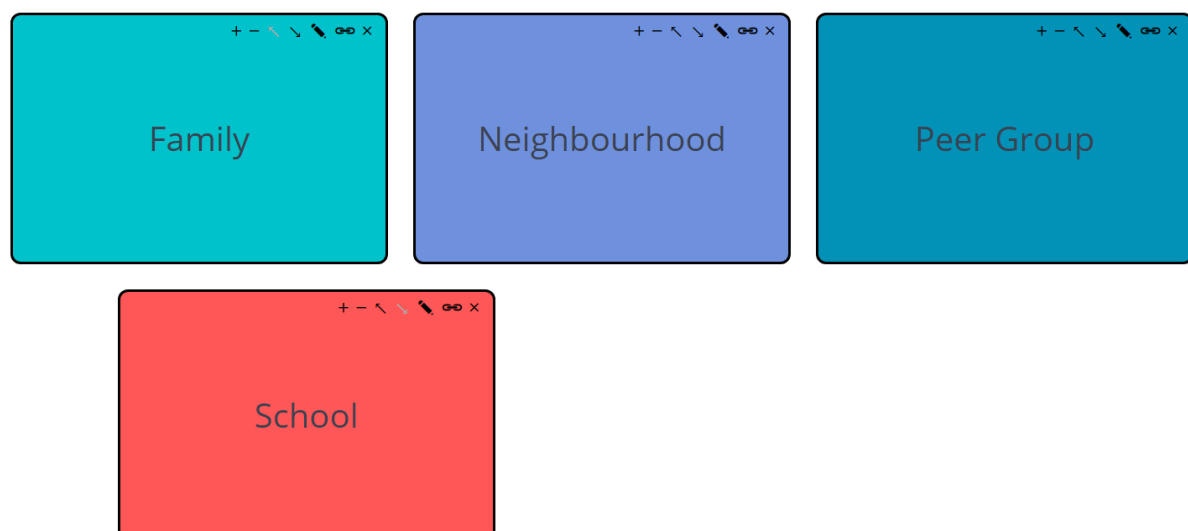
The Independent Reviewing Team would follow the normal process of invitation for a Child Protection Conference but would be clear that the Conference is being conducted under the ROTH procedures.

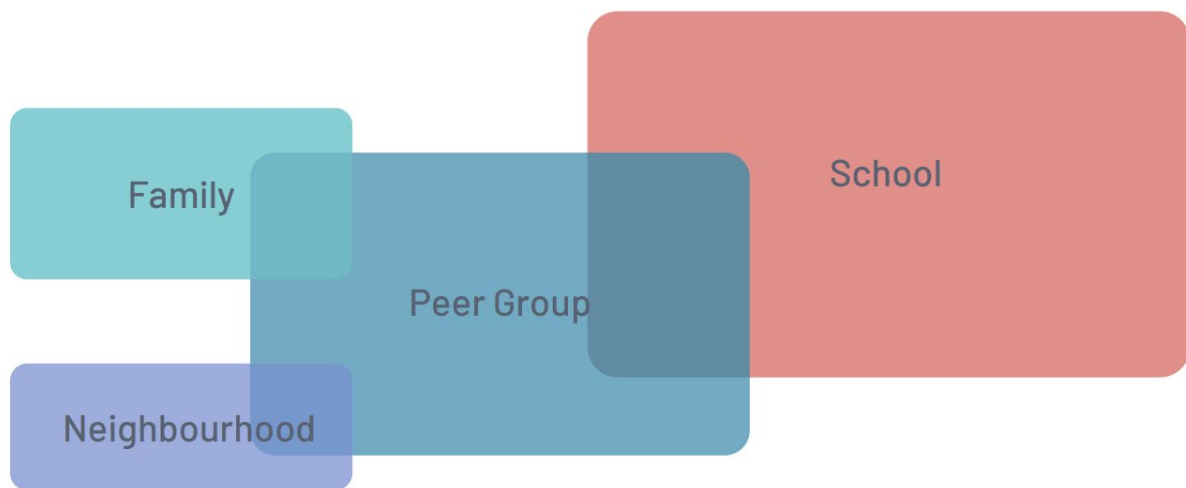
Reports for Conferences should be expanded to incorporate what the risk is, identifying where it's happening and be clear on external, environmental, geographical and peer/adult relationships that are adding to risk to the child.

Context Weighting:

The assessment and planning for children facing ROTH should make use of context weighting to determine where the risk and safety is greatest. The first diagram below illustrates that all the environments have equal influence on the child, whereas the second one shows the extent to which each context has a bearing on that child.

Context Weighting





ROTH Plan Category:

Currently, LA's are required to record CP plans under 1 of 4 established categories, Neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse and sexual abuse. For Children facing ROTH, the most appropriate category will be selected on the system; however, the documentation shared with the child and family will be labelled as a 'ROTH plan'. This is fully explained to the child and parents for transparency.

Reports

[ROTH Conference Agency Report \[LINK\]](#)

At the initial conference, the social worker will present the assessment completed under section 47 as their agency report and all other professionals will be required to complete a pre-conference report to assess the risk outside the home. Professionals and agencies will be required to provide details of any specific places, context, groups and risks that have been identified as posing a risk to the child. Within the context of ROTH and Relational Practice adopted in Newcastle, we should answer the following questions: –

- What do you know about the risk?
- What form is the risk and What does this mean for the child?
- What's the safety for the child?
- Who are the adults in the network who help the child feel safe?

If organisations have worries for other children, this information should be provided on a confidential sheet so not to breach GDPR.

Reports would still need to be shared 48 hours prior with the child and their family to best prepare them for the ROTH Conference. ROTH Conferences will be managed sensitively in accordance with the needs of the child and community venues should be chosen that will best support their attendance.

Parental Engagement

Parental engagement will be key and the model of practice should see them as being central to working with a child and their networks (social, professional and family) to manage and reduce risk of harm outside the home, i.e. safeguarding partners.

What happens at the end of a ROTH Conference?

At the end of a ROTH Conference, a decision will be made in keeping with Working Together regarding the area of risk. The Conference chair would be able to use the ROTH category and will outline the central reason for the decision within the context of risk outside the home.

Reviews for children who are identified at risk outside the home will take place in keeping with the process above and reports must be shared within 48 hours of the review date. Where this timescale cannot be met, it is the responsibility of the professional to contact the CP chair to agree a way forward. The threshold for decision making under this process does not change and continues to work within current guidance and procedures.

Children in our Care

Where a child is a child in our care (CIC) and there are worries about risk outside the home, the Care Team should explore these using the Screening tool. Where there are significant worries about a child in our care and risk outside the home, a strategy meeting should be arranged, following existing procedures. The strategy meeting will consider the risk outside the home. The ROTH manager/Assistant Team manager should be invited to the initial strategy meeting. In the event they are not able to attend, outside of the

strategy meeting advice and guidance should be sought. The strategy meeting should consider what the risk is, identifying where it is happening and be clear on external, environmental, geographical and relationships that are adding to risk to the child. An appropriate disruption/ diversion plan should be in place for the child.

The allocated social worker for the child will ensure that the Independent Reviewing Officer is updated about the risks outside of the home and safety planning.

Multi-agency ROTH panel

Cases across all tiers can be referred into the panel following screening using the new exploitation tool.

Representatives from the following agencies should be invited to sit on the panel. These could include Future Focus, Early Help, CSC, YJ, Sidestep, Police, Education, Health, CYPS, YHN, Community Safety, Adult social care, SCARPA, Way through, West End Women & Girls, Young Carers

If screening score 5 or above, case should be referred automatically to panel. Anything below this where there are also identified barriers to the plan should be discussed with ROTH TM/ATM for panel consideration.

The aim of the panel is to offer access to a wide range of support to inform the child's plan and to overcome barriers to accessing support. The panel will provide a problem solving approach to finding solutions / enabling better engagement with a child's plan as a means of ensuring Multi-Agency contribution.

Partnership Response to Exploitation & Missing (PREM)

PREM is a Police led, multi-agency problem solving meeting to reduce identified risk and harm of exploitation and missing episodes which is chaired by a Detective Inspector from Northumbria police. Referrals to PREM by partners will be made when the authorising manager for the Local Authority is satisfied that risks identified in relation to exploitation and missing have not been negated through initial intervention (care planning, contextual safeguarding) and require the additional support of multi-

agency problem solving to help reduce the risks. The ROTH Team Manager is the LA gatekeeper for PREM referrals.

- Referrals to PREM by partners will be made following the authorising manager for the Local Authority gatekeeping and approving the referral.
- The authorised PREM referral will be emailed to Northumbria Police mailbox
- The agenda for each Local Authority which will include details of work done to reduce the risk to the person and reason for PREM referral will be sent to the PREM membership a week in advance of the PREM meeting
- LA's to use their own forms internally and the one page referral form created by Northumbria Police to be filled in at the point of requesting it to be heard in PREM.
- The approach will focus on the offenders and locations as much as the victims, to minimise the risk to communities.

Community Group Conferences

Community Group Conferences are conferences where there are a number of children who are all linked to one another through peer relations and/or association at the same geographical area and/or linked to adult(s) of concern, and who are all identified as being at risk outside of the home.

A Community Group Conference should be arranged to consider how we provide disruption to risks being posed to these children in their communities.

The Community Group Conference will think beyond the individual child as their individual needs will be addressed via a Risk Outside the Home Conference for each specific child. In the Community Group Conference, the focus is on disruption and bringing together community knowledge about the existing concerns. The Conference will consider what the harm is, where the harm is happening and what it means for the safety of children. Partners and community services will be invited to engage in sharing intelligence and information about what is known about a particular environment, group of children and the risks. Where appropriate, consideration should be given to how services could engage with groups of children in a meaningful way for

them to share their individual experiences or worries about a geographical location, an adult in the community and any behaviours that they are worried about in their community.

A Community Group Conference will be chaired by the Risk Outside the Home Team Manager, Assistant Team Manager or Child Protection Lead Practitioner who will arrange and facilitate the Conference, bringing together the appropriate professionals and community stakeholders.

The aim of a Community Group Conference is to move the focus away from an individual child's behaviour to the context and the environment where risk is being identified for children, and to build a Community Safety Plan. The Conference will also aim to:

- Develop community-based responses that create contextual safety for children within the community
- Provide strategic overview of risks outside the home both to support targeted responses to increase safety
- Provide a safe base for the sharing of information on risks in our community for children
- Strengthen communities in providing safety for children

Arranging a Community Group Conference

A Community Group Conference will be considered where concerns for an individual child are also being identified for friends, acquaintances under the age of 18, or for a place (whether virtual or geographical) where a number of children are identified at being at risk outside the home.

Where a Team Manager identifies the above worries for a group of children, they will initially discuss this with the ROTH Team Manager, and then have further discussions held with the relevant Service Managers. Upon agreement that there is information that highlights there is a need for a Community Group Conference, the Risk Outside the Home Team Manager or Child Protection Lead Practitioner will take responsibility for arranging a Community Group Conference. Invitations will be determined based on information that is known at the point of the concerns being highlighted.

The fundamental principles of Working Together and keeping children safe underpins the practice within Community Group Conferencing.

Organised and Complex Abuse Procedures:

The North and South of Tyne Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures Manual outline the existing pathway for the investigation of complex and organised abuse and what action should be taken. The procedures outline the definition and include information that whilst most cases involve risk from an adult abuser, it is possible for children to be the perpetrators of such harm. The procedures outline the need for Children's Social Care and Police to be notified in cases where it is believed the criteria is met.

[Regional Procedures - Organised and Complex Abuse \[LINK\]](#)

These meetings are chaired by the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO), but in those cases where extrafamilial harm is the primary factor, it is appropriate for these to be chaired by either the ROTH Team Manager, a Lead Child Protection Practitioner, or the Manager of the Lead Child Protection Practitioners. This should be considered on a case by case basis.

Risk Outside the Home Language

It is important to consider how the language used and written influences and underpins work with children. In recent years there has been significant research into risk outside the home and learning from what children and their families have told services. Newcastle are committed to implementing the learning regarding language and our practice, and seek to use the tools and language developed by The Children's Society.

[Appropriate Language Guides for child exploitation and abuse \[LINK\]](#)

[ROTH Terminology Guidelines \[LINK\]](#)

Please visit the below link for access to ROTH Pathway, Exploitation Screening Tool, ROTH assessment tool and further guidance on ROTH thresholds and CP Plans

[NSCP Resource Library – ROTH \[LINK\]](#)

Resources in This Document

1. [NSCP Resource Library – ROTH \[LINK\]](#)
2. [ROTH Guidance Flowchart \[LINK\]](#)
3. [Roth CP Plan \[LINK\]](#)
4. [ROTH Conference Agency Report \[LINK\]](#)
5. [Regional Procedures - Organised and Complex Abuse \[LINK\]](#)
6. [Appropriate Language Guides for child exploitation and abuse \[LINK\]](#)
7. [ROTH Terminology Guidelines \[LINK\]](#)