

# Contextual Safeguarding 7 Minute Briefing

## **1. Background**

Traditional approaches to protecting children & young people from harm have focussed on the risk of violence and abuse from inside the home, and don't always address the time that children/young people spend outside the home.

As children move from early childhood and into adolescence, they spend increasing amounts of time socialising independently of their families. The nature of the relationships they form in these settings, informs the extent to which they encounter protection or abuse.

## **2. What is it?**

Contextual safeguarding has been developed to inform policy and practice approaches to safeguarding adolescents, 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, peer groups, with adults not connected to their families and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have less influence over these contexts and young people's experience of extra-familial abuse can undermine a parent/child relationship.

## **3. What can adolescents be of risks of?**

This list isn't exhaustive but includes peer on peer abuse, acts of violence exploitation, online abuse, missing episodes, criminal & gang activity, possession of weapons, radicalisation, trafficking, and modern slavery.

Peer relationships are influential during adolescence, friendships can be anti-social and unsafe if formed in contexts characterised by violence and/or harmful attitudes.

Questions to consider:

- Do parents/carers have an awareness of their child's peer group and how and where they are spending time?
- Are you concerned about the peer associations/relationships they are forming?
- Are there concerns about a change in their behaviour?

## **4. Possible push factors**

**Push Factors** – some reasons that could lead to a young person becoming distant from the people who would usually protect them:

- Living with domestic abuse
- Being thrown out of home
- Family behaviours and beliefs
- Being in a residential or foster placement where they are unhappy
- Alcohol or substance misuse within the home
- Parents with mental health problems
- Having problems at, or not being in school, training or employment
- Being bullied or threatened

- Having siblings with difficulties
- Being in trouble
- Bereavement or significant loss

## **5. Possible pull factors**

**Pull Factors** - The grooming techniques used to gain the young person's attention, admiration, and affection often that often tap into their insecurities or desire for acceptance and status:

- Receiving alcohol, drugs, money, or gifts
- Getting a buzz and the excitement of doing something risky or forbidden
- Feeling accepted
- Being offered somewhere to stay where there are no rules
- Being given lifts, taken to new places and having adventures with a casual acquaintance
- Being part of an alternative scene
- Meeting somebody who thinks they are special on the internet

## **6. What We Should Do**

A Contextual Safeguarding approach aims to disrupt harmful environments in the community rather than move young people away from them. It seeks to identify the ways in which professionals, adults and young people can change the environments where abuse can occur by engaging with those who can change those spaces, i.e. retailers/hospitality, youth service, police, community leaders, transport providers, schools, local authority to make environments safer.

## **7. How to share or report your concerns**

If you are worried about a child initially consult your designated safeguarding lead to discuss what action and procedure you should follow.

There may be a need to discuss your concerns with [Salford Children Services](#).

If a young person is involved with Children Services, please contact their worker and together you can consider a consultation with the Complex Safeguarding team and/or linked Children Services Police Officers.

Dial 999 if a child is at immediate risk

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### **Useful links**

Contextual Safeguarding website: <https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/>

SSCB website for training opportunities: <https://safeguardingchildren.salford.gov.uk/professionals/multi-agency-training/>

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