



One Minute Guide



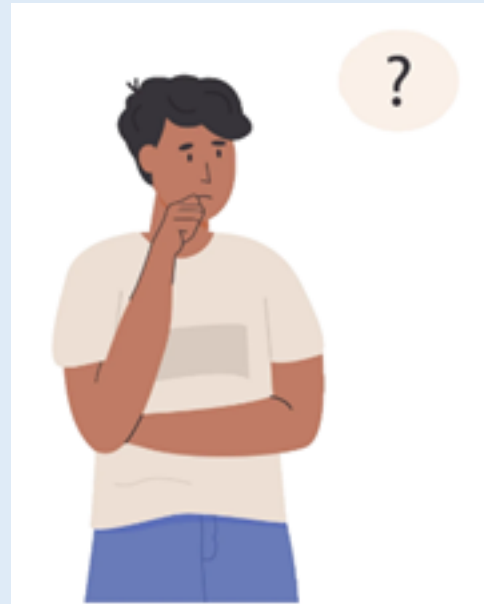
What is Contextual Safeguarding?

Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to a young person's experiences of significant harm **beyond** their families. It recognises that the different extra-familial relationships young people form, for example, in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can result in violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and the experience of a young person's extra-familial abuse can undermine existing parent-child relationships, causing many problems.

Children's social care practitioners, child protection systems and wider safeguarding partnerships should engage with individuals and sectors who do have influence over, or work within extra-familial contexts to recognise that assessment of, and intervention with these spaces are a critical and essential part of safeguarding practices. Contextual Safeguarding, therefore, expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people can be vulnerable to abuse beyond their front doors.

What is the purpose of the Contextual Safeguarding approach?

Issues such as sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, youth violence and abusive teenage relationships are often informed by the dynamics at play in young people's peer groups, schools and communities. However, assessment and intervention with young people tends to focus on the young person/s family unit and their home environment to protect the young person/s from harm outside the home. This can prove to be unrealistic, as safety is unlikely to be achieved unless the wider contexts in which a young person is socialising can also be made safe. Contextual Safeguarding therefore, targets extra-familial contexts and relationships in which harm occurs, and addresses this through plans and interventions not only with the young person and their family, but also with the spaces that the young person is frequenting, making the context safer for all those who are part of it.



Examples of contextual interventions

- Increased PCSO presence in parks
- removing free Wi-Fi to prevent groups of young people congregating in areas
- monitoring school buses
- asking local business owners to report any concerns

Which agencies are involved?

As with all safeguarding concerns, Contextual Safeguarding requires a multi-agency approach to child protection. Any person or agency that supports children & young people has a duty of care to ensure young people are safe and protected outside of their family homes.

Contextual Safeguarding also draws support from; the wider community, shops, take-aways, parks, CCTV monitors, public transport and anywhere that young people congregate.

It is important to recognise that all can play a pivotal role in safeguarding children contextually.



One Minute Guide



Who to Contact / How to Refer

Where there is an emergency about the safety of a child and they are in **immediate danger the police should be contacted on 999 without delay.**

Extra-familial harm is just as risky to children and young people as concerns from within the home.

If you have concerns that a child or young person is at risk within the community, a MARF should be completed, and a referral made to children's social care. If you believe the situation is **urgent but there is no immediate danger, please call 0345 8503 503 in the first instance** to speak to the Integrated Front Door.

It is important to gather as much information as possible about the young person/s network within the context that they are suffering or are likely to suffer harm, for example:

- **In what context is the harm taking place?**
- **What harm has been suffered / is likely to be suffered?**
- **Who else is present (peers, strangers, family members etc.)?**
- **What have you / your agency done to mitigate any risk?**
- **What is the young person's understanding of the situation?**

Supporting Documents

The following document has been designed to support professionals in assessing the risks and safety of different contexts that a young person may frequent. It helps practitioners in gathering relevant information to assess potential risks to a young person and to feed into a referral to social care where threshold for further intervention has been met.



Context-Assessment-Triangles.pdf



Useful Resources

WEBSITE WSCP Worried About a Child
www.wakefieldscp.org.uk/worried-about-a-child/

Multi Agency Referral Form (MARF)
www.wakefieldscp.org.uk/professionals/key-safeguarding-forms-tools-standards-frameworks/

WEBSITE Contextual Safeguarding Network
<https://tinyurl.com/3eyd458d>

WEBSITE NSPCC Learning
<https://tinyurl.com/4nbsxxve>

WEBSITE WSCP Contextual Safeguarding
www.wakefieldscp.org.uk/resources/contextual-safeguarding/