

Report sponsor: Andy Smith, Strategic Director  
People Services  
Report author: Suanne Lim, Director Early Help  
& Children's Social Care

## **Contextual Safeguarding**

### **Purpose**

- 1.1 Reducing serious youth violence and criminal related exploitation is a priority for Derby. The City is experiencing an increase in group youth violence, drug dealing and children and young people exploited for criminal activities.
- 1.2 This report outlines the headline principles of Contextual Safeguarding as a strategic response by partners in Derby and the current progress of Derby and Derbyshire Children's Partnership in developing a defined, holistic model of practice. Contextual Safeguarding is an evidence based framework that was created by Bedfordshire University in 2016. Partnership approaches have since been developing nationally as a response to community vulnerability, serious youth violence and criminal related exploitation.
- 1.3 The key strategic principles that Contextual Safeguarding seeks to recognise are;
  - An approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families.
  - Power of relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online.
  - Acknowledging parents /carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships.
- 1.4 Contextual Safeguarding's success is rooted in the role that partners and partnerships have and their shared understanding and accountability to holistic safeguarding. It extends the parameters of traditional child protection systems and its referral, assessment, planning and intervention to extra familial settings.

### **Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 To note the progress and direction of travel in developing a Contextual Safeguarding approach for Derby.

## **Reason(s)**

- 3.1 There is increasing national recognition that extra familial risk within local areas and communities require a different approach to that which traditional interventions currently deliver.

## **Supporting information**

- 4.1 Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 states:

“As well as threats to the welfare of children from within their families, children may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families. These extra-familial threats might arise at school and other educational establishments, from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online. These threats can take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple threats, including: exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as county lines; trafficking, online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. Extremist groups make use of the internet to radicalise and recruit and to promote extremist materials. Any potential harmful effects to individuals identified as vulnerable to extremist ideologies or being drawn into terrorism should also be considered.”

- 4.2 In March 2019, the Derby Safeguarding Children Board considered and approved in principle the development of a Contextual Safeguarding approach within Derby underpinned by the strategic principles outlined in 1.2 and agreed to provide overall governance and strategic leadership.
- 4.3 This model of delivery does not seek to replace the need for individual work with children, young people and families but instead aims to add value to "complex" and "traditional" safeguarding applications in its development of active partnerships with those agencies that have reach into extra-familial settings. In this respect it provided the opportunity to develop the existing practices in Derby and build upon similar models of emerging shared partnership arrangements. The measure of success will ultimately be in a reduction of contextual risk and increased reported safety in extra familial settings where young people encounter harm.
- 4.4 From June 2019 the Vulnerable Young People's Subgroup of the Safeguarding Board has been actively reviewing various approaches adopted in other local authorities and considering what would add value to the existing complex landscape of intervention. In addition the subgroup consulted a focus group of young people to inform future direction which provided rich and meaningful feedback regarding how young people currently view services and those services response to risk. Fundamental to any changes to be developed was improvement in relationships, perceived and real, between intervening services, such as social care and the police, and local communities of young people in order to build trust and view young people and communities they live in as "assets" and central to any solution.

- 4.5 Partners agreed to adopt a Places People Risk approach and to pilot a Community Peer Group Assessment Model. A peer group assessment is a holistic assessment of extra familial harm to a young person or groups of young people and entails a multi agency mapping of need and partner intelligence in respect of “people, places, risk”. Social Care, Police, Community Safety, Health and Schools used this approach to understand and respond to increasing anti-social behaviour by a group of young people within a locality of Derby.

Information sharing lead to shared vision about current and future prevention activity in risk areas. There was a collective understanding and appreciation of professional roles and intervention was informed by the young person and parent’s voice and targeted at the context of harm as opposed to individual, for example CCTV installed were in parks as active safeguards to disrupt current activity and prevent future risk. A focus on building strengths outside the family was a critical success factor. Cross relationships between current case holders enabled better collaborative working and sharing of plans. Engaging schools enabled prevention of any further young people being drawn into the group. During the course of the pilot, no further young people were added to the group being monitored and behaviours did not escalate further.

- 4.4 The process of completing a Community Assessment did bring structure to understanding and working through how partners can collectively “hold the risk” of a community problem from a shared partnership perspective. It provided the appreciation there was no one agency quick fix to addressing acute issues. In addition, the process sought to dispel myths around respective professionals remits and instead pull together how the respective agency strengths can complement and work together. This has set the foundations for preventing further escalation in that locality area in the future. The basis of this work is now informing another group activity and community assessment in another locality.
- 4.5 Through undertaking a Community Assessment we have evidence of an emerging approach to strategically underpin prevention. Through a structured process we have shared intelligence of a developed urban street gang in Derby and have effectively shared information to ensure activity is coordinated, planned and not counterproductive. We have a greater appreciation of respective roles and how they can complement overall outcomes. We have piloted a collective approach to managing risk and this is helping us to plan strategically to prevent escalation of further risk in this area.

- 4.6 The learning and what is needed to protect and safeguard vulnerable people by the partnership?
- A consistent method of enabling a strategic understanding of prevalence and level of child criminal exploitation (extra familial risk) including who is involved and where it is taking place to enable collective proactive rather than re-active silo-ed approaches.
  - Ability to gather intelligence about serious youth crime from all relevant stakeholders, including the community, in one place.
  - An agreed process that drives partnership working with all relevant stakeholders including the private sector and development of appropriate rehabilitative interventions.
  - A process that enables engagement of our communities in playing a more active role.
  - An agreed process of how, who and what is raised with the public and all relevant professionals ie a communications strategy.
  - Overlaying all of this is the evolving change of partners approach to considering at point of referral and assessment, wider implications of extra-familial risk through our existing policy and procedures and what can be done at lowest level.
- 4.7 The Safeguarding Board is currently considering the outcomes and learning of the pilot, the wider application as both a preventative strategy for the City and its place in managing risk as defined by Working Together 2018.

### **Public/stakeholder engagement**

- 5.1 Young people's focus group was held in August 2019 facilitated by Safe and Sound and the Youth Offending Service that has informed development to date
- 5.2 Partners of the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Board are fully engaged in developing the right approach for Derby.

### **Other options**

- 6.1 The Hackney panel approach was considered by the Safeguarding Board. However this sought to replicate and did not add value to the existing complex landscape of existing provision and interventions.

### **Financial and value for money issues**

- 7.1 The approach draws in existing resources used in a different way. A strategy to reduce or prevent extra familial risk will in turn reduce demand for services and result in financial savings. However this needs to be considered within the context of a longer term benefits strategy.

### **Legal implications**

- 8.1 Partners have duties under the Children Act and Working Together 2018, as outlined in paragraph 4.1 of this report.

### **Other significant implications**

- 9.1 None

**This report has been approved by the following people:**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of sign-off</b>
<b>Legal</b>	Olu Idowu	7 February 2020
<b>Finance</b>	Alison Parkin	7 February 2020
<b>Service Director(s)</b>	Suanne Lim	6 February 2020
<b>Report sponsor</b>		
<b>Other(s)</b>	Liz Moore - HR	6 February 2020