



Contextual Safeguarding

Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to 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 different settings can feature violence and abuse.

As individuals move from early childhood and into adolescence they spend increasing amounts of time socialising independently of their families. During this time the nature of young people's schools, neighbourhoods and online behaviour, the relationships that they form in these settings informs the extent to which they encounter protection or abuse. Evidence shows that, from robbery on public transport, sexual violence in parks and gang-related violence on streets through to online bullying and harassment from school-based peers and abuse within their intimate relationships, young people encounter significant harm in a range of settings beyond their families. Parents/carers have little influence over this, but young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships.

A Contextual Safeguarding system supports the development of approaches which disrupt/change harmful extra-familial contexts rather than move families/young people away from them. While parents/carers are not in a position to change the nature of extra-familial contexts those who manage or deliver services in these spaces are and they therefore become critical partners in the safeguarding agenda.

This approach extends the concept of 'capacity to safeguard' beyond families to those individuals/sectors who manage extra-familial settings in which young people encounter risk. Practitioners need to engage with others who do have influence over/within extrafamilial contexts, and recognise that assessment of, and intervention with, these spaces are a critical part of safeguarding practice.

Contextual Safeguarding expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people are vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts.



National drivers that support a contextual safeguarding approach include:

- Public Health England A new legal duty on: “a range of agencies such as police, education, and health partners, local authorities, offender management, housing, youth and victim services to take action to prevent and tackle violent crime.”
- Home Office A new legal duty in respect of a multi-agency approach to preventing and tackling serious violence: “Bringing together police, local government, health professionals, community leaders and other key partners to tackle the root causes of serious violence.”

In Kirklees, to support contextual safeguarding there is an information report to complete and send to the West Yorkshire Police Portal.

A Contextual Safeguarding Implementation Toolkit has now been developed to provide a roadmap for embedding contextual safeguarding in:

- Referrals and screening
- Assessment processes
- Planning and review
- Support, help and intervention
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Policy, strategic engagement, training and commissioning

Additional Resources:

[Kirklees – Information Report & West Yorkshire Police Portal](#)

[PACE Information – For parents](#)

[Contextual Resource for parents](#)

[Contextual Safeguarding Implementation toolkit](#)