
VCSE Workshop

Contextual Safeguarding

Transitional Safeguarding

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Introduction



How familiar are you with contextual safeguarding or transitional safeguarding?



Briefly introduce contextual and transitional safeguarding as crucial evolutions in protecting young people.



Outcome: to equip VCSE organisations with foundational knowledge and practical insights.

Contextual Safeguarding





Identifying Extra-Familial Risks

- Common settings include peer groups, online spaces, and community spaces
- Partnership working is crucial to ensure information is shared and responded to
- In pairs, discuss 1-2 specific extra-familial risks you have encountered or are concerned about in your work.

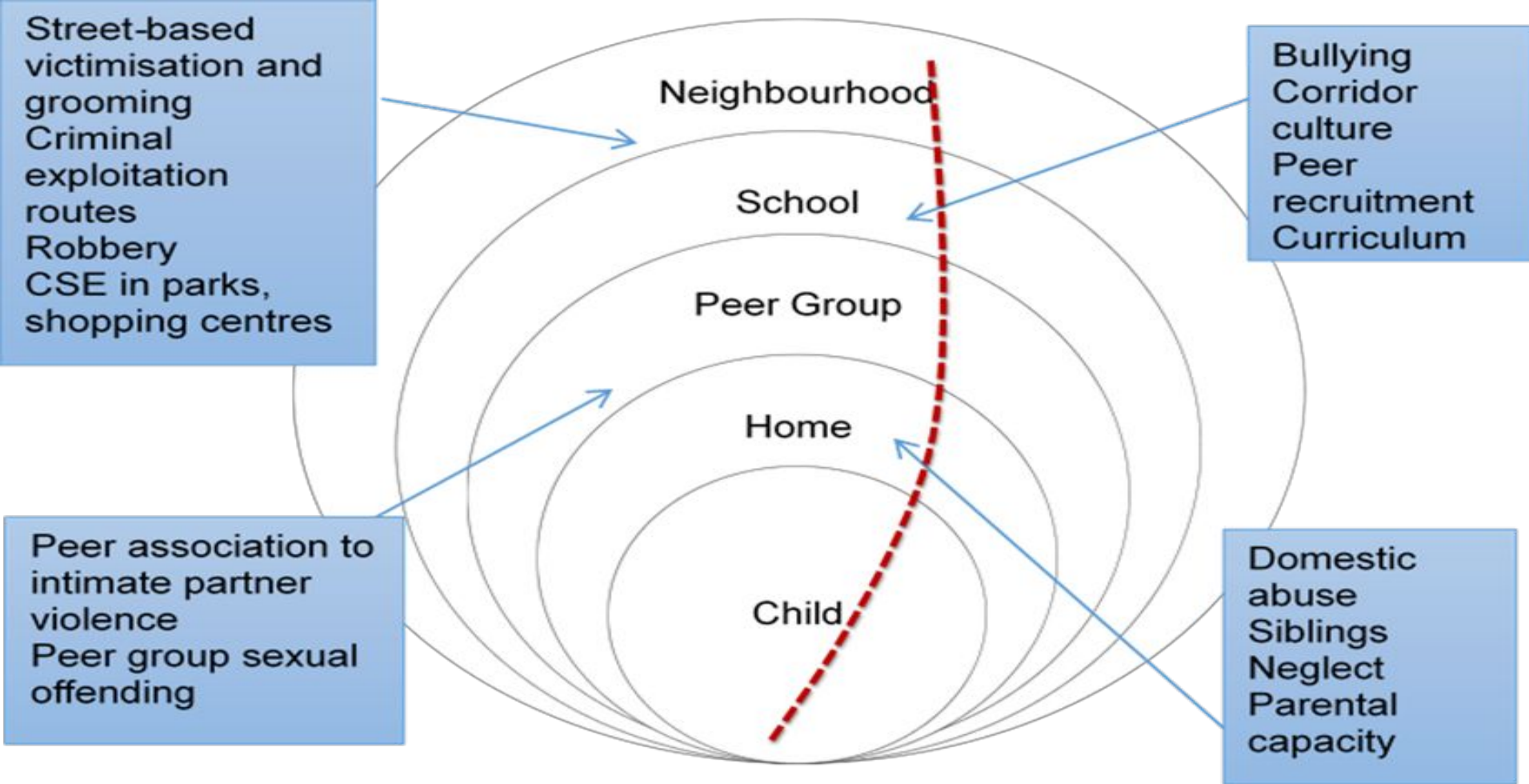
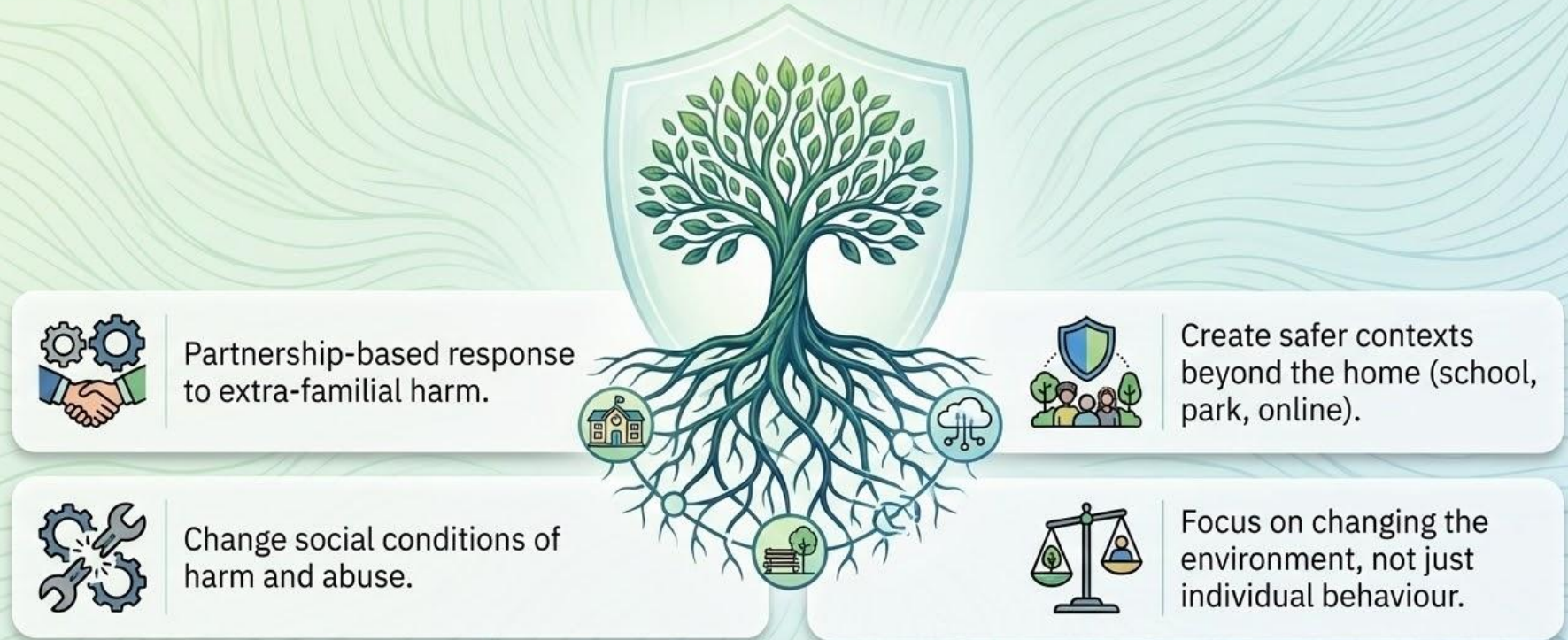


Diagram to visualise research on the contextual dynamics of extra-familial harm (Contextual Safeguarding Network)

Contextual Safeguarding is an ecological approach



Reporting child safeguarding concerns

If you think a child is in immediate danger you should call 999.

You can tell us about a child, young person or parent/carer that needs support in some way by contacting our Single Point of Access Team (SPA). You may be concerned about the child's developmental needs, issues that the parent/carer is experiencing, or you may suspect a child is being neglected or subjected to physical, sexual, or emotional abuse.

You can:

- call us on 0208 547 5008 between 8:00am - 5:15pm, Monday - Thursday, and Friday between 8:00am - 5:00pm
- or call the out of hours duty team (evenings and weekends) on 020 8770 5000.

You will be asked for your name, address, details of the child and the concerns you have. These are to help us make further enquiries and to contact you again if necessary. Your details will be treated confidentially and will not be disclosed to members of the family in question without your consent.

You can also tell us about a child, young person or parent/carer that needs support in some way by

[completing the Single Point of Access online referral form](#)

For more information see the [Council website](#)

Local approach - Risk Outside the Home (ROTH) - locations of concern (contextual safeguarding)

REPORTING COMMUNITY CONCERNS

 For locations of concern, where a child may be at risk of harm within a community setting, please send the following information to:
contextualsafeguarding.exploitation@achievingforchildren.org.uk



1. Details of the location



2. How many children are impacted i.e. **one or a large group/gathering** (please give some context but do not provide children's details or attach any photos of children)



3. What time of day is the location impacted, is there a pattern i.e. Friday nights.



4. What is the specific concern?



AfC APPROACH & RESOURCES



AfC has a number of ways that we are implementing contextual safeguarding and utilise the term **Risk Outside the Home**, a term agreed by our local children to discuss our child protection equivalent process when a child or family are only at risk of significant harm outside the home.

We have also developed our **local response to locations**.



Risk outside the home information leaflet (PDF)



Risk outside the home review and plan policy (PDF)



Risk outside the home reviews and flowchart (PDF)



Risk outside the home reviews and plan (PDF)

Transitional Safeguarding

A Contextual Approach

Transitional Safeguarding - a way of thinking



Transitional Safeguarding



What it is: Supporting young people as they move from childhood to adulthood.



Key focus: Continuity of care and protection across different services and life stages (e.g., from children's to adult services).



Importance: Prevents young people from 'falling through the gaps' as they transition.



Discussion Prompt: "What challenges have you observed or experienced when young people transition between services or stages of life?"

Report neglect or abuse of an adult (safeguarding concern)

If someone is in danger of being hurt right now, call the Police on 999

What is considered a safeguarding concern

Abuse or neglect can come from anyone, including family members, friends or professionals. It can include:

- physical abuse
- domestic or sexual abuse
- neglect
- someone not looking after themselves (self neglect)
- psychological or emotional abuse (bullying someone or making them feel scared)
- forcing someone to work (modern slavery)
- taking over their home to use it for crimes such as drug dealing (cuckooing)
- financial abuse
- discriminatory abuse

Refer an adult to the adult safeguarding team if you are a professional using this [form](#)

For more information see the [Council website](#)

What is the VASA Panel?

The Vulnerable Adolescents Supported into Adulthood (VASA) panel is a partnership approach between organisations in the Kingston and Richmond boroughs to consider cases of adolescents who remain at high risk of contextual harm and exploitation despite previous intervention efforts at the point of transition into adulthood and up to 25 years.

How to refer to the VASA Panel?

Please contact the VASA coordinator for a referral form. kingstonandrichmondvasa@kingston.gov.uk

Referrals need to be received at least five working days before the panel occurs to allow sufficient screening time. You will be notified of the outcome of your referral before the next panel date.

What does VASA Panel support look like?

Tailored packages of support focusing on reducing vulnerabilities and increasing protective factors. Specialist mentoring is also available.

Delivered through local partners and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS).

Who can make a referral?

Any agency supporting an adolescent aged 18-25 who meets the referral criteria can make a referral.

[referral form](#).

You can also contact -

kingstonandrichmondvasa@kingston.gov.uk

What happens with the referral?

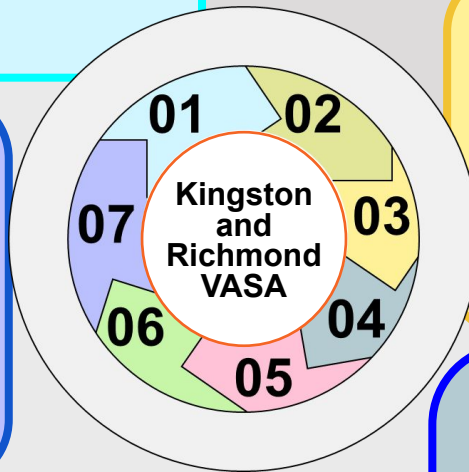
All referrals will be reviewed by the VASA Coordinator to ensure it is appropriate for the panel and not already heard at another panel and that there is sufficient information on the referral form to enable partners to adequately prepare for the meeting.

How does the VASA Panel work?

The VASA Panel meets on the 1st Wednesday of the month. The panel is chaired by Kingston and Richmond Community safety Teams. The panel has a range of multi-agency partners to collectively assess the risk and agree a bespoke package of support. The panel includes statutory and non-statutory partners, as well as lead safeguarding professionals. This partnership approach ensures those with the expertise to address the vulnerabilities of individuals at risk.

How will the person be involved in this process?

Participation is voluntary. The consent of the individual is required before interventions can take place. High risk cases can be discussed at the panel without consent.



Role of VCSE

Vital partner in contextual and transitional safeguarding approaches due to your unique position in communities and your ability to offer **flexible, person-centred, and trusted trusted support**.



Provides a rich and diverse range of support and activities for people where statutory services may be limited, particularly for those who do not meet eligibility criteria of statutory services



Instrumental in ensuring people's voices are heard



Foster stable, meaningful relationships with people, which is critical for those who have experienced trauma or who are resistant to engaging with statutory services



Possess **specialist expertise** in areas like mental health support, housing assistance, or support for victims of specific crimes (e.g., modern slavery, exploitation), which can be invaluable to multi-agency partnerships



Contextual Support: often working within specific communities and contexts (e.g., in schools, online, or local neighborhoods), helping to address risks and harms that occur outside the family home, such as exploitation or homelessness



Ensure policies are updated to reflect contextual safeguarding

Case Study

— Wednesday 3rd December —

What is Contextual Safeguarding?

- Approach that protects young people by addressing risks that occur beyond the home - within their **peer groups**, **schools** and **wider community environment**.
- Numerous **linked harms** - bullying, coercion, violence, threats, exploitation, grooming, criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation, online harm etc)

How does exploitation typically occur?

Identification and targeting → Building trust/ Grooming → Incentives/Offering an exchange → Emotional abuse and Coercive Control → Sexual abuse → Financial Abuse → Reduction in 'benefits' → Escalation in exploitation of individual → Isolation → Threats → Blackmail → Debt Bondage / Fear/ Emotional Pressure

Who are the victims?

- They may come from any background
 - Exploitation does not occur because of their **choices** but because someone exploits their **Age, Needs, Vulnerabilities, Desire for belonging**
 - Previous abuse or neglect.
 - Unstable home environments due to issues like domestic abuse or parental problems.
 - Being in or leaving the care system.
 - Frequent missing episodes from home or school.
 - Social isolation or difficulties.
 - Economic vulnerability.
 - Connections with exploited children or gang involvement.
 - Mental health or substance misuse issues.
 - Having a disability.
 - Being excluded from mainstream education.
 - Being a migrant child or unaccompanied asylum seeker.
- Children under 18 cannot legally consent to exploitation, their involvement is often due to coercion or manipulation.
 - Grooming means young people may not see abuse, viewing their abuser as a friend or partner.
 - Due to fear or shame, children struggle to report abuse; adults and professionals must be vigilant for signs.

SAFEGUARD

Sexual identity, wellbeing choice

Absence, truancy going missing

Family and homelife

Emootional and physical health

Gangs, groups, age gaps, crime

Use of technology and sexual Bullying

Alcohol and substances

Receipt or unexplained gifts or money

Distrust of authority figures

Case Study

Referral Summary:

The school contacts Children's Social Care following a pattern of behavioural and attendance changes. Jayden's usually a quiet, friendly pupil, but recently he's been more distracted, missing morning lessons, and his uniform has become untidy. Staff say he appears tired, sometimes falling asleep in class. He's been seen leaving the school gates at lunchtime and returning late, occasionally with older teenagers who don't attend the school.

When spoken to, Jayden says he's "just meeting friends" and that people are "being nosy." One teacher noted that he had a new smartphone and a designer jacket, and when asked about them, he laughed and said, "You think my mum could afford this?" before walking away.

His mother, Sarah, has also contacted the school to say she's struggling to manage him at home. She says he's often out late, has become secretive, and has recently been "answering back" more. She's worried he might be mixing with people who are a bad influence, but doesn't know who they are. Mum struggles financially, and gets support through a local food bank and her local church.

There are no previous social care concerns. Jayden is doing worse academically but still attends most days. The school's safeguarding lead says, "We're not sure what's going on — it's just a feeling something isn't right."

Initial Discussion Points

- What information raises curiosity?
- What might be 'normal' teenage behaviour vs signs of exploitation?
- If you had to discuss this with Jayden and his family, what would be your approach?

Contacts and resources

Steff Royston-Mitchell - stephanie.royston-mitchell@kingston.gov.uk

Stephen Hall - stephen.hall@achievingforchildren.org.uk



Collaborative

Collaborating with professionals, children and young people, families and communities to inform decisions about safety.



Ecological

Considering the links between the spaces where young people experience harm and how these are shaped by inequalities.



Rights-based

Rooted in children's and human rights.



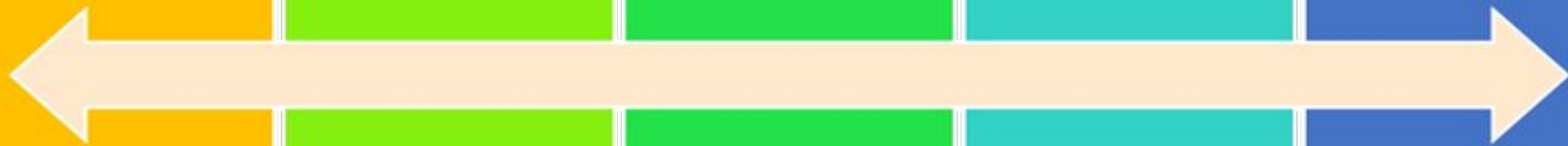
Strengths-based

Building on the strengths of individuals and communities to achieve change.



Evidence-informed

Producing research that is grounded in the reality of how life happens. Proposing solutions informed by lived experience.



Achieving for Children Resources

[Achieving for Children Risk Outside of the Home](#)

- [Response to locations.](#)
 - [Risk outside the home information leaflet \(PDF\)](#)
 - [Risk outside the home review and plan policy \(PDF\)](#)
 - [Risk outside the home reviews and flowchart \(PDF\)](#)
 - [Risk outside the home reviews and plan \(PDF\)](#)
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Resources: Contextual Safeguarding Network

Key Resources for the VCSE

The [Contextual Safeguarding Network](#) at Durham University has developed specific tools and resources for the VCSE sector to embed this approach:

- ["Towards Safety" Toolkit](#): A self-assessment tool to help youth-facing VCS organisations identify their strengths and barriers in building safety within and around their provision.
 - [VCS Collective](#): A network for organisations actively using Contextual Safeguarding principles to share learning, evidence impact, and collaborate.
 - Context Mapping Guidance: Tools to help practitioners and young people visually describe and analyse risks and safety in different contexts, such as peer groups, schools, and online environments.
 - [Conversations about Contextual Safeguarding](#)
 - [Context Assessment Triangles](#)
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County Lines Awareness Video



Resources: Transitional Safeguarding

- [Transitional Safeguarding Briefing for sector leaders](#)