



**Adur & Worthing Councils' Safer Communities Partnership**

# Peer Group Conference: Terms of Reference

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## 1. Contextual Safeguarding

Whilst traditionally children's safeguarding has focused upon the risks posed to children within a family context, contextual safeguarding recognises that adolescent children in particular spend large amount of time in a variety of contexts. These contexts include, but are not limited to:

- Community and/or social spaces;
- Online spaces; or
- School and colleges

The contexts in which our young people spend time are often outside the influence of families and domestic settings and can be referred to as Extra Familial Risk/Harm. The extra familiar risks that contextual safeguarding can consider include youth violence, gangs, involvement in crime, county lines drug dealing, child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation. Contextual safeguarding recognises that children may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from:

- Their peer groups;
- The wider community,
- Online; and
- Adults

For any concerns relating to radicalisation, extremism and terrorism, the standard Prevent process must be followed. Further details can be found on the West Sussex County Council website.

## 2. What is the Peer Group Conference?

The Peer Group Conference is a multi-agency meeting to discuss and explore issues within the local community where there are concerns about a particular group of young people, or a location where young people are known to congregate. The meeting allows for professionals to understand the risk levels young people are subject to and, as a result, appropriately safeguard them.

## 3. Core Principles

The Adur & Worthing Peer Group Conference is informed by the Contextual Safeguarding Network and its principles. As the Network states in its document 'Contextual Safeguarding: An overview of the operational, strategic and conceptual framework' (Firmin, 2017:3):

*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 their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young*

*people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships. Therefore children's social care practitioners need to engage with individuals and sectors who do have influence over/within extra-familial contexts, and recognise that assessment of, and intervention with, these spaces are a critical part of safeguarding practices. Contextual Safeguarding, therefore, expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people are vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts.*

National guidance also states that context of children and young people ought to be considered when working to reduce harm and risk.

#### **4. Adur & Worthing Principles**

Adur & Worthing Councils adheres to the principles as set out in the West Sussex Contextual Safeguarding Steering Group Governance and Terms of Reference. There are six principles in total:

1. **Recognise & Respond:** Understand, recognise and respond to young people's experiences of harm beyond their families.
2. **Assess & Intervene:** Develop effective tools to identify, assess and intervene when extra familial risk and harm are suspected.
3. **Expand Our Vision:** Expand our vision of child protection and build upon existing criminal justice work to incorporate extra familial contexts into child protection frameworks and referral pathways.
4. **Work in Partnership:** Work in partnership to engage with individuals and sectors who have influence over/within extra-familial contexts to reduce harm and increase welfare.
5. **Capable & Competent Systems:** Ensure our systems are capable and competent to work contextually, looking for opportunities to developed shared resources and systems where appropriate.
6. **Monitor Outcomes:** Monitor outcomes of success in relation to contextual, as well as individual, change.

#### **5. Purpose**

The Peer Group Conference is a multi-agency meeting which involves representatives from key agencies across the Adur & Worthing areas. The purpose of the Peer Group Conference is to:

1. Understand the current risks posed to our young people, including peer group related risks and geographical risks.
2. Ensure that agencies work together in reducing the risk and harm that our young people may be exposed to.
3. Improve knowledge about groups of peers and associates.

4. Improve working practices and encourage taking a multi-agency approach when working with peer on peer abuse.
5. Provide agencies with access to relevant services in the Adur and Worthing area.

## **6. Structure & Attendees**

The Peer Group Conference is chaired by the Lead for Early Help & Wellbeing from Adur & Worthing Councils' Safer Communities Partnership.

The group consists of professionals from a range of agencies. These agencies include:

- Adur & Worthing Councils
- West Sussex County Council – Early Help, Social Care, MEOG, YOS
- Sussex Police
- British Transport Police
- Govia Thameslink Railways
- Local schools and colleges in the Adur and Worthing localities
- Local youth based charities in the Adur and Worthing localities
- NHS and health services
- Housing providers

The governance, management and operational delivery of the Peer Group Conference will be overseen by the Safer Communities Team at Adur & Worthing Councils. In the event that delivery is unable to be managed by the Team for any reason, temporary oversight will be sought from one of the key partner agencies who attend the meetings.

## **7. Peer Group Conference Frequency**

The Peer Group Conference will be held on a monthly basis.

## **8. Information Sharing**

Government guidance and legislation puts the preservation of life and promotion of safety as key considerations when seeking to balance confidentiality and disclosure.

The below legal frameworks allow for information sharing in relation to children, young people and adults:

- Children Act (1989)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- Care Act (2014)
- Human Rights Act (1998)

- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (2018)

In addition to the above, all attendees at the Peer Group Conference are required to sign and adhere to the Confidentiality Agreement which states that information sharing is not permissible without express consent from the administrators and facilitators of the meeting (Safer Communities Partnership). All casenotes and minutes are sent password protected to a core distribution list.

## **Appendix 1: Extra Familial Harm Definitions**

### **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

CSE is a form of sexual abuse against children. It occurs when a child or young person is exploited and provided with things – such as gifts, drugs, money, status, affection – in exchange for performing sexual activities. These young people are tricked, manipulated, coerced or forced into sexual activity and are often led to believe they are in a loving and consensual relationship.

A victim has been sexually assaulted even if the sexual activity appears consensual. CSE doesn't always involve physical contact; it can occur through the use of technology.

Types of CSE include, but are not limited to:

- Sexual activity;
- Young people posting or sending explicit images of themselves,
- Filming and/or streaming sexual activities; and
- Engaging in sexual conversations.

### **Criminal Exploitation (CE)**

CE is a form of exploitation where children are forced into committing crime, or being controlled by someone else to carry out certain activities. Young people who are victims of CE may not even understand that they are victims, or they may have been groomed into carrying out certain activities.

Some examples of CE include:

- Forced begging;
- Shoplifting,
- Trafficking,
- County lines drug running,
- Cannabis cultivation; or
- Financial exploitation.

It is important to recognise that some victims, particularly those who are victims of trafficking, may speak no or little English and will be unable to ask for help.

### **Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)**

This is where sexual behaviour expressed by children or young people under the age 18 years old is developmentally inappropriate. This sexualised behaviour may increase risk and harm towards the young person themselves or others. It may also lead to the young person being abusive towards another person.

**Modern Slavery (MS)**

Modern Slavery is where a victim is, or is intended to be, used or exploited for someone else's gain. This is done without any respect for the victim's human rights. It is where a group or individual recruits, moves, harbours victims through the use of force, coercion, abuse or deception. Often these victims will be promised something in return for their service (such as accommodation or money) but this often will not come to fruition.



## Appendix 2: Useful Resources

- Contextual Safeguarding Network - <https://csnetwork.org.uk/>
- West Sussex County Council Safeguarding - <https://www.westsussexscp.org.uk/>
- Public Health England, CAPRICORN document - [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/828228/CAPRICORN\\_resource.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/828228/CAPRICORN_resource.pdf)

### Appendix 3: Acronym Guide

ADC	Arun District Council
AFRS	Adolescent Family Resource Service
ASB	Anti-Social Behaviour
ASBRAC	Anti-Social Behaviour Risk Assessment Conference
AWC	Adur & Worthing Councils
CAMHS	Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service
CCE	Child Criminal Exploitation
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
CE	Child Exploitation
CGL	Change Grow Live (substance misuse service)
CJS	Criminal Justice System
County Lines	Where gangs and organised crime groups export illegal drugs out of bigger cities such as London into smaller towns in the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines.
CSC	Children's Social Care
CSN	Contextual Safeguarding Network
Cuckooing	Where a vulnerable person's home is take over by drug dealers for the purpose of cutting, storing and distributing drugs.
E-CINS	A cloud based multi-agency case management system. E-CINS stands for Empowering Communities Inclusion and Neighbourhood Management System.
EH/IPEH	Early Help
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulations
ISVA	Independent Sexual Violence Advocate
LA	Local Authority
LSCP	Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership
MACE	Multi Agency Child Exploitation Group
MAPS	Multi Agency Problem Solving Meeting
MASH	Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub
MEOG	Multi Agency Exploitation Operations Group
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NICHE	The case management system used by police for recording crimes and intelligence.
OCG	Organised Crime Group
PCSO	Police Community Support Officer
PNC	Police National Computer
PYO	Prevention Youth Officers
REBOOT	A police run initiative for young people aged 11-17 who may be at risk of serious youth violence, gang involvement and criminal exploitation.
ROCU	Regional Organised Crime Unit
SAB	Safeguarding Adults Board
SARC	Sexual Assault Referral Centre
SCJB	Sussex Criminal Justice Board
SCP	Safer Communities Partnership (Adur & Worthing Councils)
SECAMB	South East Coast Ambulance Service
SIU	Special Investigations Unit
SOC	Serious Organised Crime

SPFT	Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust
TTCG	Tactical Tasking & Coordination Group
YMCA Downslink	A local branch of a national charity working with young people.
YOS	Youth Offending Service