



CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING
IMPLEMENTATION TOOLKIT

Extra-Familial Risks or Vulnerable/Safeguarding Adolescents' Panels

Establishing a holistic/integrated meeting to hold oversight of extra-familial concerns in the area

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When developing a Contextual Safeguarding approach it is important to consider whether you have, or need to create, a structure to provide multi-agency oversight of the young people, families and contexts associated to extra-familial risk and open to (or referred into) children's services.

Such a structure can draw together often siloed review panels for issues such as sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, peer-on-peer abuse, serious youth violence teenage relationship abuse and a wider set of behaviour that can be peer-influenced, or associated to extra-familial risks, such as suicide, self-harm, substance abuse and anti-social behaviour. Areas may also want to consider whether the extra-familial dynamics of radicalisation are also considered in these meetings.

In drawing together a range of existing meetings, an overarching extra-familial risk or vulnerable adolescents' panel requires specific, and action-focused objectives. It needs to go beyond discussing concerns to playing a role in developing and overseeing interventions to address extra-familial risks or increase extra-familial welfare and protection so as to prevent significant harm to young people.

The operating function for these meeting structures can vary dependent on local priorities, partnerships and wider practice approaches. Despite local variations there are some questions to consider when establishing and reviewing the operation of a local oversight panel/meeting: some of these pertain to Tier 1 and others to Tier 2 of the Contextual Safeguarding framework.

Overarching Considerations

How does this meeting/panel replace, or feed into, existing multi-agency structures. For example:

- When would the discussions at this meeting be referred into a strategic decision-making structure within either safeguarding (exploitation sub-group of a safeguarding partnership) or community safety (location tasking)?
- Are there some multi-agency meetings, for example panels providing oversight of radicalisation concerns that will continue to function and, where relevant, communicate with the overarching panel?
- Is there a clear primary (core) and secondary group membership identified for the panel?
- Do professionals have access to standard templates for referring concerns into this panel?
- Is there an information sharing agreement in place for the meeting? In addition to outlining confidentiality, does the agreement make reference to proportionate, contextual, and action-focused requirements on the information that is shared?
- If there was an occasion where a young person/family was being discussed who was related in some way to a group member are their guidelines for holding restricted versions of them meeting?



Tier 1 Considerations

- Does the local thresholds document provide mechanism for screening referrals for children and families impacted by extra-familial risks – and can this be used to inform and frame decision-making at the panel?
- Does the template used to refer concerns into the panel/meeting request a proportionate, and contextually relevant, information about children and families (i.e. not detailed personal, intra-familial or historic information) that will be managed by child and family plans developed independently of plans to address extra-familial risk?
- Does the template used to refer concerns into the panel/meeting invite professionals to weight concerns and children and/or families with reference to the extra-familial concerns that would be the subject of the meeting?

Tier 2 Considerations

- Is there a thresholds document for contexts (peer groups, schools and neighbourhood settings) that can be used to inform and frame decision-making for tasking context assessments or escalating contextual concerns to strategic forums?
- Does panel membership provide sufficient coverage/oversight of the extra-familial contexts that may be referred into, or discussed, at meetings?
- Does the template used to refer concerns into the panel/meeting prompt professionals to include, where available, visual and pen narratives of a peer groups, school or neighbourhood locations associated to the extra-familial risks of concern?
- Does the template used to refer concerns into the panel/meeting prompt consistent context weighting discussions to form part of a case summary?
- As well as review progress on individual young people and families affected by extra-familial risks is their clarity on the role of the meeting in reviewing the findings of context assessment and making recommendations for context safeguarding/planning/strategy meetings or context protection conferences?

A range of areas have developed holistic, multi-agency meeting structures to provide oversight of local extra-familial concerns. You can find out more about approaches developed by network member sites in a briefing on holistic approaches to safeguarding adolescents available on the Contextual Safeguarding website's publication page – you can also access it [here](#).

