

Contextual Safeguarding in Redthread

This case study was written by Delphine Peace, Research Fellow in the Contextual Safeguarding programme, in partnership with Rabena Faried, Practice Development Lead at Redthread. It shares how Redthread is adopting Contextual Safeguarding and the difference the approach has made to safeguarding young people from extra-familial harm.

How is Redthread implementing Contextual Safeguarding?

[Redthread](#) is a charity that embeds specialist youth workers in health settings, and currently works in hospital emergency departments across London and the Midlands. When a young person presents at hospital Redthread workers use this as an opportunity in young people's lives to develop safety plans with them to help them feel safer in their community. They also do case work with young people, subject to consent, supporting them across a range of different areas.

Redthread has adapted tools from the CS Network to support safety planning and risk assessment with young people – namely the safety mapping, peer mapping and 'All Around Me' tools. A case study example of how Redthread has adapted the safety mapping tool to support safety planning with a young person is available [here](#).

Furthermore, Redthread has incorporated Contextual Safeguarding as a lens throughout its workforce development from recruitment through to induction and ongoing training. For example, knowledge of Contextual Safeguarding is reflected as a key criteria in job specifications, as well as being a central aspect of core training modules which are delivered to new starters as part of their induction. Redthread used resources on the CS Network to develop its training material and created its own 'introduction to Contextual Safeguarding' video for new starters, providing an overview of the Contextual Safeguarding framework, theory and principles, extra-familial harm, and how to implement the approach to Redthread's practice within a trauma-informed lens. This video is shared with new starters alongside a reading list which signposts to resources from the CS Network, including academic papers and practice guidance. This introduction to Contextual Safeguarding is supplemented by reflective sessions and reflective journals providing new starters with opportunities to reflect on how they might use the approach in their practice. In addition, Dr Carlene Firmin delivered an introductory training session on Contextual Safeguarding at a Redthread staff event which was recorded and is now shared as part of the induction process.

Embedding Contextual Safeguarding throughout its workforce development has helped Redthread ensure consistency in how the Contextual Safeguarding framework is understood and used by practitioners and has equipped staff with the skills and confidence to bring a contextual focus to their work. This will be supported through the development of a central

bank of resources sharing case studies of how Redthread workers are using Contextual Safeguarding.

Redthread is in the process of further implementing Contextual Safeguarding by reviewing its policies and templates for its risk assessment and intervention plans, and aligning them with the Contextual Safeguarding framework and principles. This work is taking place as part of Redthread's new five-years strategy launch.

What difference has Contextual Safeguarding made to Redthread's work?

- **Helping practitioners to develop bespoke and meaningful safety plans with young people:** The Contextual Safeguarding framework has given professionals a broader understanding of what is happening in young people's lives and how they might support them across various contexts. Practitioners are now better equipped to understand how and why young people might choose certain routes around their local area and how this impacts them. For example, a young person might be late for appointments or school because they take longer routes to avoid risk. Considering locations of risk and safety is helping practitioners when making decisions about young people, such as what service locations may be best for them.
- **Bringing contextual knowledge to strategic panels:** When attending MACE panels or sitting on the London Borough of Hackney's Extra-Familial Risk Panel, Redthread practitioners share the knowledge they have about trends and locations in the communities they work with.
- **Sharing learning across the sector:** As a member of the 'Contextual Safeguarding VCS collective', Redthread shares its experience of embedding Contextual Safeguarding with a range of VCS organisations.
- **Supporting reflections on adolescent development and extra-familial harm:** CS Network resources are used in training and in reflective spaces for knowledge sharing and professional development.

Find out more

In this [podcast](#), published on the CS Network in 2019, Redthread's Practice Development Lead reflects on the difference Contextual Safeguarding has made to its work.

This case study, available [here](#), provides an example of how Redthread has adapted the safety mapping tool to develop a safety plan around a young person.