

This template is designed to support a contextual and welfare-led assessment of a neighbourhood location. The areas of focus and prompts are based on the neighbourhood assessment triangle. Overall, the assessment is designed to help practitioners to:

- 1) understand the needs and risk of harm to young people in a specific context
- 2) inform a tailored response plan that builds safety
- 3) track the outcome of that plan and measures change in relation to the young people involved and to the context itself, to increase safety for all future young people who spend time there.

Assessment Information	
Unique identifier for this context (number, location, etc.)	Location: Bus Route 61 and Church Street Bus Stop [ID 36J]
Date started	27/01/2026
Date completed	13/3/2026
Summary of why you decided to undertake this assessment	This work started as a single assessment of a young person (AK) who was part of a Risk Outside the Home (ROTH) response because of sexual harassment at school. Through this work, a youth worker spoke with AK and her friends and found out that AK and many of her friends have experienced sexual harassment and assault when they travel to school (on the bus and at the bus stop). The chair of the ROTH referred the bus route and bus stop to the monthly multi-agency Contextual Safeguarding meeting, where locations of concern are held. The chair of this meeting tasked a social worker and youth worker to undertake this assessment.
Name and role of people completing the assessment	Hala Raynen (Social Worker) and Jo Knight (Youth Worker)
Name and role of people involved in the assessment and how they have been involved/engaged	<p><b>Young people:</b> Eight young people took part in this assessment – the friends and peers of AK. We (HR and JK) held three sessions at the local youth club and invited them to come along and talk to us about what was going on for them. All eight are girls and travel on the same bus route to school. We did some detached young work on the bus route to and from school to talk to as many young people as we could.</p> <p><b>Professionals:</b> We spoke to the DSL, head of year and deputy head for the middle school We contacted but have not heard back from the DSL of another school whose children we learnt are scared of travelling on the bus</p> <p><b>Non-traditional partners:</b> Transport provider – Yoohoo Bus drivers – we spoke to 5 bus drivers Adult bus users – as part of this we observed the bus journey twice on the way to school and twice on the way home We spoke to members of the public who use the bus at the same time as the young people (12 people) We ran a survey which 16 people completed</p>

<b>Young People and Peer Groups</b>	<b>Identity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do young people in this context view themselves?</li> <li>• Do they see themselves positively? If not, why not?</li> </ul>
		<p>The young people feel like anything can happen on their way to school and at the bus stop. We invited them to make collages to show what travelling to school was like and they depicted images like a war zone and another chose a darts board to show she feels targeted.</p> <p>The girls said they support each other by saving seats and sitting together but they think that they are generally seen as a pain and to be avoided by other people who are not at their school and by the bus driver.</p>
	<b>Emotional and behaviour development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the mood and usual emotion state of the young people in this context?</li> <li>• What are the opportunities and barriers to young people expressing their views and feelings and influencing what happens in this context?</li> </ul>
		<p>When we first met the young people, they were not ready to say how the sexual harassment and assaults affected them. Instead, they spoke about how they can defend themselves and how they think the people trying to harm them are 'stupid' and 'ridiculous'.</p> <p>When we spoke to members of the public who use the bus route, they talked about the young people as 'loud' and 'annoying'. We saw in one of our observations some verbal altercations between the girls and other adult bus users who were asking the girls to be quiet, and once an empty takeaway cup was thrown across the bus from the back where the girls were sitting (it was not clear where it came from). From this we understood that the girls were likely to be feeling angry, upset and like anyone could be a potential enemy. This was confirmed to us in the group discussions with the girls – especially in the third session where we had built some trust and</p>

	<p>understanding with them. We asked the young people to write words to express how they feel when they are on the bus and at the bus stop and they wrote words like 'scared'; 'got at'; and 'attacked'. We concluded that their emotional state of appearing angry was a way of coping with a feeling of being under attack.</p> <p>The young people have had limited opportunities until now to talk about what happens when they travel to school and the harassment they experience. They said that once they were asked to fill in a survey at school, but they don't know what happened after they'd filled it in. They said that they generally don't tell anyone apart from each other when things happen.</p>	
	<b>Care and well-being</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do the young people in this context support each other?</li> <li>• Are young people in this area generally happy? If not, why not?</li> <li>• Are the relationships age appropriate?</li> </ul>
	<p>The young people had strategies to help each other feel safe. Sometimes if they are feeling threatened or intimidated, they will all get off the bus together and walk the rest of the way home. Or sometimes they will stay on the bus even past their own stop because they feel safer when they are together.</p> <p>In the sessions at the youth club the young people laughed and joked and relaxed (they were more relaxed as the sessions went on). They were happy and friendly towards us, answering our questions and open to what we were doing. We really enjoyed getting to know them and seeing how they show love and care towards each other. When one or two people talked about the harm and abuse, they'd experienced on the bus, the girls listened to each other, put their arms around each other and spoke in solidarity – like talking down the abuser and speaking words of encouragement and support to each other. They also gave each other advice on how to cope with things from their own experiences.</p> <p>We observed very caring relationships between these young people. They show a lot of kindness and love with one another. When we asked them what their friendship with each other means to them, they said their friends were everything to them. We asked them to make collages about their relationship with each other, and they chose images like animals holding each other, rainbows, sunshine, and ice-cream.</p>	
	<b>Social relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the relationships like between young people and adults linked to this context?</li> <li>• Who do young people identify as adults who like them, who they trust who they can talk to if they don't feel safe?</li> </ul>
	<p>The young people felt that they do not have adults who like them and who they trust on the bus. They feel as if some of the bus drivers don't like them and do things that make life difficult for them, like driving past and not stopping when they are waiting at a stop or not letting them on if they have lost a pass. None of the girls felt as if they would ask a driver for help.</p> <p>In terms of the adult bus users, the young people talked about how they do not have a relationship with them. When we asked them if they would ever ask a stranger for help, they laughed and said they didn't think anyone would help and didn't think there was anything they could do anyway.</p> <p>One of the young people had once spoken to a teacher at school about the trouble she was having on the bus. The teacher had told another teacher, and it had come out when she was having a meeting at school about her behaviour with her mum there. Her mum had told her off for causing trouble on the bus and not sitting downstairs like she'd told her too and this young person felt let down and misunderstood by this.</p>	
	<b>Community context</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do young people and adults have shared ideas about this context (who it is for, how it should be used etc.)?</li> </ul>
	<p>The bus is a shared space and there is to some extent an understanding of it being a space for everyone. However, there is a sense from our observations that young people occupy the edges of the space – either through choice or through feeling unwelcome. They are usually at the very back of the upper deck where there is less adult supervision. Adults we spoke to talked about sometimes feeling intimidated by the young people and others talked about how they try to avoid coming on the bus during school times because they find the young people, especially the girls, loud and annoying. So there is not a shared and communal space but adult bus users want the young people to behave differently and not be so prominent. The young people feel that they do not have a choice about travelling on the bus and wished they didn't have to. They wish they felt safe on the bus and at the bus stop as they have to spend time there every day.</p>	
<b>Environment and Community</b>	<b>Use of space, environmental factors and neighbourhood safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When and how do young people use the space?</li> <li>• When and how do adults use the space?</li> <li>• How safe do young people and adults feel?</li> <li>• Are there aspects of the physical environment that are impacting the safety and well-being of young people?</li> </ul>
	<p>The young people need to use the bus to get to and from school. As described above, the young people feel generally unsafe, or at least they are aware that harmful things can and do happen to them on the bus or at the bus stop, including being touched, photographed without consent and verbally abused. The young people wait at the bus stop after the school closes and it is also sometimes a place where they hang out with their friends. The bus journey takes about 45 minutes.</p> <p>The bus and bus stop are public places used by a range of different people including children from other schools and adults. We ran a survey for the bus users. We put up a link to it from a QR code at the bus stop and spent time on the bus route several times engaging people in conversation. We found that most adult users do feel safe on the bus but some say they feel intimidated or annoyed by the young people who 'pile' onto the bus. We also found out that young people from other schools also feel fearful of using the bus.</p> <p>There are five bus drivers who operate this route. We have spoken to three of them briefly about the young people and their safety. They generally said that they are only really aware of the young people when they are causing trouble. One of the drivers told us that one time he had to stop the bus and wait for the police because there has been a fight on the upper deck. He did not know what to do to help and did not want to leave his seat so he called the police.</p>	

<b>Partners, businesses and agencies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do the professional partners, businesses and agencies operating in this context relate to young people?</li> <li>• To what extent do these partners understand their role in making this context a positive and safe environment for young people to be in?</li> </ul>
<p>The main transport provider (YooHoo) is the main business in this context. At the bus stop there is a chicken shop nearby and a small corner shop. The bus stop is near the town centre and there is a town centre manager who oversees security in the area. We did some observations of the bus stop and spoke to the business owners. They were very willing to talk to us. The chicken shop manager says he sometimes sees things happening between the young people and worries about them. One time two girls came running into the shop saying that they were running away from someone and needed help. He closed the shop to new customers and asked them if they needed him to call the school or the police, but after a while they said they were ok and left.</p> <p>The corner shop owner said that he has a strict policy of only letting one young person in at a time. He thought the young people were generally very loud and he worried they were going to steal things. We also spoke to the town centre manager who said that they knew the bus stop was a 'hot spot' area for what she called 'youth antisocial behaviour' and that in a recent meeting she has suggested that they increase CCTV and security guards in the area.</p> <p>The school is nearby but currently there is no intervention from the school at the bus stop or route. We spoke to the school about this, and they said this was due to capacity and that they do not have the resources to send staff to spaces that are beyond the school gates. However, they have been known to issue sanctions to young people following reports of behaviour on the bus if they are wearing school uniform.</p>	
<b>Resident/public integration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the relationship like between adults and young people in this context?</li> <li>• Are there opportunities for positive, caring, respectful and equal relationships between young people and adults to develop?</li> <li>• What are the attitudes of adults in this context towards the young people who spend time there?</li> </ul>
<p>We would say that overall, the relationship between the young people and the adults in the context is poor. They don't know the young people but see them as a large unruly and challenging group. The bus drivers, town manager and business owners generally see the young people as mostly causing trouble and as a problem to manage.</p> <p>The only example we came across of an adult showing care and kindness to young people was the chicken shop owner but he wasn't sure what to do. There is an opportunity for building on this positive interest in the safety of young people. We also believe that the town centre manager is open to further intervention around understanding her role in creating safety at the bus stop. A few of the adults on the survey mentioned that they are also worried about the young people but don't know what to do. One person said that they called the police once when they were really worried about what was happening.</p>	
<b>Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the professional partners, agencies and businesses have policies that promote the safety and inclusion of young people in this context?</li> <li>• Are these policies being followed?</li> </ul>
<p>The school safeguarding policies don't cover the bus and bus stop. The town centre manager has told us that they have a safeguarding policy. We have not been able to review it. They said that their safeguarding policy focused on what to do if a young person discloses abuse and reporting this to children's services. We believe there may be an opportunity to develop this policy further with the town centre manager and the businesses who operate in the area.</p>	
<b>Community resources and systemic factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What community resources are available to young people in this context that support their wellbeing (including having fun and friendship)?</li> <li>• How do structural factors (like poverty, racism, inequality) impact the accessibility and availability of resources and safety for young people in this context?</li> <li>• Is there anything else happening locally to impact the wellbeing and safety of young people in this context?</li> </ul>
<p>There is no youth work presence or other resources currently available to young people on the bus route or bus stop. We spoke to the council's detached youth work team who said that they would be open to doing some work on the bus route but that they never did anything like this before and don't know what the bus company would say.</p> <p>The young people we engaged and their friends are predominately from a Black British or Mixed Ethnicity background.</p> <p>This is happening in the context of arrests of multiple young people who are friends and who attend the same school as the young people linked to this incident. There is a lamppost very near the bus stop which has become an unofficial memorial to a young person who died, and this has attracted negative responses from residents who would like to put in place measures to stop young people spending time there.</p>	
<b>Thresholds and recent/recurring incidents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the local safeguarding arrangements include guidance on the thresholds for responding to harmful incidents when they take place beyond the home?</li> <li>• To what extent do agencies (voluntary and statutory) know about this guidance and use it?</li> <li>• Are incidents involving young people's safety being recorded appropriately and responded to?</li> <li>• Is there a process for collecting, reviewing and responding to trends and themes (alongside individual incidents) and is it being used?</li> </ul>
<p>We have been tasked by the Contextual Safeguarding multi-agency meeting to undertake this assessment because it was decided at that meeting that the concerns in this context meet a threshold for a safeguarding assessment. The town manager and transport organisation are not aware of these processes and guidance related to this. They believe that the right thing to do is call the police or make a referral to children's services but only if they become aware of home-based safeguarding harm for individual children. We understand that multi-agency training has taken place for various statutory and voluntary organisations about the Contextual Safeguarding thresholds policy, but the people we spoke to have not received this training.</p> <p>The incident in question came to light through a ROTH pathway, and these have been recorded on the local authority database. However, we found out about several new incidents during this assessment which were not recorded nor shared.</p>	

	The Contextual Safeguarding multi-agency meetings are a place for responding to patterns and themes.	
<b>Guardianship Capacity</b>	<b>Ensuring Safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the roles and/or people who spend time in the context and the influence they have over the safety of young people (e.g. teachers, shop keepers, residents, bus drivers, etc.).</li> <li>• How do these people and/or roles foster ongoing trusting relationships with young people?</li> <li>• How do they demonstrate respect, kindness and care towards the young people?</li> </ul>
	<p>We spoke with teachers and they explained that historically when there were incidents on the bus, the transport company would report these to the school and young people would be sanctioned and reprimanded for this. If some of the bus drivers were able to identify some young people there is potential to capitalise on this knowledge for the safety of young people. The current schoolteachers are concerned about safety, but their response is mostly punitive.</p> <p>The corner shop owner is very wary of young people and only allows one in at a time. He was reluctant to engage with us. The chicken shop owner, however, is open to strengthening his role in providing safety for the young people who come in every day.</p> <p>At present there is very minimal care and kindness from adults (business, statutory or residents) in this context, but there are some opportunities for developing this.</p>	
	<b>Trusted partner arrangements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the policy framework that determines how professional partners act to ensure the safety of young people in this context? Is this policy framework understood and adhered to?</li> <li>• Does the policy framework and related actions meet the welfare needs of young people?</li> <li>• Do professional partners resist attempts to criminalise young people; shift the focus away from making them the focus of blame; and actively avoid actions solely focused on motivating young people to change their behaviour to create safety?</li> <li>• How are parents of young people in this context supported to contribute to their children's safety?</li> </ul>
	<p>The policy framework for responding to young people facing harm outside the home is overseen by the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership (LSCP). There is some confusion locally about whether a safeguarding response is needed in a situation like this or whether Community Safety and police led responses should be prioritised.</p> <p>During this assessment we came across different views on whether young people were in need of protection or whether they should be punished/dispersed/banned from certain places.</p> <p>Our view is that the prioritisation of policing responses to these young people and sanctions-based responses at school mean that their welfare needs are often overlooked and their welfare needs unmet. There is currently no response to these young people beyond what has taken place through this assessment. There are very few attempts to resist punishment and sanction-based response.</p> <p>We believe that the school attempted to contact the parents of the young people affected but this was unsuccessful. As part of this assessment, we met some of the parents of the young people who have been affected. This was not a formal part of the assessment but we understood from talking to them that they were also worried about the safety of the girls on the bus route and had given advice and support to their daughters about safety. Several of the parents said they would be interested in being part of creating safety for their children and receiving support around this. Some spoke about how they had not found the school very helpful and about historic issues around young people being excluded and sanctioned rather than given the support they need, so we believe that future work could involve some restorative work around this, to maximise the parents and schools working together.</p>	
	<b>Knowledge and understanding of safeguarding role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the range of adults who spend time in the context and whether they are each aware of their role and responsibility for safeguarding in this context?</li> <li>• What training and support is available for them?</li> <li>• If adults in the context are aware of young people being unsafe, what information do they share and with whom?</li> </ul>
	<p>The adult in this context who has demonstrated that they are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities is the chicken shop owner. Bus drivers, bus users and to some extent the school and centre management have all shown that they may be willing to offer safeguarding support to young people but are unclear on what this actually entails and how they should manage this alongside other pressures to sanction and punish the young people.</p> <p>The LSCP does provide training for multi-agency partners on Contextual Safeguarding but we believe that something more tailored may be required for this context, due to the high levels of concerns that the assessment has raised about the lack of guardianship provided to the young people on the bus.</p> <p>Currently the transport company shares information about the behaviour of young people with the school and the police. The town manager also shares information with the police about anti-social behaviour if this comes to her attention from business owners.</p>	
	<b>Policy framework</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do professional partner agencies demonstrate commitment to anti-racism and anti-discrimination policies and actions?</li> <li>• Are there regular and structured opportunities for professional partners to reflect on and address their own biases?</li> </ul>
	<p>No – there was no evidence of partners having a commitment to anti-racist and anti-discriminatory policies and actions. The young people involved all spoke about experiencing racism and it is our view that they have not received safeguarding support due to racism.</p> <p>No – there are not currently any opportunities for any of the agencies involved to reflect on their biases in the decisions made about their responses to young people.</p>	