

Peer mapping case studies and examples

Using this tool within safeguarding practice

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Examples of peer mapping

The following case studies were shared by a Contextual Safeguarding practitioner in Hackney. They show how peer mapping has been used to support casework with connected young people affected by extra-familial harm.

The maps below have been anonymised and re-created based on the original mapping that was conducted for these cases. The practitioner in this instance has chosen to create new symbols or adapt symbols from a traditional genogram:

- zig-zag line with an arrow indicates a form of abusive or negative relationship with the arrow showing the direction of harm
- a single line shows a connection
- a double line indicates a strong connection
- a broken line shows a tenuous or untested connection
- a box around the young people highlights that the young people were involved in the same incident; a label next to or in the box helps to explain this*

Practitioners can use any symbols that are helpful, as long as there is a key to explain them. Also, a brief narrative to accompany the maps is helpful to record additional information without crowding the map with too much detail.

See more guidance on peer assessment and mapping on the [Contextual Safeguarding Implementation Toolkit](#).

*Related to this, practitioners in Hackney sometimes use the term 'incident mapping'; there is a note about this at the end of the case studies.

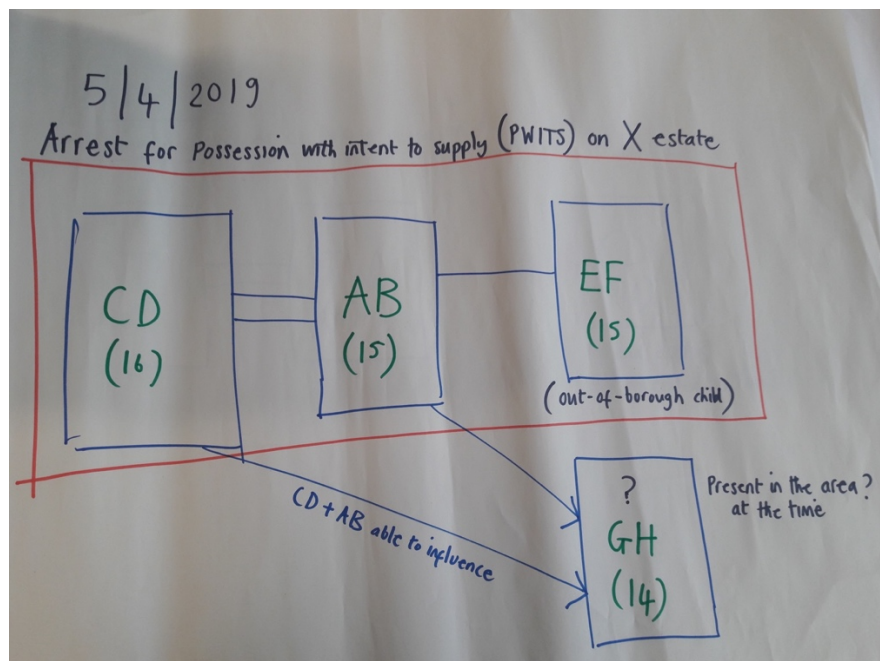
Case study 1:

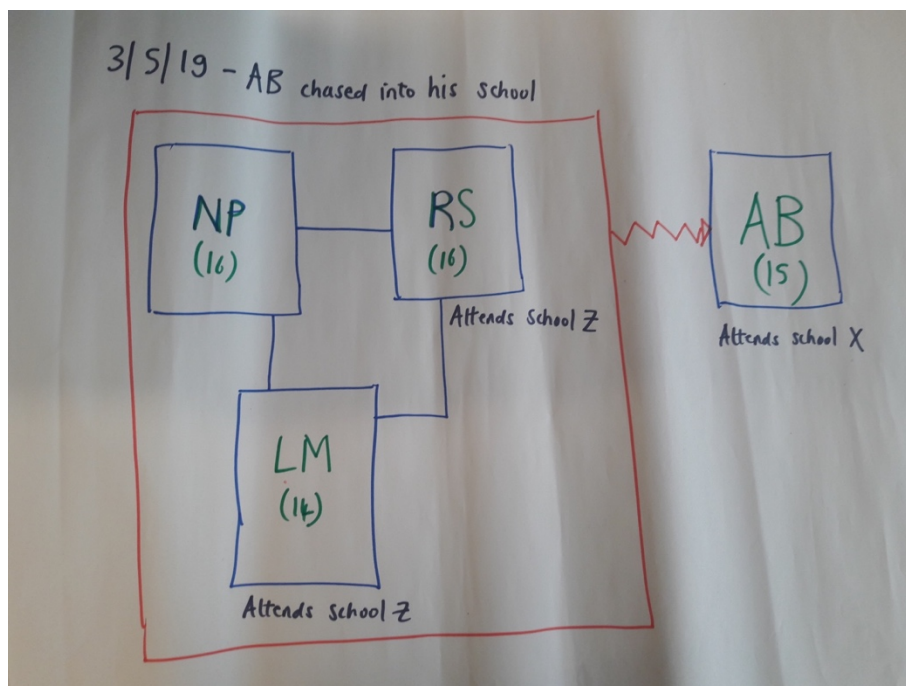
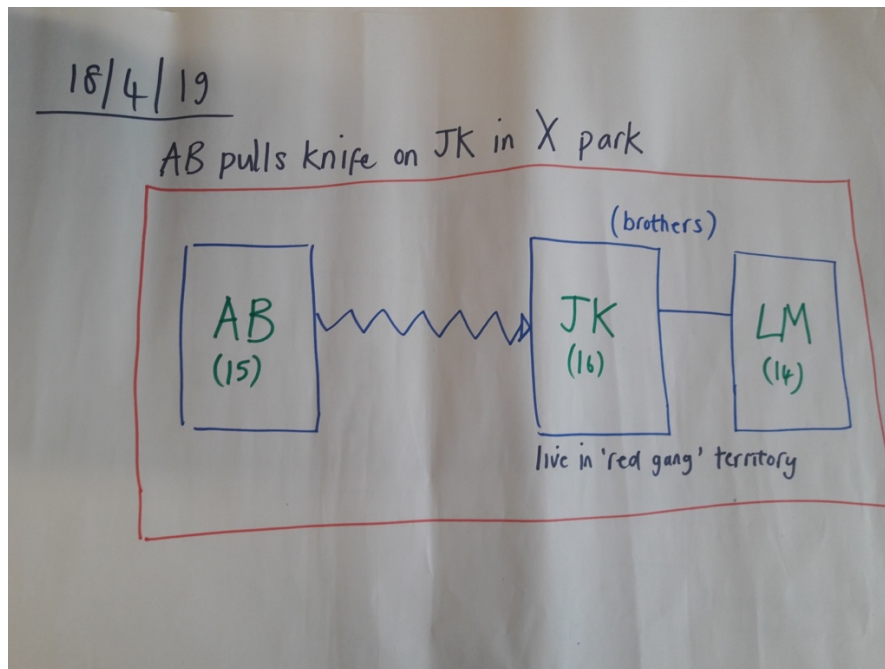
A 15 year old young man was referred to Youth Offending and Family Support services following concerns around anti-social behaviour and criminality (including selling class-A drugs). The young man was opened to both services. He was not subject of a Child in Need nor Child Protection plan.

The young man was present in a series of stabbing incidents involving a number of other young people that were part of a peer group. The Contextual Safeguarding practitioner who provided support with this case combined incident mapping and peer group mapping to demonstrate how this young man was involved in these incidents and to establish links with the other young people involved. This Contextual Safeguarding practitioner presented the peer- and incident- maps at a multi-agency meeting and this helped professionals at the meeting to inform their assessments of the young person.

Following this meeting, the young person was placed on a Child in Need plan. Professionals made this recommendation, in preference to a Child Protection plan, as the mapping made it clear that he was at risk of harm due to drug trafficking and youth violence, however this harm was not be attributed to his home/family. Mapping the young person's connections and demonstrating how he was involved in various incidents helped professionals to become aware of the risks he was facing and encouraged them to consider a different type of intervention to address these extra-familial risks.

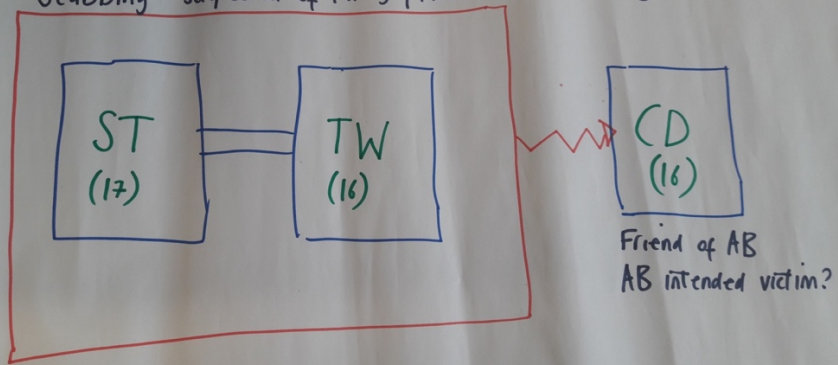
Without the work of the Contextual Safeguarding project team, this young man would have had a Child Protection plan, which would have resulted in a focus on the parent's capacity to keep their child safe. Using a Contextual Safeguarding approach meant that he was put on a Child In Need plan with oversight from Hackney's Extra-Familial Risk Panel so that interventions could focus on addressing the risk outside the home.





11/5/19

Stabbing - suspected of taking place on AB's estate



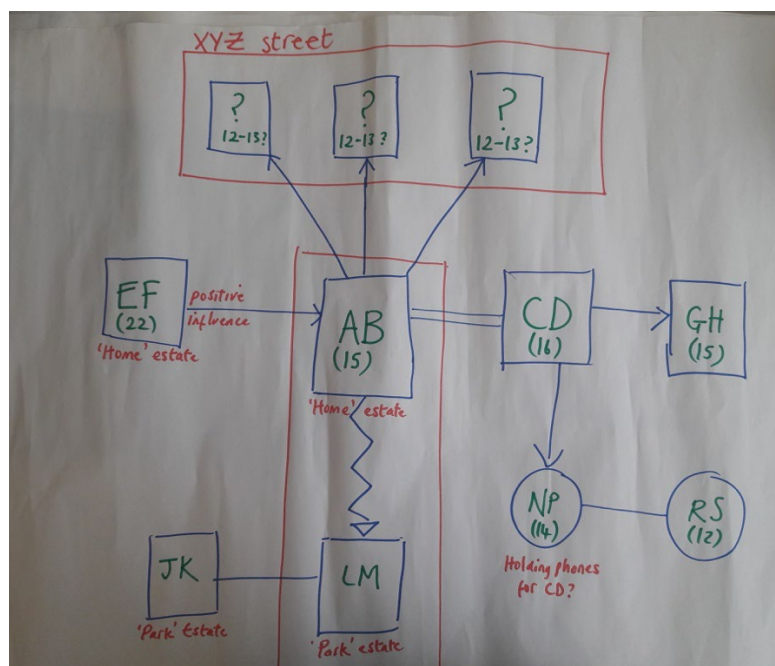
Case study 2:

A teenage young man had received a nine-month Referral Order and had been referred to the Youth Offending Team for possession of a bladed article. This young man appeared to have recently changed peer groups and his youth offending worker struggled to gather information about his new peer group to inform his Asset Plus assessment.

A peer mapping meeting was held with multi-agency professionals to map out links between the young people they worked with, share information, and identify potential members of this peer group. It became clear that the young man was closely linked to another young man that was opened to social care. Other young people were also identified as being part of the same peer group, including younger boys. There were concerns around these younger boys being influenced into gang-related violence and drug trafficking by the older boys in the group. Adults were also identified as being associated with the peer group. The Contextual Safeguarding researcher present at this meeting subsequently conducted checks on these adults. The boys' social worker also followed up with his parents to check for potential stored drugs at home.

The mapping exercise further helped professionals to pinpoint the exact locations in which the young man was socialising with his peers – including a specific street which had already been reported by other professionals as a hotspot for gang violence. Hackney's youth provision had received similar reports of concern about this location and decided to deploy a detach outreach youth service there over a few weeks.

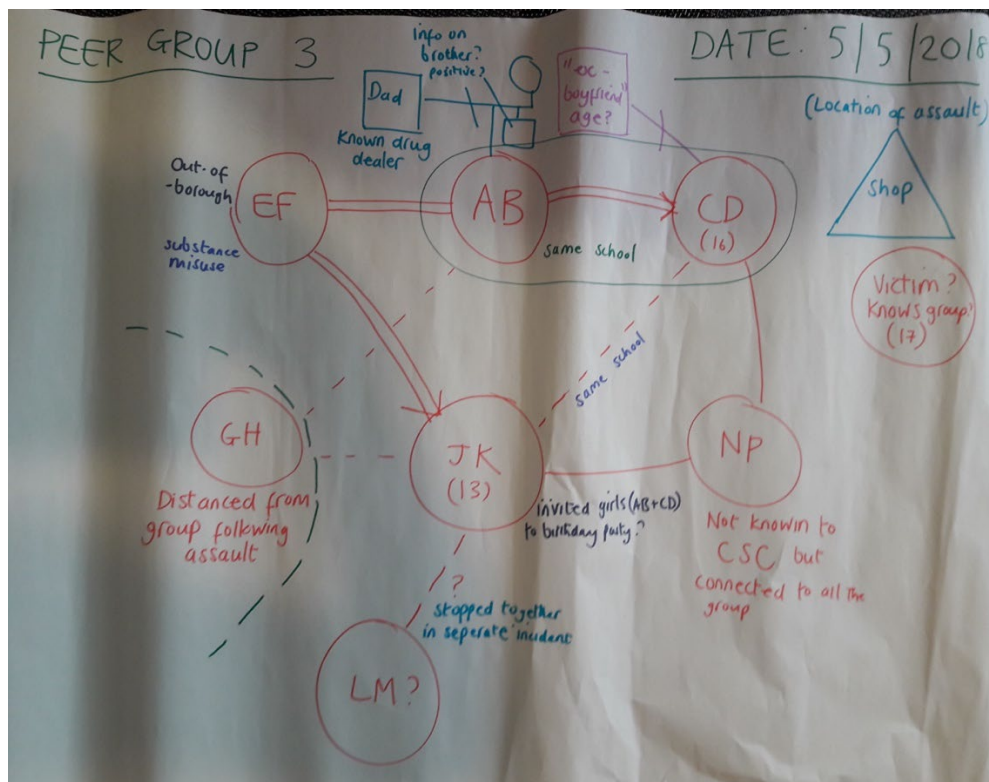
The young person's social worker and youth offending worker both found this collective mapping exercise helpful in filling the gaps on their assessments and to identify actions to follow up to help them gather information they struggled to obtain on their own.



Case study 3:

A 15 year old young woman was arrested after she was involved in a physical assault committed by a group of young people. The Contextual Safeguarding practitioner supported the young person's Family Support Service worker, who had been struggling to engage her, by organising a peer mapping meeting involving professionals working with other young women who were part of the group that committed the assault. This meeting took place after a police report identified these girls as associated to the incident. Most of them were opened.

The meeting enabled professionals to map out connections between the young women they worked with, the nature of their relationships, and to share information and identify significant vulnerabilities and risks linked to sexual and criminal exploitation. Information was shared, for example, about some of these young people's missing incidents. Through mapping, professionals built a picture together that helped them to inform assessments and make decisions for their individual cases. As a result, three of the young women were assessed as being at more risk than the rest of the group and their cases were explored further.



A note on 'Incident mapping'

The term 'incident mapping' emerged from work to map connections between young people for safeguarding purposes, and in this sense fits under the 'peer mapping' umbrella. Practitioners used this term because they were not always able to make qualitative comments about the nature of the relationships between young people, e.g. whether they are strong, weak, positive or negative. However, mapping incidents was a way to analyse the information they had, i.e. that certain young people were connected by certain events, or 'incidents'. In Hackney, the First Access Screening Team are often in this position.

These events are often connected to a known date, time and place. These dimensions can be presented too, e.g. listed in a chronology, or overlaid on a geographical map to show a 'visual chronology'. This can complement a focus on relationships, because events, time and place affect relationships.

An incident map may help to construct a narrative about connected young people, by showing developments over time. It may also help to draw out themes that can guide intervention. For instance: the young people may be especially vulnerable at a particular time or place; or there may be common features amongst the relationships and events, e.g. the normalisation of violence.

Even if specific events have not been identified, it may be helpful to use information about place to add detail and a different perspective to a peer map. In some instances, practitioners have mapped the information they have about where connected young people spend time, where they live, and where they go to school. This would not strictly be an 'incident map', but could contribute to analysis, and could direct practitioners to further work with a peer group, school or location.

In short, all these dimensions (relationships, time, place, events) are connected and relevant. If you're interested in thinking more about these relationships, we recommend Pierre Bourdieu's social theory, and this video about it: [social theory and Contextual Safeguarding](#).