

TOWARDS A CONTEXTUAL RESPONSE TO PEER-ON-PEER ABUSE

Research and resources from
MsUnderstood local site work
2013 -2016

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VIOLENCE AND TRAFFICKING



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INTRODUCTION

Over recent years concern has grown amongst policymakers, practitioners and academics regarding violence and abuse within young people's friendships and relationships - termed 'peer-on-peer abuse' for the purposes of this report. In 2013 the Government amended the definition of domestic abuse to include 16 and 17 year olds in recognition of young people's experiences of partner abuse and exploitation. In 2016 a Parliamentary Inquiry was launched into sexual harassment and violence in schools and the Department for Education provided additional information on peer-on-peer abuse within its Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance. The 2016 Ofsted Social Care report made note of the increasing concerns regarding peer-on-peer abuse and the need for holistic responses to child sexual exploitation (CSE) in order to accommodate this.

This growing political interest has emerged from an ever-increasing evidence base on the scale and nature of peer-on-peer abuse in the UK. In a 2009 survey of young people in England a quarter of girls and 18% of boys reported experiencing physical violence from a partner before they turned 18 (Barter, et al., 2009). Once the Crime Survey was extended to include 10-15 year olds in 2013 the ONS estimated that young people experienced 465,000 incidents of violent crime in a year, the vast majority of which (79%) had been perpetrated by another young person (ONS, 2015). Surveys over the past five years estimate that between 30 and 70% of young women have been sexually harassed at school (EVAW, 2010; GirlGuiding UK, 2014). An evidence hearing at the London Mayor's Office of Policing and Crime in 2015 heard that the majority of identified sexual exploitation cases in the capital were peer-on-peer (MOPAC, 2015) – and nationwide a third of cases are thought to fit such a profile (Firmin, 2013). Far from being a 'new' issue, a 2011 survey of adult survivors of child sexual abuse in England and Wales found that two-thirds of them had been abused by a peer and not an adult (Radford et al. 2011).

In the face of this growing concern, in 2013 the University of Bedfordshire, Imkaan and the Girls against Gangs Project formed the MsUnderstood Partnership (MSU) to support the development of responses to peer-on-peer abuse specifically, and young people's experiences of inequality, more broadly. The partnership sought to bring academic rigour, partnerships with practitioners and young people's voices to the fore of the debate, and generate practice-based evidence to support the development of responses that engaged with young people's lived realities of violence and abuse. We achieved this through:

- A programme of work with local multi-agency partnerships to audit and develop their responses to peer-on-peer abuse (Local Site Work)
- A paid internship and young people's engagement programme
- Engagement in policy consultation and influencing
- The dissemination of research, practice learning and young people's voice

This report chronicles the findings and resources generated by MSU over the past three years, with specific reference to the tools and knowledge created alongside professionals through local site work. The programme of work was funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, the Samworth Foundation and Trust for London.

Nature of peer-on-peer abuse

Peer-on-peer abuse features physical, sexual and emotional abuse between young people, and may occur within their friendship groups or intimate relationships (Firmin and Curtis, 2015). As

concern about peer-on-peer abuse has increased, attempts to address it have been incorporated into responses to:

1. Domestic abuse (previously reserved for abuse within adult relationships)
2. CSE (often misunderstood as only featuring the exploitation of children by adults)
3. Serious youth and gang-related violence
4. Children who display harmful sexual behaviour (HSB)

While the phenomena of peer-on-peer abuse can affect children of any age, research into the four manifestations of violence and abuse listed above are primarily concerned with young people from the age of 10 upwards. This age demarcation is in-line with the age at which young people in the UK begin to transition into secondary education, travel to school alone and spend increasing amounts of time with their peers independently of parental supervision. Both young women and young men are victimised by their peers, although these experiences are often informed by gendered expectations on young people – for example young men being disproportionately affected by street-based violent crime (largely robbery perpetrated by other young men) and young women being more likely to report being negatively affected by physical and sexual abuse in their intimate relationships (Barter et al., 2009; ONS, 2015).

Beyond the individual characteristics of those affected, and the nature of the behaviours involved, research into peer-on-peer abuse suggests a relationship between young people's experiences of abuse and the contexts to which those experiences are associated (Barter, et al., 2009; Firmin, 2016; Letourneau & Borduin, 2008; Pitts, 2008). The norms and behaviours within young people's peers groups can protect against, or aggravate, the likelihood of peer-on-peer abuse. Young people often abuse peers within friendship groups rather than one their own, driven by peer pressure and status, fear of social isolation, group loyalty and harmful social norms that are reconstructed within peer settings (Barter, et al., 2009; Corr, et al., 2012; Firmin, 2016; Henry, 2008; Letourneau & Borduin, 2008). Young people also disclose experiences of abuse to their peers, or witness the abuse of their peers, and so the reaction of peers in these circumstances can either normalise or problematize abusive behaviours (Cossar et al., 2013; Firmin, 2015).

Young people form friendships within school and as they socialise in public spaces (neighbourhoods). These associations form and can develop both online and offline. The nature of these socialisation sites will inform the nature of young people's friendships and in turn the nature of their abusive experiences. Bullying and sexual harassment within school for example can create environments that are conducive with peer-on-peer abuse (Firmin, 2015; Ringrose, et al., 2011). Likewise, young people often experience peer-on-peer abuse within public/social spaces in which they spend their time – parks, high streets, transport hubs, disused houses and garages, stairwells and youth clubs etc. both online and offline (Beckett, et al., 2013; Firmin, 2016; Messerschmidt, 2012; ONS, 2015). If young people are exposed to harmful norms and violence within these spaces, then they too may facilitate abusive behaviours between young people.

Reviews into cases of peer-on-peer abuse have evidenced an interplay between the social rules at play within young people's peer groups, schools and neighbourhoods and their experiences of violence and abuse (Firmin, 2016; Sidebotham, et al., 2016). In many cases these rules inform the behaviour of young people in ways that overpower and outweigh the norms within their familial setting. In some cases, vulnerabilities within young people's families – such as exposure to domestic abuse, neglect, or sibling criminality – can reduce the ability of parents/carers to safeguard a young person from peer-on-peer abuse. These experiences can create difficulties or challenges for a young person's home to act as a protective space – albeit online elements of

peer-on-peer abuse can undermine this anyway. As a result, while young people's family dynamic may inform their experiences of peer-on-peer abuse it is often what happens outside of this setting that is directly related to, or accommodates the abusive experiences. Therefore, in order to prevent, identify, and intervene with peer-on-peer abuse, safeguarding responses need to engage with the peer groups, schools and neighbourhoods associated to the phenomenon– in addition to supporting the young people and families affected.

Local Site Work

The central pillar of MSU's work over the past three years has been the development of co-created knowledge and practice within local sites across England. In August 2013 MSU issued a call for expressions of interest, having secured funding to work with three sites to develop their response to peer-on-peer abuse until 2016. 40 local safeguarding children's boards (LSCB) applied to take part in the programme (Larasi, 2015). Three sites, comprising nine LSCBs, were selected as follows:

1. Sheffield
2. Buckinghamshire
3. North London Cluster (Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey and Islington)

Given the level of interest in the work, particularly in London, further funding was secured to extend support to an additional three sites:

1. Lambeth
2. Greenwich
3. Croydon

Local Site support was split into two phases. The first phase audited the local response to peer-on-peer abuse through practitioner observation, a review of relevant strategic and operational documentation and focus groups with practitioners and young people. The findings of the audit process were documented in a report for the relevant LSCB/s identifying strengths within the local site and recommending where MSU could add value over the remainder of the funded programme.

During the second phase researchers worked with each local site steering group to develop and agree a delivery plan for enhancing local responses to peer-on-peer abuse. MSU led on the completion of the actions in each plan until May 2016. This report documents the range of activities undertaken during the delivery /action research phase of the programme and publishes all resources produced with sites during this time. They are shared for the purposes of facilitating national learning and service development, and will be further tested through a Contextual Safeguarding Practitioner's network that has been launched alongside this report.

Report Structure

The remainder of this report chronicles the methodological and theoretical approach to the MSU local site work and the resources developed with local sites to address the contextual and holistic nature of peer-on-peer abuse as outlined above. Resources are aggregated thematically, rather than on a site-by-site basis, as follows:

1. Reviewing cases of peer-on-peer abuse and auditing local practice
2. Profiling the contextual nature of peer-on-peer abuse, including peer-group mapping
3. Identifying and addressing peer-on-peer abuse within schools and alternative education providers

4. Developing processes for monitoring, and voluntary responses to, young people who display HSB
5. Enhancing the engagement of community, specialist and voluntary organisations in responding to peer-on-peer abuse (including detached youth workers, housing providers and CSE services)
6. Developing holistic and coordinated responses to vulnerable adolescents

The process of developing knowledge and practice in each of these areas will be outlined, and the resources produced as a result will be documented and explained. The report will then conclude by discussing the lessons learned from this process and will outline the next phase of work being undertaken by the University of Bedfordshire and Imkaan respectively to develop responses to young people's experiences of violence, abuse and inequality.

METHODOLOGY

The MSU approach to developing responses to peer-on-peer abuse has been informed by the social theory of Pierre Bourdieu (1990). Bourdieu's concepts provide us with a toolkit to explore the interplay between social rules and young people's abusive behaviours indicated in peer-on-peer abuse research – in particular his concepts of 'field', 'habitus', 'capital' and 'symbolic violence'.

According to Bourdieu the social world is made up of social fields each with their own set of rules. Within each field, and in accordance with these rules, different forms of capital give you status. Bourdieu recognises four forms of capital – economic (financial resources), social (networks and relationships), cultural (access to codes, language and other resources of status) and symbolic (reputation). When an individual enters a social field they draw upon these four types of capital to play the rules that are in operation. In order to achieve status and belong within a social field an individual may even play rules that are to their own detriment – and in doing so commit acts of symbolic violence. Bourdieu argues that individuals embody a feel for the rules within a social field and refers to this feel as their habitus. Engagement with, and embodiment of, a set of rules within a social field creates a reflective relationship between field and individual. In this relationship, the rules of a social field construct the individual, and the individual, through their embodiment and reproduction of those rules, construct that social field.

The Bourdieusian social lens has been used to explore notions of both 'abuse' (Powell, 2010) and 'childhood' (Jenks, 2005) – both which are central to the work of MSU. When applying Bourdieu's concepts to explore these issues scholars have argued that:

- Change is located in a change in the social conditions in which an individual behaves and not just within the individual or their behaviour (Powell, 2010)
- Children develop through a dependency on the actors that operate within different social fields whose rules inform their world view (Jenks, 2005)

Applying these two messages, and Bourdieu's wider social theory, to research into peer-on-peer abuse suggests that:

1. Families, peer groups, schools and neighbourhood localities, and the individuals within them, operate in accordance with social rules (some of which condone abusive behaviours, criminality and harmful gender norms and others which challenge them)
2. As they interact with these social fields, and the rules at play within each, children will develop attitudes and behaviours that condone or challenge abusive behaviours
3. All individuals (young people, professionals, parents) play a role in shaping these different social fields – reconstructing or challenging the rules at play within them
4. As young people enter different social fields they will employ the capital that they have to survive within that space – be that peer connections (social capital) within their neighbourhood or their ability to understand the behaviour codes of their school corridor to avoid being bullied (cultural capital)
5. If young people's behaviours are informed by the rules in operation within their families, peer groups, schools and neighbourhoods then a change in their behaviours is associated to a change in the rules themselves

As such, safeguarding responses need to change the rules operating within the contexts associated to peer-on-peer abuse. If young people are provided access to social fields where they can achieve status and belonging amongst their peers, but where the capital that they

require does not involve adherence to, or an embodiment of, abusive social norms, then the impact of 1:1 support to change individual behaviour can also be maximised.

This theoretical framework was applied to our work with local sites to assess, and enhance, the extent to which local multi-agency partnerships:

- Sought to address the contextual dynamics (social conditions) of peer-on-peer abuse
- Applied a contextual approach in a holistic fashion across different manifestations of peer-on-peer abuse (across approaches to serious youth violence, sexual exploitation, HSB and teenage relationship abuse)

This process was realised through both an audit of the local practice and the delivery of a development plan.

Contextual approaches

During the audit of local sites, and through the delivery of a development plan in each site, we were keen to ascertain the extent to which:

- Preventative approaches sought to create the social conditions in which young people could realise safe and healthy relationships/friendships in addition to teaching individuals about such relationships
- Identification and profiling activity sought out the contexts (social fields) associated to peer-on-peer abuse and the individuals affected
- Assessment processes identified the social rules (across a range of contexts) that informed young people's experiences of peer-on-peer abuse
- Interventions sought to change the rules (social conditions) of contexts associated to peer-on-peer abuse, in addition to the individual behaviours to which those contexts were associated
- Outcomes from all of the above were measured with reference to a change in the nature of the contexts associated to peer-on-peer abuse in addition to a change in the behaviour of individuals (or the extent to which a lack of change in an individual's behaviours was associated to a lack of change within the contexts in which that individual spent their time)

The contexts of interest during this exercise are outlined in Figure 1 – the lines dotted to recognise the potential interplay between these different contexts. For example:

If the norms associated to peer-on-peer abuse were facilitated by the rules within a young person's peer group, and this peer group spent its time at school – the relationship between the peer group and the school becomes important. Furthermore, if the norms within this young person's family were non-abusive but they were unable to counteract the influence of their peer group to what extent was this interplay addressed within family interventions?

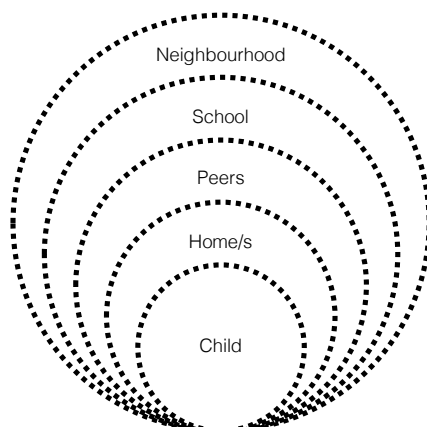


Figure 1: Contextual Framework for Exploring Peer-on-Peer Abuse

Holistic approaches

Within any local area there are a range of meetings, assessments, guidance, protocols, commissioning arrangements and strategic approaches developed to address different manifestations of peer-on-peer abuse. In particular, responses to HSB, child sexual exploitation, domestic abuse and serious youth violence have all been introduced into local practice at different times and in distinct ways over the past 20 years. In order to audit and develop contextual responses to peer-on-peer abuse researchers had to look across responses to all of these issues and the extent to which they were connected, coordinated and complimentary as outlined in Figure 2.

	Child sexual exploitation	Domestic abuse	Serious youth violence	Harmful sexual behaviour
Strategy and action plan	←↑→	←↑→	←↑→	←↑→
Strategic group	←→	←→	←→	←→
Guidance	←→	←→	←→	←→
Protocol	←→	←→	←→	←→
Multi-agency operational meeting	←→	←→	←→	←→
Assessment	←→	←→	←→	←→
Intervention plans and available interventions	←→	←→	←→	←→
Case management	←↓→	←↓→	←↓→	←↓→

Figure 2: MSU Audit Methodology

At each level, both on paper and in practice, work with sites investigated the extent of a relationship:

- Across the four siloed areas of peer-on-peer abuse
- From strategy through to case management for any given silo

Surrounding these four central areas of response consideration also had to be given to any local response to:

- children going missing from home, care or education
- substance misuse
- childhood exposure to domestic abuse (as opposed to domestic abuse within young people's relationships)
- school exclusions and truancy
- anti-social behaviour
- familial child abuse

Methods: audit and development delivery plans

The contextual and holistic approaches adopted for the site work were delivered in two phases.

PHASE 1 AUDIT: Audits assessed the extent to which the response to peer-on-peer abuse within a local site was contextual and holistic. This was achieved through:

- an analysis of all strategic and operational documentation within a local area, including assessments and protocols, actions plans and strategies
- observations of multi-agency meetings – strategic, operational and case management

- interviews and focus groups with practitioners
- Interviews and focus groups with young people (where appropriate)

Once collected and analysed, the findings from this process were written into a report for the local safeguarding children board, documenting:

- The strengths in local responses – examples of contextual and holistic responses
- Challenges in local responses – examples of where contextual and holistic practice were lacking or being hampered
- Areas for development – examples of where local strengths could be maximised to address the identified challenges

PHASE 2 DEVELOPMENT: A plan was delivered in line with the areas for development identified in each audit report. Working in partnership with the local steering group the research team created a plan of between three and five actions designed to advance examples of contextual and holistic practice in any given site. The method for delivering each development activity was determined by the activity itself - and always through a process of co-creation with local practitioners. This action-research approach, with embedded researchers in local sites, maximised the likelihood that designed approaches would be sustained following the close of the MSU programme.

The remainder of this report documents the methods employed during the development phase and all resources produced for participating sites.

LOCAL SITE WORK: APPROACHES, FINDINGS AND RESOURCES

By adopting the methodological and theoretical framework outlined above we were able to work with sites to identify and/or address the:

- Contextual nature of peer-on-peer abuse and in particular the escalation of risk within peer groups, schools and public spaces
- Extent to which the nature of peer-on-peer abuse was addressed holistically by responses to serious youth violence, domestic abuse, HSB and CSE

No single site adopted all of the approaches outlined below and there are still a number of areas that remain under-explored by our work. In short, we did not have the capacity or information to develop a wholly contextual and holistic response to peer-on-peer abuse across all structures/services in any given site. Rather we developed resources and approaches to assist on the journey towards achieving that goal, by identifying and accelerating opportunities for contextual practice that were already in development by local practitioners. It is these resources and approaches that the remainder of this report will document.

Auditing local practice

As outlined in the methodology section, the audits assisted researchers in identifying examples of contextual practice, and in exploring the contextual nature of peer-on-peer abuse in each site in order to accelerate local innovation. All sites were audited as outlined above – a briefing on this methodology is included in Appendix A and can also be accessed on the MSU [website](#).

Audits of all sites identified the following themes:

- The vast majority of assessments, intervention plans and commissioned services used in response to peer-on-peer abuse support work with families and individual young people – rather than extra-familial contexts
- Individual practitioners demonstrated a clear awareness of local contextual risk and peer group dynamics, and included these in their discussions – but were generally unable to address these factors with the interventions available to them
- In every site there were examples of contextual interventions – developed through individual practitioner initiative – that were yet to be adopted consistently across services in that site and/or were not reflected within strategic documents. Examples of contextual practice are illustrated in the exemplar boxes in Figure 3
- Some strategic documents cross-referenced one another, particularly documents focused on CSE and serious youth violence. However, domestic abuse and violence against women and girls strategies needed development to integrate them into wider responses to peer-on-peer abuse. Furthermore, even documents that did cross-reference one another used different language to describe choice and consent – for example grooming and coercion were clearly recognised in CSE documentation but less consistently included in strategy and protocol concerned with gangs and serious youth violence

Peer Group Mapping amongst youth offending staff

In one site youth offending practitioners recognised that the individual young people on their case load were connected. These peer relationships were informing each young person's offending behaviour and understanding them was therefore important for conducting assessments and designing interventions. In light of this realisation a group of practitioners met to map the connections between the young people on their caseloads and re-considered their assessments for each young person in light of this information.

Profiling school associations

In one site children's services had invested in an analyst to build their local CSE and serious youth violence profile. Investment in this analyst ensured that the connections between young people discussed at the distinct CSE and youth violence meetings were identified. The analyst had also conducted thematic analysis on the schools attended by the identified young people and had produced a thematic report on these school associations for discussion at the multi-agency sexual exploitation meeting.

Reclaiming vulnerable contexts

In one site a community safety analyst identified that young people were being groomed into CSE in a local shopping centre. Having shared this information with the police it was agreed the social workers, a specialist CSE worker from the youth service and the police would visit the shopping centre together – and on a regular basis. Over time young people in the shopping centre expected to see the workers there and some were engaged in conversation. Through this process the shopping centre became a place where this group of young people could not be sexually exploited.

Peer Group Referrals

In one site a neighbourhood policing officer raised concerns about a group of young women. He had identified that this group was spending time with a group of young men who were associated to local gangs and that the neighbourhood officer was concerned about their welfare. A referral for the whole group was made to the local youth crime prevention service who took the group on as a single referral. The service provided group work to this existing peer group and through the process identified individuals in the group in need of further 1:1 support and were able to engage with the group dynamic as part of the intervention.

Figure 3: Examples of contextual practice identified in audits

- The need for greater coordination across strategic documents was also reflected in the relationship between local multi-agency meetings. While some of the same practitioners attended operational and strategic meetings to discuss serious youth violence, CSE, domestic abuse and harmful sexual behaviours – the associations between the young people being discussed required further recognition, recording and exploration in most cases.
- While all sites had services that engaged with peer group and community contexts – such as schools, youth services, neighbourhood policing, park wardens, housing caretakers and community sector services – this was rarely explicitly drawn upon to address contextual concerns
- All sites had relatively limited resources for supporting young people suspected of abusing their peers (compared to services available for those who had been abused by peers). They also had limited provision for boys and young men – both those who had abused, and/or been abused by their peers – a briefing of which is available in Appendix B and on the [MSU website](#).

Engagement with sites on these issues identified a need to focus delivery plans on developing:

1. A shared understanding of the contextual dynamics of peer-on-peer abuse within their local area - in order to inform changes to local strategy and operations
2. Responses to young people suspected of abusing their peers – particularly those that would address the familial, peer, school and neighbourhood dynamics associated to their behaviours
3. Opportunities to integrate neighbourhood, school and peer group dynamics into assessment processes
4. The involvement of educational providers in building a response to peer-on-peer abuse
5. Opportunities to consistently involve voluntary and community sector services in identifying and addressing contextual vulnerability
6. Coordination between distinct strategic documents and multi-agency meetings concerned with peer-on-peer abuse specifically and safeguarding adolescents more generally

The resources and activities developed in response to these priorities are outlined in the remainder of this report.

Case reviews and profiling

A number of sites were keen to build a contextual understanding of peer-on-peer abuse within their local areas. We developed three different approaches to support them in achieving this – informed by the strengths in their current practice:

- Three sites requested contextual reviews of peer-on-peer abuse cases. In two sites researchers undertook the reviews and in one site analysts applied the research team's case review template to deliver the exercise themselves
- A development seminar series was delivered to CSE and gangs analysts in one site to identify opportunities for incorporating transport, education, community safety and health data into their profiling activity
- A team of analysts in one site were coached to contextualise their existing problem profile which recorded information on young people affected by peer-on-peer abuse

Case Reviews

The Head of the MsUnderstood Partnership developed a contextual case review methodology to identify:

- The contextual dynamics of peer-on-peer abuse cases
- The extent to which the safeguarding response addressed the identified contextual dynamics

The review template and guidance slides are available in Appendix 3 and a webinar explaining the review process will be run during 2017 and available on the contextual safeguarding practitioners' network.

Nine case reviews were conducted by the research team in two sites. Reviews identified that, in keeping with wider research, young people's experiences of violence and harmful norms within their peer groups, educational settings and public spaces informed their experiences of peer-on-peer abuse in the sites. They also demonstrated that while assessments and other paperwork available for the case review identified these contextual dynamics, cases were largely managed by intervening with individual young people and sometimes their families.

In order to advance practice in each site, the contextual dynamic of each case was reproduced in vignettes (case studies). These case studies were made available to the participating LSCB to integrate into peer-on-peer abuse training. They provided an interactive resource to directly engage practitioners in thinking through the ways in which risk manifested within peer groups, schools and neighbourhoods and identify opportunities to intervene. An example of such a vignette (not one made from site reviews) is available on the [Community Care Inform website](#).

Analysts within another site have been applying the case review methodology themselves. Performance analysts have been working through one case and using it to explore their current peer-on-peer abuse profile. Their work with the case demonstrates the ways in which case reviews can be used to inform profiling activity (as well as training activities).

Profiling seminar series

In one site children's services had been investing in analysts to profile the local scale and nature of CSE and gangs. The work of these analysts was promising, and was surfacing relationships between young people affected by gang-association and/or serious youth violence and those with experience of CSE.

To this extent the local profile was holistic – identifying the interconnectivity between different manifestations of peer-on-peer abuse. However, at this stage the holistic account largely pertained to the individuals affected by the issue and not the families, peer groups, schools or neighbourhoods to which those individuals were associated. In order to support participating analysts to contextualise their holistic profiles of peer-on-peer abuse researchers developed a profiling seminar series. A planning workshop was held to:

- Outline an aspirational objective for contextual problem profiling
- Identify the assistance that analysts required to realise this objective

All participating analysts attended with the workshop and working with the research team co-created the content for the seminar series. The series would feature three seminars to explore the use of:

1. Education data (exclusions and children missing from education)
2. Health data (sexual health, mental health and A&E)

3. Transport and community safety data (ASB, domestic abuse, driver incident reports on buses)

Discussions during the seminars surfaced both practical ideas about how to incorporate such data into peer-on-peer abuse profiles and the challenges in implementing these ideas. Each dataset that was explored offered opportunities not just to identify individuals affected by peer-on-peer abuse but also the peer groups, schools and public spaces in which they spent their time. Analysts participating in the programme provided positive feedback about the experience:

‘Immensely informative and interesting seminars which opened my eyes to the possibilities of using other organisations data combined with the data I already collect to get a greater picture of CSE’

‘Hearing from colleagues from schools, health and transport providers allowed for a broader understanding of the possible analytical opportunities when looking into peer-on-peer abuse’

In order to document and share the learning from the series the research team and participating analysts worked together to develop a briefing on profiling peer-on-peer abuse. This briefing can be accessed [online](#) or in Appendix D.

Contextualising problem profiles

In one site the audit process recommended that local analysts be supported to identify gaps in data held regarding peer-on-peer abuse to provide an account that both linked ‘issue-based’ profiles (regarding gangs, missing and sexual exploitation) and offered greater detail about extra-familial contexts.

Researchers addressed this recommendation by applying research about the contextual nature of peer-on-peer abuse in activities with analysts who were responsible for the development of data systems within the given site. Through this process researchers sought to enable analysts to:

1. Analyse the current data provision around peer on peer abuse (defined as physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse and coercive control exercised within young people’s relationships)
2. Create geographical maps of peer-on-peer abuse locations and overlaying them with relevant demographic information
3. Improve knowledge within the local authority of where and why peer-on-peer abuse occurs and begin the process of developing more coordinated systems to collect contextual data
4. Contribute to the development of evidence-based policy and strategy around peer-on-peer abuse in the site

In order to meet these objectives, the MSU researcher appointed to the site developed a workplan with the children’s services analysis team in the site. The researcher:

1. Worked with the children’s services analysis team to review how peer-on-peer abuse data was collected from children’s social care, youth offending service and schools
2. Reviewed a new local authority led approach to identify young people with multiple risk factors including young people: who had disengaged from education; for whom there were CSE concerns; who had been reported missing; or who were affected by gangs
3. Suggested additions to the existing approach to data collection including: identifying post-code/ward where incidents occurred and/or where young people lived; recording if CSE

concerns were peer-on-peer or adult to child; documenting the name of the gang to whom the young person was associated (if known); recording previous schools the young person had attended; and documenting any concerns about harmful sexual behaviour

4. Worked with the analysis team to identify peer-on-peer abuse 'hotspots' using mapping technology and reviewed how they interacted with other local crime maps

This process was also supplemented by a contextual case review exercise outlined in the previous section.

In order to leverage increased information sharing the researcher also trained team leaders within children's social care on the contextual nature peer-on-peer abuse. This training was intended to support social care teams to identify cases of peer-on-peer abuse and record concerns so that the contextual data could be proactively collected and shared for analysis.

Undertaking this process raised a number of questions for the site and for the researchers involved, including:

- Which service should lead on coordinating data collection and sharing activities?
- How can agencies systematically share information around contexts and what is the most effective way for this to happen?
- How can a database of individuals, who are identified as having multiple vulnerabilities, be best utilised to develop contextual data?

The children's services performance analysis team who participated in this exercise reported that:

'Our work with the MsUnderstood partnership has highlighted that there is a lack of cross departmental overview of peer-on-peer abuse, despite extensive knowledge held by individual agencies. It has also highlighted the importance of sharing information and the importance of understanding the context [in which peer-on-peer abuse occurs]'

Should you be interested in repeating this process within your local authority the steps taken by researchers is illustrated with a flowchart and set of questions in Appendix E.

SUMMARY

The cumulative knowledge generated from our profiling activity in local sites indicates that:

- The role of analysts are crucial in developing a contextual understanding of peer-on-peer abuse
- Data on the contexts associated to peer-on-peer abuse are available – within case notes and assessments for example – but they are not necessarily incorporated into profiling activity
- Young people affected by different manifestations of peer-on-peer abuse often attend the same educational provisions, know the same friends or spend time in the same public spaces
- In order to develop contextual account of the issue those who hold information on peer-on-peer abuse need to be trained on the nature of the phenomenon so that information is collected and shared in an appropriate and timely fashion

One way to enable contextual profiling is to ensure that assessments of young people who have been abused by, or abused, their peers collect information on the nature of the contexts in which those young people spend their time. The following section documents two ways in which we sought to achieve this through our site work.

Incorporating contexts into assessments

Tools to assess the vulnerability, risks and strengths of young people affected by peer-on-peer abuse were in development, and/or in use, across all MSU sites. During the audit phase we reviewed a number of these assessment tools and processes, identifying the extent to which they both assessed the holistic nature of peer-on-peer abuse and considered the contextual dynamics of the phenomenon. Overall assessment tools were largely focused on the individual and familial characteristics of the young people affected by peer-on-peer abuse although many also contained information, within notes, on the dynamics of young people's peer groups and their experiences within school and/or in their local neighbourhood. Assessment processes, particularly multi-agency discussions, often included far more contextual information than written documentation and indicated that a number of practitioners were aware of the influence that peers, families, schools and public-space risk had on the welfare of young people with whom they worked. Furthermore, many practitioners could name locations, peer groups and educational establishments where they had repeated concerns. The challenge was ensuring the assessment tools brought this knowledge to the fore – so that they could inform both the development of contextual intervention plans and local problem profiles. Opportunities were identified in two sites to address this challenge.

Routine Peer Group Information Capture

During the audit of one site researchers identified that both social workers and youth offending team practitioners had, in an ad-hoc fashion, started to map social connections between the young people with whom they worked. While this practice was not consistent across either service, in the cases where it had been used practitioners were able to refine their assessments of individual young people by considering their experiences with reference to their wider peer group:

- Was their young person adopting a leadership role within their peer group, or were they largely following the influence of others?
- Was their peer group protective or did it present a risk associated to peer-on-peer abuse?
- Were their peers largely in the same educational establishment together or did they meet in other social or public settings?

Building the answers to these questions into assessments advanced practitioner understanding of peer-on-peer abuse, and provided a route to identifying interventions that considered a young person's peers. Although this approach demonstrated the potential for contextual assessment practices in the site, it was:

- Inconsistent – only used when individual practitioners thought it may be helpful
- Absent from strategy – was an operational approach that lacked strategic direction or recognition
- Lacked quality assurance – the informal nature of this activity meant that it was largely unregulated – this in turn reinforced its inconsistent application and practitioners were unclear about when peer groups could be mapped and for what purpose

Researchers working in the site undertook a piece of work to provide consistency in the local approach, ensure its inclusion within local strategies and introduce a process by which peer mapping could be quality assured.

In the first instance a workshop was held with practitioners who had been involved in peer group mapping processes, including practitioners from the youth offending team, police, children's

social care, the youth service and the local CSE specialist service. The workshop aimed to identify the ways in which peer groups were being mapped in the site, the purpose of these mapping activities and the potential challenges of further development, or implementation, of these processes. Discussing these three points identified that:

- Peer group mapping could be used to identify young people who were vulnerable to peer-on-peer abuse, inform the assessment of individuals who had already been identified, and inform detached and peer group intervention where concerns were escalating
- Within the site peer group information was being used, informally, to identify and assess risks associated with CSE and serious youth violence. This process largely occurred during multi-agency meetings, sometimes called by an individual worker who had identified peer connections that were of concern
- The identification of peer groups who were vulnerable to peer-on-peer abuse could be used to inform interventions offered by detached youth workers but such an approach was under-developed
- There were a number of challenges with formalising peer mapping processes – including: the different IT systems in use within the site (which all separately held information on peer groups); a need to clarify who owned (was responsible for) peer maps once they had been developed; a need to distinguish between mapping to inform assessment (safeguarding) and mapping as part of an intelligence gathering process (enforcement)

As a result of the workshop a briefing was produced for the local site steering group and local safeguarding children board. The briefing documented the opportunities and challenges identified during the workshop. It also made a proposal for one activity that the research team could undertake within the site during the remainder of the delivery period – noting that other challenges (such as sharing information between IT systems and building intelligence profiles) were beyond the remit/responsibility of the MSU project.

The research team proposed piloting a peer group information capture form to inform the assessment of individuals affected by peer-on-peer abuse. The form (included in Appendix F) was designed for use by children's social care and the youth offending team. It included trigger questions that would be used by a worker within either service when they contacted a young person's education provider and/or the youth service. The answers given to the question would then be integrated into the assessment tools already used by children's social care (social care assessment) and the youth offending team (Asset Plus).

The questions used in the form were considered and re-drafted by the local site steering group and the local safeguarding children board to ensure strategic buy in. Managers from each service were briefed on the content of the form and its use to aid quality assurance processes. The use of the form itself at the point of any referral where there were concerns regarding peer-on-peer abuse ensured that questions related to peer-group influence were asked consistently.

Developing the pilot and the information capture form raised important questions regarding ethics, consent and information storage. While peer associations are mapped routinely as part of police investigations across the country, questions were raised as to whether a service could ethically map a peer group without the consent of the individual young people featured in the map (or their parents). Associated to this question, debates surfaced about who would hold peer group information once it had been provided and who would oversee the actions taken if concerns regarding peer groups were identified. Ultimately most of these discussions were addressed by the form being used to capture information consistently that should be informing

individual safeguarding assessments – it was not used for intelligence gathering or wider proactive activity with peer groups. In addition, information was only captured by children's social care and the youth offending team during the pilot period, ensuring statutory oversight of any safeguarding concerns related to peer groups. Nonetheless, the fact that these debates surfaced at all is important, and points to the need for wider (and likely national) advice regarding the place of peer group mapping within processes intended to safeguard young people.

Contextualising asset plus training

Most assessment tools used within sites were focused on the individual and familial characteristics of young people affected by abuse and violence. However, during the delivery period the Youth Justice Board introduced new assessment tool into youth offending teams: Asset Plus. Asset Plus is an assessment tool that considers contextual factors, particularly peer group dynamics, when considering the risks associated to young people's offending. Our work within one site allowed us to explore how this tool could be used to assess risks associated with peer-on-peer abuse.

The audit of this site identified a need for a holistic assessment tool within the youth crime prevention service. This service, which was separate to the youth offending team, was currently using a range of assessment tools that were issue-specific (CSE, domestic abuse, youth violence etc.) and they requested one that provided a more holistic account of young people's experiences of abuse. Given the multitude of assessment tools already in use within this site the research team were reluctant to introduce another. However, during the delivery phase the youth offending team and the youth crime prevention service both adopted Asset Plus. Practitioners within the site were due to be trained on how to use Asset Plus during the delivery period. It was agreed by the site steering group, and the relevant service, that supplementary training would be designed by the research team to identify ways that Asset Plus could be used to provide a contextual and holistic assessment of peer-on-peer abuse. The research team would design the training content via knowledge of how Asset Plus works and applied the evidence based on peer-on-peer abuse to this assessment framework.

The researcher responsible for designing the training content attended the Asset Plus training alongside site professionals who would be delivering Asset Plus training to all other practitioners within the participating site. Going through this process enabled the researcher to both hear the way in which Asset Plus would be communicated to practitioners and identify opportunities for the tool to be used when assessing risks associated to peer-on-peer abuse.

Having attended the Asset Plus training sessions the researcher set about designing the supplementary training content. Training content applied research into peer-on-peer abuse to the structure of the Asset Plus assessment framework – identifying elements of the framework that were particularly helpful for developing a contextual assessment of risk/resilience and/or a contextual intervention plan.

Training was run over a half day period and structured into two parts:

SECTION 1: An overview of peer-on-peer abuse

- General research evidence into the nature and scale of peer-on-peer abuse
- Exploring contextual and holistic dynamics of peer-on-peer abuse (case file activity)

SECTION 2: Using Asset Plus in response to peer-on-peer abuse

- Information gathering during assessment – building information on contextual as well as individual risk/vulnerability/resilience factors

- Conclusions and explanations – provide an explanation of risk, vulnerability and resilience in relation to contexts as well as individuals
- Pathways and planning – identify opportunities to intervene with the contexts associated to the abusive incidents, and individuals concerned, in addition to any required 1:1 and family support

The training session was largely interactive and included a number of activities during which participants would build and apply a contextual understanding of peer-on-peer abuse.

During Section 1 this interactive element was enabled through engagement in case file reviews. The site participating in the deliverable had also undertaken reviews into local cases of peer-on-peer abuse (detailed in Appendix C) which in turn had been worked into learning vignettes. The researcher used these vignettes as the basis for the Asset Plus training, by firstly asking attendees to identify the contextual dynamics of a local case (compared to the wider research evidence on peer-on-peer abuse).

During Section 2 three interactive tools were introduced – all of which are reproduced, along with the training slides in Appendix G:

1. Information gathering table: The first column of the table captures the information gathering sections on Asset Plus. The remaining columns break down the contexts to which this information could relate – home, peer group, school, neighbourhood or indeed individual. Drawing information from the case vignette practitioners were asked to complete the table, gathering information about: personal, family and social factors; offending and anti-social behaviour; and foundations for change in relation to contextual as well as individual factors. This exercise was intended to highlight an opportunity within Asset Plus to collect information related to all contexts potentially associated to peer-on-peer abuse – unlike many other assessment tools which are largely restricted to collecting information on family and personal characteristics.
2. Explanations and conclusions exercise: Using the table in which they have gathered information from the case vignette, participants were then asked to explain, and draw some conclusions about, the nature of the abusive incident and the young person's involvement in it. Going through some of the same processes they would do in Asset Plus, participants were asked to:
 - Rate desistance factors – those related to contexts as well as individuals
 - Identify any significant contextual or individual events in the past that may have informed the young person's behaviour
 - Make some judgements about which contextual risk/resilience factors were likely to change
 - Identify the contextual risk/protective factors that had been used to explain the ratings applied in the assessment
 - During this exercise, participants were returning to processes and concepts that had already been introduced to them in Asset Plus training, but were now working through them with a contextual lens. In this way the fact that a young person's peer group dynamics or the cultural context of their school/neighbourhood could enable or prevent desistance – as well as that young person's familial or individual attitude – was brought to the fore. Participants were encouraged to articulate where these factors were unlikely to change, for example exposure to high levels of street based violence within their local neighbourhood, which in turn would provide

opportunities to more critically assess intervention plans (and partnerships) at a later stage.

3. The final interactive exercise involved the development of a contextual intervention plan. Participants were given a new table (featured in Appendix G) which drew upon elements of the intervention plan in Asset Plus. As illustrated in the table below, the first column of the table provided space for a participant to note a key area of intervention for a young person, such as addressing their abusive behaviour within their intimate relationship. The second column provided space to document work with the young person - whether the young person required a referral for this activity (i.e. to a domestic abuse programme), a target for the young person to aim for in relation to this area of intervention (i.e. stop threatening their partner) and a note of what the young person would do to achieve this (i.e. fully participate in the programme).

Key area of intervention	Young person	Other Controls	Family	Peers	School	Neighbourhood
Threatening behaviour towards partner	Referral: Domestic abuse project Target: To improve attitudes towards women Young person will: Fully participate in the programme					

Figure 4: Contextual intervention plan

The next section in the intervention plan for Asset Plus was 'other controls'. Other Controls enables a practitioner to identify controls external to the young person that if put in place could enable them to address the key area of intervention. This is an element of Asset Plus that is critical for enabling contextual practice. During the training exercise the interactive table broke down potential areas for other controls into family, peers, school and neighbourhood. In doing so it asked participants to explicitly consider each context associated to the young person, whether the nature of any of these was associated to the area in need of intervention, and importantly what controls could be put in place to address any negative associations.

In the exemplar table these controls included:

- Speaking with the young person's mum to identify the impact of historic domestic abuse on the family dynamic and whether she needed any support in this regard
- Mapping the peer group dynamic of the young person to ascertain whether they were following the lead of their peers when they abused their partner (as their peers participated) or whether they initiated the assault. This would ensure that any risk within the peer group dynamic itself could be identified and if necessary addressed so that it did not undermine the input from the 1:1 domestic abuse programme

The session was delivered on four occasions to staff within the youth offending and youth crime prevention service. Having completed all three activities participants were asked what lessons

they would take away with them as a result of the day, what they would change about the training content and what they felt was most useful. Comments back included:

‘The message I took from the session was to be more aware of peer on peer abuse and how it interlinks with other aspects of their lives...I already communicate well with other agencies to get a bigger picture of what is going on in young people’s lives, and mostly include the family. However, with the older young people I work with the family sometimes is not as involved, so (I will) try to involve them more to get a fuller picture of the young person’s life. (I will) Also try to keep track of young people’s peer groups more effectively, and use the tools with young people I work with who are in probation where they do not use asset plus where possible– for my own planning with them which I can share with their case managers.’

‘As a seconded Probation Officer, recently seconded into Youth Justice, the whole of the content of the training was beneficial to me to help main gain another perspective and a better understanding of the issues involved for the young people I am working with.... this for me was an excellent training event, difficult subject matter very well delivered and interaction rather than just being lectured to’.

‘I really enjoyed the session and felt that I took away further understanding in terms of the complexities and depth of these types of cases. In terms of areas for improvement I would have liked the session to be spread over a full day.’

The research team were in agreement about the length of time required for the training. In order to make full use of the resources a whole day was required. Participants were also relatively new to Asset Plus and so some needed reminding about the key concepts and processes featured in the assessment tool. Once Asset Plus has been in use for a longer period of time participants may find the resources even more helpful and easy to apply.

Going through this process demonstrated to the research team that Asset Plus is an assessment tool with contextual capability – providing a direct means through which practitioners can explicitly capture information on peer group dynamic (as well as school and neighbourhood) and feed this into their individual intervention plans and wider area problem profiles. The supplementary training designed to enable this requires further piloting over full-day sessions and its impact needs to be monitored for any changes it makes to youth offending practice.

Working with schools and alternative education providers

Audits across MSU sites identified the significant role of schools and other education providers in safeguarding young people from peer-on-peer abuse. In keeping with wider research on the phenomenon, some schools were identified as protective spaces in which young people were supported to build healthy and safe friendships with peers and partners. However, a number of challenges were also identified related to:

- Inconsistent engagement of schools with the multi-agency response to peer-on-peer abuse within local areas
- Inconsistent provision of sex and relationships education within schools
- Reporting rates of peer-on-peer abuse within schools and lack of clarity about referral pathways and thresholds for reporting harmful sexual behaviour

- The challenges faced by schools when responding to incidents, including the use of managed moves, lengthy police investigations and on-going bullying behaviours
- Lack of coordination in offers made to schools to provide awareness-raising and interventions for young people – leading to duplication of delivery in some provisions
- Routes to share local problem profiles and concerns with all education providers in a given local area via multi-agency processes when not all could attend meetings associated to peer-on-peer abuse

Some of our delivery within sites, while not specifically focused on school environments, sought to bolster partnerships with education providers and the wider local partnership – such as engaging schools in peer group mapping processes (Appendix F) or considering the place of education data in problem profiling activities (Appendix D). However, in two sites researchers worked with schools, students and those who support education providers within local authorities to deliver targeted activities to meet some of the challenges outlined above. In one site this was achieved via work with the Fair Access Panel and better coordinating the plan for whole school approaches in that area. In another site work focused on training with teaching staff and education safeguarding leads, in addition to consultation with students.

Engaging the Fair Access Panel

During an audit of one site researchers identified that some cases of peer-on-peer abuse within schools were being managed via referral to the local Fair Access Panel (FAP). FAPs operate across most local authorities in England, and are designed to ensure that children who do not have an education place are found one quickly, to minimise the amount of time a child is out of school. FAPs lead the education access process and it is their role to discuss each case and agree an education placement for each child. Children discussed at a FAP include those:

- at risk of permanent exclusion
- who have been permanently excluded
- subject to managed moves between schools
- who are looked after young people being moved into the local authority and require a school place
- referred by admissions who may be hard to place in a mainstream school

More information on the FAP protocols and procedures can be found [here](#).

In a number of MSU sites researchers observed that students were being moved between schools in response to an incident of peer-on-peer abuse. In some cases, those suspected of being abusive, but in a number of cases those who had been abused, were moved to a different school as part of a risk management strategy. The decisions about if and how to move these students were being made at the FAP. Conversations which informed these moves indicated that schools were often at the forefront of responding to cases of peer-on-peer abuse, infrequently referred to as incidents of 'sexual bullying' or 'sexual misconduct' in addition to physical assaults against other students. Some incidents occurred on school premises and others involved students but took place outside of the school environment.

By observing decision-making at FAPs, researchers identified that:

1. The FAP is often the centre of the decision making process deciding where to place the student/s when they are being moved/excluded
2. The FAP holds a lot of 'soft' information about prevalence of peer-on-peer abuse in schools and the impact it has on students' education. This includes incidents and assaults

that are documented in FAP referral forms or are discussed in FAP meetings. This information is not always known to other services/agencies, particularly if incidents are identified as 'low level' sexual misconduct or 'persistent disruptive behaviour'

3. Schools often hold a lot of contextual information about peer-on-peer abuse including how peer groups of concern, safety on transport networks (particularly during school journeys), prior incidents and neighbourhood disputes, affect the safety of their students
4. Information known to and discussed at FAPs could be used to develop a greater understanding of the scale and nature of peer-on-peer abuse in schools specifically, and a local area more widely, to inform problem profiling, the targeting of interventions and measurements of success

While these observations were made during multiple audits, one site in particular appeared keen to explore the potential of FAP involvement through the delivery process. Building on this identified strength, researchers recommended a programme of work with the FAP to ensure that:

- instances of peer-on-peer abuse are consistently considered and recorded when placements are decided
- information collected through this process is shared with relevant analysts to track the prevalence and impact of peer-on-peer abuse in educational settings within the local site

In order to address this recommendation, researchers aimed to use the FAP to develop data and information on the impact of peer-on-peer abuse in schools and alternative education provisions within the identified site. Through this process it was envisaged that professionals within the site would be able to:

- Develop a process to more accurately record incidents of peer-on-peer abuse in schools and education provisions
- Collect information on the prevalence of peer-on-peer abuse in schools
- Generate data on the impact that peer-on-peer abuse has on young people's education, including exclusions and managed moves
- Generate data on how schools currently respond to concerns and incidents – in particular those identified as 'sexual bullying/sexual misconduct/inappropriate sexualised behaviour/touching'
- Identify any further contextual trends e.g. peer groups and locations of concern by education providers and use this information known to the FAP to enhance the development of the local peer-on-peer abuse profile; which was largely built upon information known to statutory agencies including children's social care and the police

Researchers implemented a staged delivery process:

In the first stage researchers observed a further two FAP meetings and met with key local authority staff. During observations, researchers were looking for particular points of discussion in order to identify opportunities for gathering data from the FAP process to develop local understandings of, and responses to, peer-on-peer abuse. These included:

- Does peer-on-peer abuse feature in the reasons given for the referral to the FAP? For example, is the young person being exploited by, or exploiting, their peers? Are they affected by, or involved in, sexual bullying, inappropriate sexual behaviour, relationship abuse or gang-related violence?
- Does the reason for the move/exclusion recorded on the referral form convey the reasons given in the FAP discussion?

- How are incidents or concerns related to sexual bullying/sexual misconduct/inappropriate sexualised behaviour/touching recorded on the referral form and discussed at the FAP?
- What information is shared at the panel in relation to the child's behaviour, family or home environment, peer-group, school and neighbourhood?
- Have any interventions been used by the school to address the behaviour/experience of concern prior to a referral to the panel?
- Is the incident or reason for move related to other incidents or concerns with other students and how has the school responded to these peer dynamics (beyond the request to move)?
- Is any support planned for the child being moved and for other students who remain in the school and were also affected by/involved in/associated with the incident in question?

In the second stage, researchers reviewed versions of the FAP referral form that had been completed by schools and admissions staff to refer young people to the panel. During the review, researchers sought to identify whether:

- The form clearly indicated why the student was being referred to FAP?
- Any concerns related to peer-on-peer abuse, particularly that of a sexual nature, had been clearly identified, and how they had been described?
- The form captured information about the individual child, their family and peer group dynamics, and the association of the incident to their school and/or neighbourhood environment.

During the third stage, findings from the observations, meetings and FAP form review were presented to representatives of the local authority including FAP co-ordinators, the inclusion team and the heads of children's social care and education. At this meeting head teachers, FAP leads/co-ordinators and analysts were able to work with the researchers to identify any additional information that the referral form could capture and how best to achieve this.

Informed by this discussion, researchers worked with members of the local authority inclusion and FAP teams to adapt the FAP referral form and considered:

- the type of information that was required and the best way to record it so that it was usable by analysts
- the extent to which quantitative or qualitative data, or a combination, would be most useful
- how the information would be analysed, used and with whom it would be shared

The annotated version of the FAP referral form in Appendix H documents the changes made by the research team in consultation with the FAP co-ordinators and key stakeholders. In addition to information already collected on it, the FAP referral form needed to document:

1. Quantitative data collection on:
 - Ethnicity, gender, year-group of the child
 - Post-code and ward where the child lived
 - Name of the child's school/provision
2. Contextual information on reasons for the FAP referral and the impact of factors beyond the individual's history of behaviour and information on the family – including information on the child's peer-groups, school environment and experiences of the local neighbourhood

3. Details on the school's response to the incident or behaviours of concern related to the child in question prior to referring to the FAP. This was to include any referrals to external agencies, and interventions offered by the school

In the final stage, the revised form was piloted for school term, its use was monitored by researchers and feedback gathered by members of the FAP and local authority staff.

The FAP coordinator for the site commented that:

(The) FAP went well and the feedback on the form was extremely positive. The schools felt that it made them think about interventions the holistic picture of the young person

Following the trial period, a further FAP meeting was observed and 32 referral forms were reviewed by the research team. This process identified:

- A noticeable improvement on the input of contextual data on some forms, for example a park was mentioned in relation to risk experienced by one young person and a young man who was subject to a referral was identified as a 'leader' within his peer group when accounting for peer dynamics that he had experienced
- That over a third of the 32 cases referred to the FAP were related to peer-on-peer abuse
- Further support for schools was required to ensure that incidents and concerns of a sexual nature were consistently recorded on the form. For example, behaviour identified as 'inappropriate behaviour to female students' was noted on one form but no further details about the nature of the behaviour or the response of the school to manage the impact of such behaviour was recorded
- An evidenced lack of provision for young men displaying harmful sexual behaviours

This process not only provided information about the scale of peer-on-peer abuse within schools in the local site, but gave an indication of gaps in service provision and where schools required support or challenge from the wider multi-agency partnership.

The research team then worked with local analysts to establish a system for processing the data included in the FAP referral form. Data from the forms were reviewed by analysts in consultation with the research team. It was agreed that the information held in FAP referral forms could be used to:

- Identify the number and nature of peer-on-peer abuse incidents within schools and processed via the participating local authority's IT data collection system – including data to identify schools affected by peer-on-peer abuse and locations affecting students on their journeys to school
- Capture contextual information within the local site to enhance the local partnership's understanding of the interplay between particular peer groups, schools, and public spaces and the local nature of peer-on-peer abuse

Reflecting on this process the Head of Learning Access within the site commented that:

'The Learning Access Service has found the support and advice of the MsUnderstood project invaluable to reviewing the Fair Access Panel to ensure peer on peer abuse indicators are identified in the referral process and at the panel.

Following an initial review of the Fair Access Panel referral form the following questions were added to the FAP referral form for schools to complete:

- CSE
- Serious Youth Violence
- Gangs
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour
- Missing from Education
- Children's Social Care
- Domestic abuse/teenage relationship abuse
- Sexual Bullying
- Missing from Home

Colleagues from MsUnderstood and the local authority have subsequently tracked responses to these questions. This has allowed LA offices to create a data matrix of need around peer on peer abuse.

The Learning Access Service has revised its procedures around the use of the following interventions: Pre FAP professionals' meetings, transition meetings between schools and restorative justice techniques to support pupils who have been identified as at risk to these issues.' (The Learning Access Centre, Education, Local Authority)

Developing whole school approaches

In addition to using structures such as the FAP to explore school engagement, in two sites we worked directly with schools, and those who provide services to them, to explore opportunities for creating whole school approaches to respond to peer-on-peer abuse. Schools and other education providers manage incidents of peer-on-peer abuse and provide a context in which young people form peer relationships and friendships. As a result, the nature of educational environments will inform young peoples' exposure to, or protection from, peer-on-peer abuse. In response, schools often engage with external services who can offer them and their students support to prevent and address the impact of violence and abuse. MSU audits identified that:

- Different external services (run by voluntary sector organisations, the faith and community sector and the local authority) often deliver direct work into the same schools and education providers
- Work offered to schools is often focused on a specific manifestation of violence and abuse such as CSE, gang related violence or domestic abuse etc. rather than on the connections between these issues
- Limited capacity/funding or funder requirements result in services being offered to select groups or individuals within schools, or a one-off assembly or workshop for a larger group (such as a school year group)

- Whole school approaches were rarely delivered – some approaches that were called ‘whole school’ were often limited to work with young people and didn’t address school policies/procedures, environmental factors (including design) and/or staff training
- Support was largely time limited i.e. two assemblies a term, or work with an identified group for one term

In order to respond to these challenges and inconsistencies, and build on the strengths identified in areas where schools were engaging with external providers, we developed two different workplans for two different sites. In one site, our work involved influencing a planned roll out of whole school approaches to CSE; so this was broadened to address all forms of violence and abuse experienced by young people. In another site, researchers engaged students, schools and the local authority in order to support the LSCB to develop a plan for including schools in all stages of their response to peer-on-peer abuse.

EXAMPLE 1: Developing holistic whole school approaches

One site had made a strategic commitment to develop whole school approaches in response to CSE. Following the audit, researchers recommended that this commitment be broadened to incorporate all forms of violence and abuse. Widening the remit of the whole school approach would create opportunities for preventing all forms of peer-on-peer abuse.

Researchers aimed to support the local authority to re-consider their original proposition which was CSE specific, and involved agencies in the process who were delivering school-based interventions targeting different forms of peer-on-peer abuse. Facilitating discussion across these services and with the local authority, researchers aimed to co-create an approach to move beyond the siloed approach to school interventions that had been in place. This aim was to be realised via a three stage engagement and influencing process.

In order to commence the work, researchers needed to identify agencies delivering work in schools of relevance to peer-on-peer abuse. Secondly, researchers needed to identify school policies and procedures of relevance to peer-on-peer abuse – to ensure a holistic structure was in place within schools in which services would be engaged. Two approaches were taken to gather the information. Initially, a researcher met with local authority education leads to identify the organisations that were delivering peer-on-peer abuse interventions in schools. A supporting document (Appendix I) was prepared in advance of this meeting to guide discussion. Evidence gathered at this meeting was supplemented through information provided by schools in their Section 11 Safeguarding Audits¹. Researchers added three questions to this audit in consultation with professionals from the local authority:

1. Which services support your school in relation to peer-on-peer abuse?
2. What training has your staff received on issues including gangs and serious youth violence, child sexual exploitation, missing and teenage relationship abuse/domestic abuse?
3. What policies and procedures do you have in place to inform your response to peer-on-peer abuse?

¹ ‘Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places duties on a range of organisations and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children’ (Working Together 2015, Chapter 2 – online version). While this duty does not specifically apply to schools many LSCBs around the country still use audit forms under s11 for schools as well as other services to which the duty does apply such as youth offending teams and local authorities.

Researchers reviewed the information that had been returned in the Section 11 Audits and used it to supplement that already provided by the local authority. The information gathered through this process was shared with wider education teams in the site, including the Fair Access team to review gaps in school provision and identify a school in the local site to trial a whole school approach to peer-on-peer abuse.

The local authority used the discussion guide (Appendix I) and the findings of the review to meet with and work alongside local providers, to develop a shared and holistic whole school approach to prevent and respond to peer-on-peer abuse in the site. The local authority reported that:

Working with MsUnderstood made us step-back and think strategically about what we need to be doing to co-ordinate work delivered in schools.

The process, and the information gathering during it, raised questions for the research team and local professionals that others may want to consider when developing a similar approach:

1. Throughout the process, providers, the local authority and researchers questioned what role should/could the local authority play in coordinating the provision of external services – for example could they provide some form of quality assurance with regards to what is offered?
2. What approaches can services take if they want to create cross-silo partnerships for building holistic whole school approaches but are in receipt of different funding streams?
3. What policies and procedures should schools have in place in relation to peer-on-peer abuse to make best use of interventions that are offered and to ensure inputs are sustained throughout school systems and structures?
4. How does LSCB training for schools coordinate with interventions/training provided by external agencies, and how is its impact monitored?
5. Is the training that external agencies provide to schools quality assured and/or should it be and by whom?

Coordinating services offered to schools creates an opportunity to more creatively use existing resources – pulling together capacity to create structured, whole school approaches as opposed to disconnected and duplicating interventions. However, it is interesting to note that the above points of discussion arose in the process of mapping and attempting to coordinate offers being made to schools. The fact that they remained unanswered at the end of the delivery period signify both the challenge of making consistent and holistic offers to schools and the importance to striving for this goal.

By the close of the delivery period, funding had been made available which local sites could apply for, to receive whole school approaches to respond to young people's experiences of violence and abuse. Researchers informed the funder about the work that had been undertaken in this site as it now had a favourable strategic environment to support such an opportunity. This information, along with that provided by other stakeholders, resulted in the funder commissioning whole school approaches to be delivered to education provisions within that site.

EXAMPLE 2: Developing an LSCB plan for whole school approaches

The audit of one site identified an interest from the LSCB in better engaging schools with their multi-agency plans to respond to peer-on-peer abuse. In order to do this the LSCB needed to ascertain how schools and other education providers were preventing and intervening with peer-on-peer abuse and the extent to which whole school approaches to safeguarding had been developed. Researchers aimed to:

1. work with the LSCB Education sub-group to lead on the development of a borough wide response to peer-on-peer abuse
2. support schools and education providers in the site to develop an in-depth understanding of the impact that peer-on-peer abuse was having on students and the wider school environment so that they could better engage with this process

To commence this programme of work researchers developed training content on the peer-on-peer abuse evidence base – with specific reference to schools. The training was intended to support safeguarding leads to develop their response to peer-on-peer abuse incidents and concerns (slides with notes available in Appendix J). Researchers worked with the site to build the peer-on-peer abuse training content in wider CSE training that was being delivered to safeguarding leads. The site's education inclusion and safeguarding team identified professionals from schools and other education services to attend sessions.

Having raised awareness of peer-on-peer abuse amongst school professionals, researchers designed a process to explore how the issue was manifesting in schools within the sites. Working with the young women's team in MSU, researchers designed and facilitated a workshop with secondary school age young women to get their views on school safety and the impact of peer-on-peer abuse on their school experience (a guide on questions for the session available in Appendix K).

The MSU team focused on the links between attitudes and behaviours towards women and girls in school and the representation of women and girls in the media and popular culture. This approach provided an accessible route for young women to engage in a discussion about experiences of school safety and how to make schools in the site safer. Two workshops were run in the site reaching 28 young women. Participants identified that:

- the sexism and sexual harassment they experienced from other students made them feel unsafe
- students who displayed other behavioural issues also made them feel unsafe on occasions
- there were physical sites of harm within school premises including stairwells and unmonitored corridors and they sometimes felt unsafe travelling to and from school

A briefing was produced for the site LSCB outlining the views of these young women and their account was used to develop a facilitated workshop with 21 senior leaders from secondary schools and alternative education providers in the site. During the workshop researchers and professionals reflected on the impact that peer-on-peer abuse has on local students and the wider school environment – and the extent to which these experiences reflected the wider evidence base that had been shared in the initial peer-on-peer abuse training to school safeguarding leads. Workshop attendees:

- identified examples of how peer-on-peer abuse impacts students and the wider school environment
- outlined the current response to peer-on-peer abuse
- made recommendations for how the LSCB could support schools in responding to peer-on-peer abuse in the future

How peer-on-peer abuse impacts students/school environment	The current response to peer-on-peer abuse	Recommendations for the LSCB
<p>Some students are 'self-excluding' due to fear about their safety in school or on their journeys to/from school</p> <p>Experiences of peer-abuse can lead to self-harm and hyper-vigilance amongst students. It can also impact their ability to form relationships and engage in education</p> <p>Neighbourhood-based conflicts can come into school and result in a heightened awareness/tensions amongst students</p> <p>Responding to incidents in school impacts staff capacity and school budgets. Some schools have provided mediation, counselling and anger management courses</p>	<p>There is sometimes confusion about the most appropriate way to respond to escalating incidents and behaviours, including inappropriate sexual touching/sexual misconduct. For example, knowing what to do when police involvement was not appropriate and identifying when to inform the police</p> <p>The majority of interventions available to schools work with individuals rather than groups of concern, including peer groups and year groups. Given peer influence and the normalisation of sexual bullying seen in wider school environments, this approach is questionable and alternative approaches would be of interest</p>	<p>Clear guidance for schools is required on how to prevent and respond to all forms of peer-on-peer abuse including incidents and patterns of behaviour seen as 'low-level sexual bullying/ sexual misconduct' through to allegations of serious sexual assault</p> <p>Specialist support is required for students that are being moved across schools through the fair access process as a result of peer-on-peer abuse. Ensuring schools have a full set of information about these experiences, and how they have been managed, when the student arrives will assist in putting a support plan in place</p>

Figure 5: Impact of peer-on-peer abuse on students/school, response and recommendations for the LSCB

Researchers produced a second briefing paper for the LSCB following the professionals' workshop outlining the support needs identified by schools and the recommendations made for how best to develop their response to peer-on-peer abuse. Researchers worked with the LSCB education sub-group to develop an action plan based on the findings that were presented in the briefing papers which in turn were incorporated into the LSCBs wider plans to develop local responses to peer-on-peer abuse.

Professionals within the local authority commented that:

'A development [of the work with MsUnderstood] has been working more closely with a greater number of schools and having greater level of transparency [about the impact peer-on-peer abuse]' (Targeted Youth Support)

'A key aspect of addressing peer on peer abuse is to ensure gender roles are challenged [within schools] and children are supported to develop a positive identity, respect, empathy and resilience' (Interim Director of Early Help)

Workshops evidenced that both professionals and young women were aware of the negative impact that peer-on-peer abuse was having on students and school cultures/environments. Amongst professionals there was a clear need for further guidance to ensure consistent and quality assured responses to peer-on-peer abuse in schools, and questions were raised about the roles of both LSCBs and national governments in providing this.

By involving students, school professionals, the local authority and the LSCB in this process the work of schools was integrated into the local strategic plans to respond to peer-on-peer abuse and the needs of schools could also be considered. This two-way relationship – what schools

require from, and can offer, a partnership response to peer-on-peer abuse – is integral to ensuring a holistic and coordinated response to the phenomenon in question.

SUMMARY: Developing whole school approaches

As researchers were seeking sustainable solutions for sites they did not develop and offer specific interventions for schools. Instead they sought to create the appropriate environment in which whole school approaches could be achieved.

Our work in two sites demonstrated that in order to develop/enable whole school approaches to peer-on-peer abuse it was important to:

- create a favourable strategic environment with direct engagement from the LSCB and school leaders
- incorporate school involvement into the wider LSCB plans to respond to peer-on-peer abuse
- build the experiences of young people and school professionals into the planning stages of delivery
- look for opportunities to identify and bring together external providers to forge partnerships, maximise capacity and avoid duplication

Responses to young people who abuse their peers

One of the many benefits of increasing the engagement of schools is ensuring the early identification of young people who display HSB (Women and Equalities Committee, 2016). However, the more schools identify and share concerns regarding young people who are abusing their peers, the greater the demand for consistent and effective responses to be made available.

MSU audits identified some examples of local protocols to guide referrals for HSB and the emergence of HSB operational meetings, many of which were in their early stages of development or were under review. Most sites had access to some staff, particularly within youth offending services, that were trained to conduct AIM2 assessments for HSB and deliver interventions in accordance with this when a young person had been convicted of a sexual offence. In general, however, sites saw this area of their work as being one that was in need of most improvement. This was particularly true of responses to young people who:

- Were suspected of displaying HSB but had received no-further-action decisions (NFA) from criminal justice agencies
- Were suspected of, or proven to have, sexually harmed peers in groups rather than on their own

The challenges in these circumstances were multi-fold. Working with NFA cases required young people's voluntary engagement in services. The services that young people engaged in couldn't be delivered on an idea of 'guilt' or 'culpability' if a young person had received an NFA decision – and therefore needed to be integrated into other support they may be receiving. In addition, most HSB services and assessments available within MSU sites were designed to intervene with young people who had sexually harmed others on their own rather than in groups – and group-based HSB was an issue of increasing concern within MSU sites. Engaging with peer groups of concern was not something that most sites had considered - responses available within sites were largely individualised and did not address the contextual dynamics of young people's abusive behaviours.

The research team identified opportunities within two sites to enhance local responses to HSB and to begin address some of the challenges identified above. In one we sought to advance

initial attempts made by the site to provide a consistent and quality assured response to young people subject to NFA decisions regarding HSB. In the other we developed a programme to support a youth club who were already supporting a group of young people (where there were HSB concerns) to identify how they could build HSB intervention into their delivery model.

A framework for contextual HSB meetings

In one MSU site children and young people's services had begun to pilot a process for HSB meetings. This process was initiated following the identification of a number of peer-on-peer CSE cases and NFA decisions by criminal justice agencies. Professionals within the site identified the need to have multi-agency oversight and plans for young people subject to HSB NFA decisions. In a number of these cases professionals had multiple concerns about those they suspected of abusing their peers and wanted a consistent approach to managing these concerns – in a shared, multi-agency structure.

Under the leadership of children and young people's services terms of reference for the meetings were drafted and circulated to the multi-agency partnership within the site. Multi-agency planning meetings were undertaken in accordance with the terms of reference to review decisions about young people where there were HSB concerns and used risk, vulnerability and strength factors from the AIM2 assessment to guide conversation. The research team observed two of these HSB MAP meetings and analysed the minutes of 15 further meetings comparing the activity at meetings to the evidence base on HSB. Combining the research evidence with the meeting structure adopted by the site, researchers produced a revised framework for HSB MAP of strategy meetings (Appendix L).

The approach proposed by the research team maintained the general structure and attendance introduced by the site. Revisions attempted to bring discussion of context to the fore - with reference to both planned interventions and assessment of risk/vulnerability/strengths. Prior to the involvement of researchers there was a discrete place on the agenda for a discussion of context but this part of the meetings had been largely limited. The researchers produced a template for minuting discussions which required the routine recording of contextual information throughout the meeting (Appendix L). Therefore risks, vulnerabilities and strengths within contexts as well as individuals were recorded – and interventions for contexts as well as with individuals were considered.

Having piloted the revised framework the site requested that a box to summarise the contextual discussion also be added to the template. Following this change an introductory section was added to the template – allowing the reproduction of HSB meetings in other sites. The primary intention of the framework was to guide discussion about NFA cases in a way that enabled the identification of interventions within contexts associated to the abusive incidents (including peer groups and schools etc.) It also provided a means by which to explore the more contextual dynamics of peer-on-peer abuse which are particularly, although not exclusively, pertinent for group-based HSB. The single point of contact for HSB meetings within the site reported that:

MsUnderstood were instrumental in supporting us to develop an understanding of our local profile of CSE. This enabled us to identify that a significant proportion of CSE in the borough related to peer abuse. The MsUnderstood project subsequently guided and supported us in the development of a framework and process to identify, assess, intervene and review the needs of young people who present with harmful sexual behaviour. This framework is enabling us to reduce the risk presented to self and others applying a

contextual understanding to the needs, risks, strengths associated with the young person, their families, peer groups and communities. MsUnderstood has provided extremely valuable advice, support, feedback and guidance throughout this process. They have been responsive to our local needs, structures and services and have worked closely with key professionals to promote and enable change across the local network. (Head of Service and Service Manager, Children and Young People's Services)

For sites interested in repeating this process it is critical that the principles for conducting HSB meetings (outlined in Appendix L) be considered. These are fundamental to the meeting process and make sense of the approach enabled through the framework. Whether the meeting used is a strategy meeting, MAP or some other form is less important. The framework is intended to enhance any existing meeting structure rather than necessarily introduce new processes. It also doesn't introduce a new assessment process. It draws upon the AIM2 categories (used by most sites across the country) but applies them to contexts as well as individuals to enable a contextual discussion. As such it provides a means by which to contextualise existing meetings where HSB cases are discussed and in doing so offers a mechanism for identifying ways to change the social conditions in which peer-on-peer abuse is occurring where 1:1 intervention is a greater challenge to deliver.

Peer group intervention

One of the queries that emerged from the HSB framework pilot, site audits, and delivery plans more broadly, was how best to intervene with peer groups to disrupt norms which may be enabling (or at best failing to challenge) abusive behaviours. This question was particularly pertinent for sites who had identified peer relationships and groups where there were concerns about abusive behaviours but nothing had been proven to a threshold required for a criminal justice intervention. For many sites these concerns made up the bulk of peer-on-peer abuse referrals and were seeking alternative approaches to disrupting abusive attitudes and behaviours – particularly those that were built upon problematic group dynamics.

MSU's audits revealed that local authorities had recognised the need for work with pre-existing peer-groups of boys and young men where there were concerns associated to peer-on-peer abuse - in particular HSB, peer-on-peer CSE and harmful attitudes. However, even instances where the professional partnership had information about the link between peer dynamics and a young person's abusive behaviours interventions tended to focus on disrupting individual/family behaviours rather than addressing peer-group influence. Beyond provision from the youth offending service (for those convicted of peer-on-peer cases), some sites were also using HSB services. These services were critically important for some young people who sexually harm peers, however they were not always appropriate for those where no offence had been proven and did not generally work with peer groups. In addition, HSB services were often perceived as 'specialist' and distinct from other youth services/support that young people received. It seemed to the research team that this 'specialist' label had been interpreted to mean that only therapeutic, forensic, services could deliver HSB input rather than more universal youth services also routinely incorporating work on harmful behaviour to young people.

One site audit identified that local services, particularly youth clubs, were working with peer groups of young men. Multi-agency discussions had raised concerns about some of these groups and their involvement in peer-on-peer abuse but the youth club providers had not been engaged to consider what services they could offer when they were already engaging with those groups. The audit report proposed that researchers work with an identified provider and use

evidence on peer-on-peer abuse to develop and deliver a support package for them. The support package would aim to create opportunities for youth work providers to identify ways in which they would prevent the normalisation of peer-on-peer abuse by promoting positive social norms and disrupting harmful attitudes amongst the peer groups that accessed their services. While further research is required to explore the contextual interplay between peer group dynamics and incidents of peer-on-peer abuse in the UK (Barter et al, 2009; Firmin, 2015), researchers identified this as an opportunity to begin investigating how services, that already work with peer-groups of young men, could address group attitudes and beliefs that can underpin peer-on-peer abuse.

For this area of delivery, MSU researchers worked with the local authority to identify a service that worked with boys and young men within the local site. Researchers then intended to work with the identified service to:

- Develop their existing work with peer-groups of young men to consider the extent to which it challenged harmful peer dynamics and abusive norms
- Reflect on current service delivery, identifying their strengths and challenges related to developing a peer-group intervention
- Design peer-group interventions that:
 - were based on the needs of the service and young people it supported
 - utilised the emerging evidence and research into the role that peer-groups play within instances of peer-on-peer abuse
 - provided some useful learning about what peer-group responses to peer-on-peer abuse could look like in the future and what factors could contribute to their success

Researchers held two of three planned workshops with an identified service (the third was cancelled due to staff sickness and couldn't be rescheduled during the delivery period). The slides and notes developed for the first session are included in Appendix I. During this time, researchers were able to support the service to identify their needs in developing a response to harmful peer group dynamics, and provided them with the emerging evidence base on peer-group involvement in peer-on-peer abuse cases. The service identified a need for further support to explore staff attitudes towards consent, gender and group dynamics, in order to fully equip them to co-create a response to peer groups associated with peer-on-peer abuse.

The research team undertook some wider work within the site with the aim of providing some sustainable infrastructure to continue this work programme. This included working with the local authority to identify other peer groups of concern within the site who could be supported through the development of interventions for pre-existing peer groups. We also recommended that the local authority consider the content and design of training for youth offending staff to better equip them to identify, prevent and address harmful attitudes and behaviours within peer groups that access their services (associated to the resources developed in Appendix F and G). Researchers also recommended that:

1. Strategic and senior leadership within the site recognise the importance of developing contextual approaches to working with young people, including work with peer-groups to ensure that this work was developed beyond the close of the programme
2. Increased mapping and identification of peer groups was critical for informing the type and extent of services that were required
3. Professionals required support and training to build confidence for discussing sex, relationships, power, gender, societal influences, societal inequalities and media

representation with young people. This also included supporting staff to acknowledge their own values and attitudes towards power, gender and inequalities and impact of these issues on young people. Investment in this area would equip more mainstream services to engage in the prevention and disruption of HSB.

This deliverable remained under-developed at the close of the programme and continues to be a priority area for service development and commissioning across MSU sites. A number of sites are considering opportunities for developing peer-group interventions. Our research team is currently undertaking an international literature review into HSB, group offending and group intervention, offering a synthesised evidence base to inform service development in this area in the future.

Engagement of community, specialist and voluntary organisations

Working with youth clubs to develop peer group interventions was just one of many approaches taken by researchers to engage community, voluntary and specialist organisations in the response to peer-on-peer abuse.

Across the MSU sites voluntary and community organisations were directly involved in supporting young people affected by peer-on-peer abuse – albeit not specifically for that reason. Housing providers and caretakers, park wardens, sexual health clinics, youth service provision and transport providers were just some of the agencies/individuals delivering services to young people who had been abused by, and/or who were abusing, their peers.

In addition to these universal services a number of sites had commissioned specialist support for young people affected by particular manifestations of peer-on-peer abuse, including:

- Specialist CSE services – provided by both statutory and voluntary organisations
- Specialist harmful sexual behaviour services – provided by voluntary organisations, youth offending teams and forensic CAMHS services
- Domestic abuse provision – both early intervention for young people in abusive relationships and independent domestic violence advocate (IDVA) provision for those aged 16 and over
- Domestic abuse ‘perpetrator’ programmes – largely provided by voluntary organisations
- Serious youth violence organisations or those who specialised in gang-related violence – largely provided by voluntary organisations

The involvement of both universal and specialist organisations to support young people affected by peer-on-peer abuse was a consistent strength within MSU sites. During the delivery period it was critical for researchers to engage with this suite of existing services to ensure our input was sustained past the close of the programme. The research team undertook a number of activities to:

- Enhance the contribution made by these services
- Capture and enable strategic recognition of the role of these services in responding to peer-on-peer abuse
- Ensure the involvement of these services was built into a holistic responses to peer-on-peer abuse across local multi-agency operational arrangements

Identifying opportunities to work with these services ensured that the MSU delivery programme advanced and didn’t usurp or disrupt existing provision within our sites.

Peer-on-peer abuse - train-the-trainer programme

In one site there were a number of specialist organisations supporting young people affected by peer-on-peer abuse. The audit identified significant contributions being made by a forensic CAMHS service (supporting young people who display HSB), a voluntary sector CSE service and a youth worker based within a voluntary sector domestic abuse service – all of whom also provided training and practitioner consultancy on particular aspects of peer-on-peer abuse. In addition, the youth offending service, wider CAMHS provision, sexual health services, safeguarding children's board, education welfare service and local pupil referral unit were also delivering messages, training content and case advice on peer-on-peer abuse within their own services, amongst their peers and to external agencies. Such a plethora of provision was both a strength and a risk to the site. The wealth of knowledge and commitment amongst these services was a strength to be maximised. However, having this many services providing training and advice about peer-on-peer abuse risked a lack of consistency in the messages being given to agencies seeking advice or the evidence that was being used.

Researchers proposed that they work with representatives from all of these services to co-create a train-the-trainer programme on peer-on-peer abuse. Rather than create a new training programme the content was intended to provide an evidence-base against which participants could compare their current training provision and a set of resources that trainers could incorporate into their existing content.

Researchers ran a workshop with would-be training attendees to:

1. Identify training underway in (the site) where messages about peer-on-peer abuse could be incorporated
2. Agree the key messages /areas of knowledge to be communicated through training
3. Present case review findings and identify opportunities for their use in training programme
4. Identify needs of trainers and trainees
5. Agree train-the-trainer programme structure

The workshop identified that different services were drawing upon largely distinct areas of research to build their knowledge of peer-on-peer abuse. Despite this, services shared principles of practice and a commitment to support both young people who had been abused by, or were abusing, their peers. Workshop attendees also suggested that they, and practitioners across the site, required training content on:

- Contexts associated with peer-on-peer abuse – and in particular the research evidence to which they could refer when sharing this with colleagues
- The evidence base on young people who abuse their peers – including their backgrounds, drivers, and required assessment/intervention
- Approaches for developing and delivering contextual and individual interventions when peer-on-peer abuse had been identified and assessed

Attendees were also keen to use resources developed from the case file review undertaken in their site within any training content that was developed.

Researchers used this direction to develop a training programme of 3 x 0.5 days.

DAY ONE: focused on the contextual evidence base associated with peer-on-peer abuse, provided an overview of the theoretical foundations for contextual analysis and introduced the case review resources.

DAY TWO: focused on research into young people who abuse their peers and returned to the contextual evidence base with this cohort in mind. It also provided attendees with an opportunity to practice using the case review resources and considered the overlaps between teenage relationship abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, CSE and serious youth violence.

DAY THREE: gave attendees the opportunity to present how they intended to integrate the case review resources and learning thus far into their existing training content and case consultancy activity. Researchers recorded all of these examples and asked that attendees provide feedback on progress following the close of the programme. The training then ended with researchers sharing examples of ways in which other sites were developing interventions within existing services/mechanisms in response to peer-on-peer abuse – this included sharing the HSB meeting framework (Appendix L) and the contextual application of Asset Plus (Appendix G).

The training slides for all three sessions are available in Appendix N and will be delivered via webinars to the contextual safeguarding practitioners' network. Taken together they provided a consistent message across the range of organisations delivering advice on peer-on-peer abuse within the site. Going through the process together enabled practitioners to discuss and debate how their services responded to peer-on-peer abuse and recognise the different skills, services and knowledge that they contributed to the local response. Since participating in the programme the group have continued to meet and identify ways in which they can incorporate training messages into their practice as well as advice they provide. For example, the youth offending service and CAMHS service used the evidence base and tools from the programme to facilitate the meeting about four vulnerable and associated high risk young people. Having multi-agency attendance at the training sessions provided an opportunity for attendees to explore their multi-agency responses and, as intended, ensured that the contribution of researchers was sustained beyond the life of the project.

Detached youth work and public-space safety

When we deliver presentations or training sessions on contextual safeguarding we are commonly asked about the role of the youth service in responding to risk in public spaces – and more specifically the contribution made by detached youth work provision. In some respects the question is an obvious one – detached youth work engages with young people beyond them being subject to a 'referral' (and as such can intervene earlier) and the provision is by definition offered in the spaces and places where young people socialise and spend their time (and as such can occur within contexts of concern). Despite this potential we know that funding for detached youth work provision is in decline and in some of the sites we supported it is no longer an available resource.

During audits, however, we identified detached youth workers in two sites who were proactively engaged in the response to peer-on-peer abuse. A concerted effort had been made to maintain and invest in the capacity of the detached team and to an extent their role in responding to peer-on-peer abuse was strategically recognised through this commissioning decision. We recommended that this potential strength be investigated during the delivery phase through a small exploratory study to investigate the contribution of detached youth work to the safety of young people in public spaces within the identified sites.

The study comprised of:

- Observations of detached provision in both sites
- Focus groups with detached youth workers
- Focus groups with young people engaged through detached provision

- Focus groups with multi-agency partnerships within each site
- A workshop with a wider set of youth workers – both service based and detached – to debate preliminary findings of data collected

All of the data was then coded and analysed in NVivo using a contextually informed coding framework. The coding framework sought to identify evidence of both the attempts/successes of detached youth workers in changing the social conditions in which peer-on-peer abuse occurred and the challenges they faced in achieving this outcome. The process was used to produce a briefing to inform the commissioning, and strategic recognition, of detached youth work as part of the response to peer-on-peer abuse which is available in Appendix O and [online](#).

Within the participating sites this process served to highlight both the contribution that detached youth work was making and the challenges which were compromising the success of this sector. Ultimately while detached youth work is, in some sense, a community based service which plays a role in shaping and serving neighbourhoods, networks and localities – it is largely commissioned and evaluated on individualised outcomes (i.e. whether an individual child is in employment, education or training for example). Through this process the very central pillar of detached provision is lost in the measurement of its value and so too are the partnerships which may contribute to this – such as shopkeepers, housing caretakers and park wardens. Instead partnerships have been formed with social work, policing and community safety – and outcomes measured along similar lines. This approach appears to be narrowing the scope that detached youth work has for changing, or at least contributing to a change in, the social conditions in which peer-on-peer abuse can be facilitated.

For areas that are building a response to peer-on-peer abuse – or seeking a more contextual approach to safeguarding in general – our work in this area suggests a need to:

- Explore the contribution of detached youth work within local partnerships – or lack of available provision – to inform local strategies and commissioning decisions for safeguarding adolescents
- Recognise the contribution that detached youth work could make to creating safety within young people's peer groups and in the public spaces in which they socialise
- Measure the community and social outcomes of detached provision as well as any individualised impact
- Recognise that the impact that detached youth work can have on an individual's outcome will also be affected by the contribution of a wider partnership (social care, policing, housing, education etc.). Therefore, if detached youth workers engage with a young person who then goes on to commit an offence it is critical to consider whether this outcome actually indicates a deficiency of the detached provision – or whether it was a challenge with another service in the partnership or an issue beyond the influence of detached provision that drove the offending behaviour

Going through a process such as this will ensure that wherever possible the ability of detached youth work to engage with the public and social dynamics of peer-on-peer abuse is being utilised.

Building awareness and partnerships amongst community sector provision

In addition to specialist services and youth service provision, audits identified a number of other agencies/individuals who were also encountering or providing services to young people – some of these young people were affected by peer-on-peer abuse. Engaging with these public-facing or community-located services such as these is critical given the often public nature of peer-on-

peer abuse. Audits noted that peer-on-peer abuse was being identified on young people's journeys to and from school, in transport hubs, shared living accommodation, in parks, fast food restaurants and abandoned flats or stairwells – i.e. places where they socialised with peers. As a result, services which engaged with young people in these spaces, or provided them spaces in which to socialise, were critical to the identification of, and response to, peer-on-peer abuse.

Researchers observed discussions within sites that had been triggered following calls from housing providers and caretakers, local private businesses and security guards, park wardens and members of the public who had concerns about the safety and welfare of young people. In one site in particular a member of the public had intervened to stop a girl being taken into a car against her will, and in the same site a housing caretaker had made a referral about a girl who was seen in an estate during the school day in the company of men who were involved in gang-related violence. Such evidence of community concern was a strength we sought to harness through the delivery period, and in turn address some challenges identified in the same site about a lack of referrals (although identified concerns) regarding the safety of young people in semi-supported accommodation.

In this site there were numerous community, faith and voluntary sector groups who worked with young people in neighbourhood settings. These groups were often quite isolated from local authority services but had long standing relationships with young people and the communities in which they worked. In addition, these services had access to soft and often dynamic 'contextual information' on young people's safety in public spaces that was rarely held by the local authority. Estate care-takers and park wardens in particular were also identified as holding contextual knowledge and having community relationships to support interventions.

Researchers proposed that the site view this activity as a development of existing work that had been undertaken with hotels and taxi firms to raise their awareness of CSE. Given that site work was targeted at peer-on-peer abuse (as opposed to adult-on-child models) the audit recommended targeting youth and community organisations that were engaging young people, in addition to housing provision used by young people. Support would be offered to these services in the form of research-informed training to raise the awareness of the public and professionals who used these services about:

- The nature and scale of peer-on-peer abuse
- Referral pathways within the local area

Researchers initiated the delivery process through a meeting with the community sub-group of the local safeguarding children board. Representatives from the voluntary, community and faith organisations and semi-independent housing providers (young people aged 16+) attended the meeting to co-create delivery content with the research team. Meeting attendees agreed a three-stage delivery process:

1. Developing training for the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) so that they were able to respond to referrals from community organisations about peer-on-peer abuse that may increase as a result of the planned activities
2. Providing support to a local semi-independent housing provider for young people 16+ to prevent and respond to peer-on-peer abuse within this particular setting
3. Supporting voluntary and community based organisation to identify, refer and (where appropriate) respond to peer-on-peer abuse, including housing estate officers

Researchers provided an introductory training session on the contextual nature of peer-on-peer abuse to staff within the MASH. The training content drew upon case study material and data

about the local area to enhance professional appreciation of contextual data – and the extent to which this is required to build an accurate picture of the nature of peer-on-peer abuse. Once presented with a contextual evidence base, trainees engaged in group-activities to identify ways in which MASH activities could adopt the principles of contextual safeguarding.

This training session built the capacity of the MASH to recognise and receive contextual information and, by proxy, to value the information provided by services based within, or engaged with, those contexts. Training attendees commented that:

‘(We) Need to work jointly with people and organisations that work in the neighbourhood, not just focus on families’

‘Social workers etc. do not always know schools and the area, including gangs and issues affecting neighbourhood safety’

‘In general we have a lack of information about peer-groups and need a greater awareness of environmental factors, including gang influences’

‘[MASH needs to develop] better partnerships with the community and voluntary sector’

As a result of the training session the MASH proposed reviewing their referral form to identify if there were ways to include a greater amount of contextual information within referrals and to encourage data on peer-groups, schools and neighbourhoods when referrals were being made.

Following the completion of MASH training an MSU researcher met with the senior management of a housing provider that accommodated 100 16 – 25 year olds within the site. On average 60% of residents were young men and 10% were under the age of 18 indicating potential vulnerabilities for 16 and 17 year olds and young women in general.

During the meeting the researcher and senior leadership team discussed:

- Their current approaches to safeguarding 16-17 year olds in their provision
- Any special measures that they may consider implementing when receiving a 16-17 year-old young woman (given the gender and age disparity in the service)
- The nature of abusive and violent incidents that had occurred between residents in the provision

Researchers used the information provided in this discussion to build a training workshop for frontline practitioners and managers within the provision. The workshop drew upon research into peer-on-peer abuse and contextual dynamics of risk to support attendees in addressing issues that had arisen following abusive incidents within the provision. In particular researchers focused on:

- Strengthening the service’s policies and procedures
- Identifying opportunities to develop additional, but informal, support for young people living in the hostel provision
- Environmental, design and cultural factors that could ensure the provision was a safer place for the young people who lived there

Workshop attendees commented that:

(It was) really useful to think about ways to develop our abilities to work with peer-on-peer abuse and reflect together as a team

I will encourage staff members to discuss and use their skills more to work with young people – re-focus our attention on being accountable for young people's safety

Through this process attendees recognised the contribution that they made to the nature of the provision, and the impact that this had on facilitating or disrupting young people's experiences of abuse.

Having raised the awareness of contextual factors amongst MASH services and begun engagement with community-based providers, researchers designed a workshop for a wider number of voluntary and community-sector agencies. The session was designed and delivered as a partnership between the MASH and the MSU research team with the aim of:

- Informing community services about the research evidence regarding contextual dynamics of peer-on-peer abuse
- Providing information about referral routes and local responses in the site should they identify peer-on-peer abuse, individuals affected or hold information on contextual dynamics
- Triggering a discussion through which voluntary and community sector representatives, housing estate officers, and young people's housing providers could identify how community approaches to peer-on-peer abuse could be developed.

Workshop attendees commented that it was useful to meet other community providers and to engage in solution-focused discussions with social care. Another stated: 'we don't work jointly and that is key to dealing with this'.

As a result of this process children's social care met with 16+ housing providers to discuss and plan partnership working related to safeguarding adolescents in general and peer-on-peer abuse specifically. At close of the delivery programme they planned to continue working with housing providers, including involving residents' associations, to further develop this approach. Housing also agreed to routinely attend LSCB CSE sub-group meetings in the site to ensure their work was strategically considered in the site's response to peer-on-peer abuse.

While it fell out of the delivery period, the research team felt that further consideration was required regarding the development of the MASH referral and assessment process – to ensure that contextual factors were recorded, gathered and considered in the decision-making process.

Developing holistic and coordinated strategic approaches

Audits across every MSU site suggested that in order to maximise the effectiveness of the activities outlined in this report (and resources produced) sites required greater coordination in their response to safeguarding adolescents in general and peer-on-peer abuse specifically. Each audit considered, at a minimum², the response within sites to harmful sexual behaviour, domestic abuse, child sexual exploitation, serious youth and gang-related violence and to varying extents identified a need to:

- Increase cross-referencing and coordination across different strategic documents (for HSB, CSE, DV etc.) to ensure a complimentary and consistent response to peer-on-peer abuse

² Where identified as relevant by the participating site steering group some audits also considered the response to neighbourhood-based concerns, violence against women and girls more broadly and/or children going missing from school/home/care

- Ensure that issue-specific operational and strategic multi-agency groups were better coordinated – particularly where the same individuals, families, peer groups, school or public spaces were being discussed at different meetings
- Increase reference to, and recognition of, contextual risk, strength and vulnerability factors within strategic meetings and documentation

While the above applied to all sites – they did so for varying and distinct reasons. For example, in one site there was a clear protocol for responding to HSB but it hadn't been recognised in the CSE strategy as part of their response to perpetration. In addition, the safeguarding-led language in the HSB protocol was missing from the narrative on perpetration in the CSE document. In another site there was a clear recognition that a child could not consent to CSE and it was not a lifestyle choice but in the gangs and youth violence strategic document the language of lifestyle choices was still present and there was less recognition of grooming and coercion. Likewise, some sites had joined the operational meetings to CSE and missing, whereas others had linked their meetings on CSE and gangs, but few had identified a way to ensure their response to DV in young people's relationships were integrated into the wider response.

Delivery activity sought to identify different ways to increase coordination across strategic documents and multi-agency meetings:

- In two sites meetings were held with the chairs of multi-agency meetings to identify levers for information sharing across meetings and to avoid duplication. One of these meetings resulted in the chair of the gangs panel attending the CSE meetings. In another site there was a recommendation that the LSCB needed to review the number of panels in operation and formulate a proposal to have greater oversight of the connections between them
- In one site a strategic steering group was established to oversee MSU delivery – in addition to the original operational steering group that had assisted with the audit process. Relevant Assistant Directors and the Head of the Youth Offending Service sat on that group, as well as senior representatives from community safety and the youth service. Over the course of the delivery period this strategic group developed a proposal to form a Safeguarding Adolescents Task and Finish Group. The group will review the relationship between different multi-agency panels in the site and identify a workplan to ensure increased linkage between them in the coming twelve months
- In one site we produced a briefing paper to recommend opportunities for linking strategic documents (Appendix P). This document has been used to inform the commissioning of new protocols and guidance from the LSCB across all of its documentation. The tender for this document stated that:

'We would like a single author to bring a consistency of style across the documents, but also to use their subject expertise to ensure that different subject matters are both consistently and appropriately referenced across policies and procedures. For example, a number of our policies and procedures reference young people who are perpetrators, but they are inconsistent in the way young perpetrators are also presented as possible victims. We would like the commissioned provider to pick up and amend any inconsistencies such as this, but also identify and update any areas where appropriate references may be missing entirely'

Such requirements were directly related to the MSU audit and briefing document (Appendix P) developed during the delivery stage.

During the delivery period all MSU sites have been going through a process of trying to:

1. Better coordinate their response to peer-on-peer abuse (across HSB, CSE and gangs/youth violence at a minimum)
2. Develop a holistic approach to safeguarding adolescents

This process extends far beyond the impact that MSU could have in any individual site, but the work we undertook provided levers through which to begin this process.

For other sites considering this process the following steps are critical:

- STEP 1:** MAP strategic documents and multi-agency meetings concerned with HSB, CSE, Serious Youth Violence, Domestic Abuse, Gang-Association and Missing Children
- STEP 2:** IDENTIFY duplication/overlap regarding individuals, families, educational establishments, peer networks, and public spaces
- STEP 3:** IDENTIFY inconsistencies in language, assessment and sector engagement
- STEP 4:** DEVELOP future documents and multi-agency structures which a) address identified inconsistencies and b) avoid duplication of discussion, intervention, assessment or commissioning

In order for site activities to have a sustainable impact this process needs to continue beyond the delivery period. The University of Bedfordshire will continue to track and advise progress in this regard through our [Contextual Safeguarding Practitioners' Network](#) (see page 49). For our London sites we hope that this process will be further supported by the creation of a Pan-London Safeguarding Adolescents Steering Group that was established in June 2016 and is being supported by the University of Bedfordshire to develop consistent and shared principles (and any required documents) for safeguarding adolescents across London's strategic bodies (Terms of Reference in Appendix Q). Across our sites there is evidenced appetite for greater coordination across responses to different forms of violence and abuse experienced by young people – and we will therefore seek to engage national policy bodies, inspectorates and commissioners in a process of creating an environment that enables such a holistic approach in the future.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Our work with local sites has demonstrated that:

- Peer-on-peer abuse, and other extra-familial issues that present a risk to the well-being and safety of young people, are contextual and complex
- Responses to peer-on-peer abuse, and adolescent safeguarding more broadly, need to engage both contextually and holistically at strategic and operational levels
- Practitioners who work on the ground with young people are well aware of both the above points but struggle to realise them in a consistent fashion when working within a child protection system that is built on intervening with individual children and their families
- Contextual approaches developed by local practitioners require strategic authorisation in order to make them a viable, consistent and sustained response within a given local area
- Contextual and holistic practices are achievable, and when implemented illuminate a collective understanding of extra-familial risk, the tensions of an individualised model and a desire to change the social conditions that facilitate and enable abusive behaviours

The approaches documented in this report do not seek to replace 1:1 support and therapeutic work with young people affected by peer-on-peer abuse. The importance of relational working, creating opportunities for building resilience, and sustaining 1:1 relationships between young people and workers, are all documented in research and were reinforced by the evidence we collected within local sites.

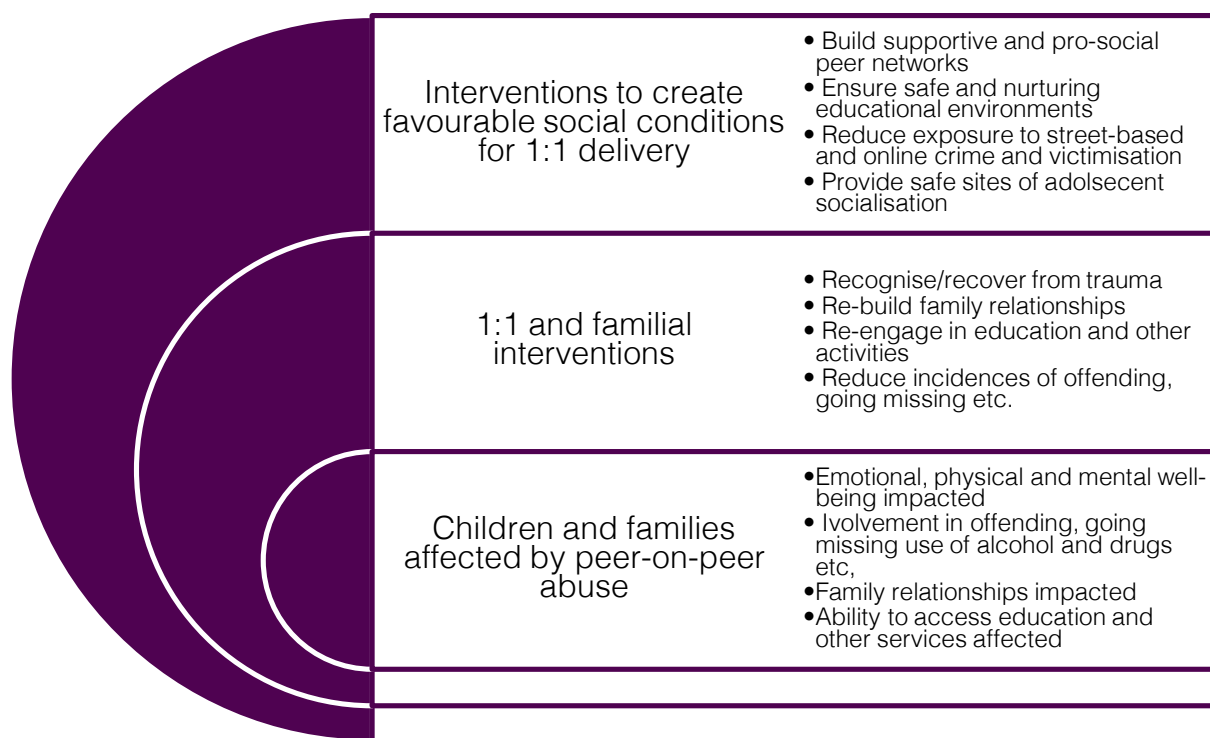


Figure 6: Relationship between 1:1 and contextual intervention

Rather, the contextual approaches developed within sites seek to enhance the of 1:1 support by changing the social and cultural environments that inform the individual behaviours that 1:1 work is tasked with addressing (Figure 6).

Furthermore, addressing some of the factors that undermine the capacity of parents to keep young people safe, and bringing the power-play between familial and extra-familial dynamics to the fore, should also enhance family support.

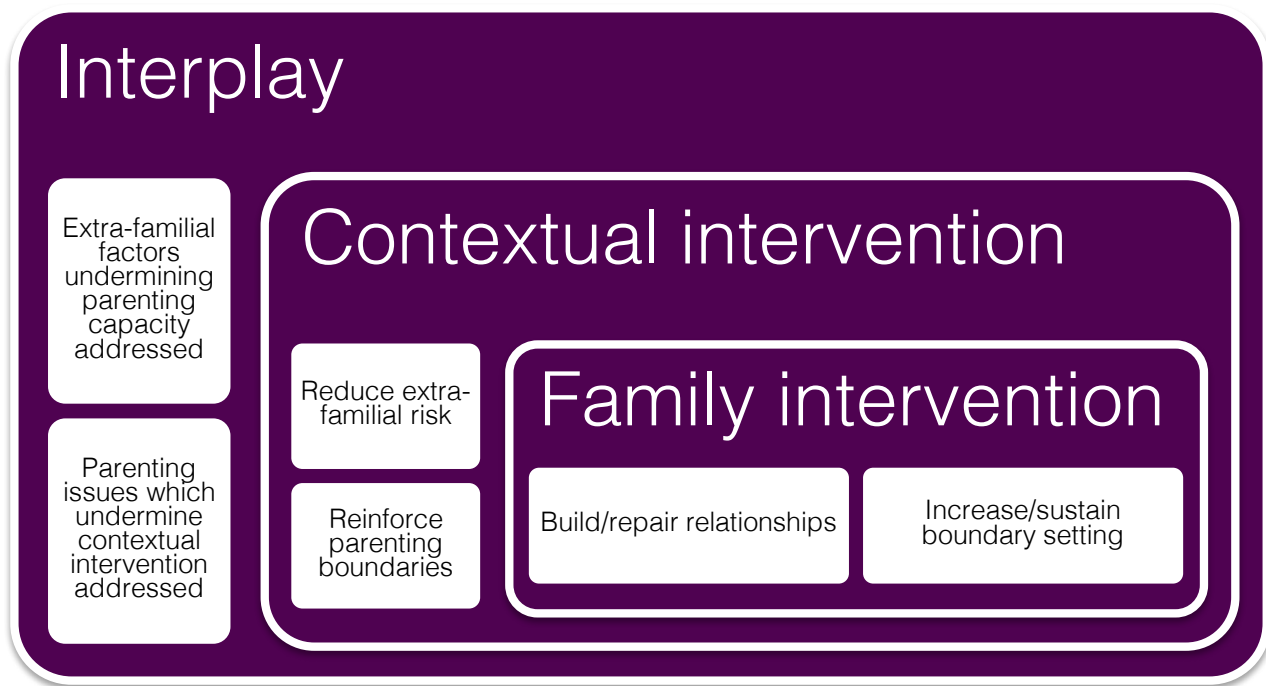


Figure 7: Relationship between familial and extra-familial intervention

The cumulative knowledge generated from across the local site work indicates that responses to peer-on-peer abuse which are not contextual are likely to be insufficient – and remain reliant on relocation and managed moves between schools to respond to risk of significant harm beyond the family. As a result it raises questions about responses to safeguarding adolescents more broadly and suggests the need for contextual strategic and operational responses to young people that are equipped to respond to, and prevent, all forms of extra-familial risk.

While undertaking site work it seemed to us that the challenges faced when responding to peer-on-peer abuse were rarely associated to that phenomenon specifically. Rather it was difficulties in managing peer-influence, risk within schools, young people's increasing sense of agency, inconsistent understanding of consent, a loss of parental control and structural/relational inequalities that undermined, and went beyond, traditional safeguarding practices. It is clear that these issues are far from confined to peer-on-peer abuse – and at a minimum they intersect with all of the siloed forms of risk associated to peer-on-peer abuse, such as child sexual exploitation, going missing, gang-related violence and domestic abuse.

Creating a contextual system

More needs to be done to advance the work achieved within sites and test the theory regarding adolescent vulnerability and existing safeguarding structures. In addition to further testing and adaptation of the resources shared in this report, other approaches to contextualising existing mechanisms need to be created. Ultimately a root-and-branch application of contextual safeguarding is required within a set of local areas to stretch and test the efficacy of the theory promoted in this report. This latter point is particularly significant – in order to fully test the efficacy of the resources created thus far, and any that will follow, a strategic and operational environment is required that mainstreams such approaches and adopts them across all facets of safeguarding work. In the absence of such an approach we will only be able to adapt/tweak processes set within broader structures that do not facilitate their impact.

Contextual Practitioners' Network

The University of Bedfordshire has secured funding to establish a contextual safeguarding practitioners' network in order to continue supporting practitioners with whom we have worked over the past three years, spread expertise and innovation regarding contextual approaches and develop mechanisms for peer support within sectors. The Network includes practitioners who have engaged with MSU, as well as other practitioners who are committed to developing contextual approaches to safeguarding adolescents. The Network promotes theory-informed practice and seeks to develop research that is co-created by academics and practitioners. Through the Network, members will learn from each other to develop practices that intervene within all of the environments associated with young people's risk of harm.

Network activities primarily occur online through an interactive website where members may contribute to:

LEARNING PROJECTS:	guided, collaborative research and writing projects
TIPS FROM PRACTITIONERS:	practical guides on contextual safeguarding practices written by network members or co-written by researchers and network members
THE NETWORK BLOG:	practitioner-driven space to reflect on contextual safeguarding practice
'ASK AN EXPERT':	feature matching Network members' questions with practitioners able to respond

Researchers from the University of Bedfordshire will work with Network members to develop content and trainings that are relevant to practice. In turn, through engagement in the Network, members will generate data for researchers to analyse in projects. Member-generated content will also inform researchers' efforts to influence national adolescent safeguarding policies

Contextualising policy and legislation

During our time with local sites we were routinely reminded of the significance of the national policy landscape in setting expectations and enabling contextual practice on the ground. If the national discourse, inspection and commissioning frameworks, guidance and advice to local areas all focus on individualised and familial risk then the space to recognise contextual approaches is greatly reduced. Over the past three years we have sought to inform key national bodies such as Ofsted and the Department for Education and have had some successes. Peer-on-peer abuse was featured in the 2016 Ofsted social care report, as was the need to address environmental influences and take more holistic approaches to exploitation. The Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance now includes slightly more emphasis on peer-on-peer abuse following a DfE consultation earlier this year. We are also aware that our approach is in keeping with some national-thinking in the violence and abuse arena – with the Home Office noting the importance of location and holistic responses to exploitation in their most recently published action plan on gang-related violence. There remains, however, much to do and over the coming two years we will be:

- Developing products on contextual safeguarding to inform inspectorates, commissioners and local safeguarding children's boards
- Working alongside a newly established Pan-London Safeguarding Adolescents Steering Groups to develop a consistently holistic and contextual policy environment in London

In addition to these two specific areas of policy work we will continue to engage with national government departments and where possible inform the development of their work as it impacts responses to vulnerable adolescents in general and peer-on-peer abuse specifically.

Further research

In addition to supporting development of practice and policy we will continue to generate new evidence on the contextual nature of, and responses to, peer-on-peer abuse. Over the next two years we will complete studies into:

- Contextual differences and similarities between young people who sexually harm peers alone and those who do so in groups – implications for practice (funded by MOPAC)
- The barriers for schools in responding to peer-on-peer abuse and the implications for education and social care inspection frameworks (in partnership with Ofsted and CQC)

We also continue to audit local responses to peer-on-peer abuse and conduct contextual case reviews using the methodologies outlined in this report. Training and a detailed toolkit on the audit process will be available in early 2017.

We recognise that the idea of contextual safeguarding, and the methodologies developed thus far, are young and require piloting and likely adaption. We are grateful to those who have worked with us on the journey thus far and look forward to working with other practitioners, managers and policymakers to further understanding of contextual safeguarding in the years to come. By working together, we change the social conditions which facilitate abuse and harm, and maximise the effectiveness of 1:1 and familial support in the process.

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Practitioner Briefing #2: Auditing your local response to peer-on-peer abuse

Carlene Firmin

MsUnderstood Partnership (2015)



Introduction

“Most of the young people and family members interviewed saw factors outside the family as having a greater influence on their gang association. Issues widely seen as more significant included growing up in a ‘hostile’ environment where gang membership, criminality and violence was normalised; negative experiences of school; the pull of peer subculture...and the search for identity, independence and respect. ”

(Catch 22, 2013:4)

In 2013, 40 local safeguarding children boards (LSCBs) applied to the MsUnderstood Partnership¹ (MSU) for support in building their response to peer-on-peer abuse. 11 LSCBs were selected and since January 2014 we have worked with them to develop responses to peer-on-peer abuse. This briefing explains our approach to the first phase of the support process – a local audit, and is intended to support other areas to audit their own response to peer-on-peer abuse.

How we understand the issue

Whether it’s defined as teenage relationship abuse, peer-on-peer exploitation, serious youth violence, sexual bullying or harmful sexual behaviour², research consistently implies that a range of social environments are associated to young people’s experiences of peer-on-peer abuse (Firmin, 2013, 2015; Firmin and Curtis 2015; Letourneau and Borduin, 2008; Messerschmidt, 2012). Peer groups (Barter, et al., 2009; Chung, 2005; Franklin, 2013), schools (EVAW, 2010; Finkelhor, 2009; Frosh, et al., 2002) and neighbourhoods (Anderson, 1999; Beckett et al., 2013; Pitts, 2008), in addition to homes, have all been identified as contexts in which young people can encounter harm. As a result, local responses to the issue need to identify, assess and intervene with all the environments associated to peer-on-peer abuse – and in essence take a ‘contextual’ approach to the phenomenon.

The audit process

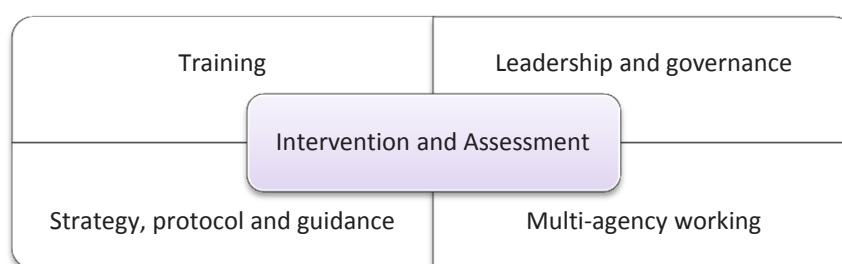
In order to develop a response to peer-on-peer abuse you need to understand what the current response looks like:

- To what extent is the approach ‘contextual’ as outlined above?
- Where is the response located across the issues of domestic abuse, child sexual exploitation, serious youth and gang-related violence, harmful sexual behaviour, bullying and so on?

¹ A partnership between the University of Bedfordshire, Imkaan and the Girls against Gangs project, established in 2013 to respond to young people’s experiences of gender inequality

² For greater detail on definitions please see Practitioner Briefing #1, Firmin and Curtis (2015)

The local area audit seeks to answer these questions by assessing the operational and strategic response to peer-on-peer abuse across the following areas:



To replicate the approach taken by the MsUnderstood partnership the following steps could be considered:

Step 1 – Strategic Review

Responses to peer-on-peer abuse are often featured in multiple areas of strategic concern. Most frequently, strategies to tackle child sexual exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour, domestic abuse/violence against women and girls, serious youth violence, gang-associated violence and bullying will have implications for how peer-on-peer abuse is managed. In reviewing all of these documents the audit process asks:

- What are the implications of each of these documents for peer-on-peer abuse?
- To what extent do these documents recognise, and engage with, environments beyond the home that may be associated to peer-on-peer abuse?
- Are the separate governance arrangements for each strategy sufficiently coordinated to demonstrate a clear line of accountability for the local response to peer-on-peer abuse?
- Taken together, do these documents provide a consistent message on the local response to peer-on-peer abuse or does the message differ dependent on the issue under consideration (for example – what is the difference between the strategic position on peer-on-peer sexual exploitation and harmful sexual behaviour)?

Sitting underneath local strategies are protocols and guidance for responding to these respective issues. The audit process asks the same questions of these documents as it does over strategic documents: what are the implications for responses to peer-on-peer abuse; do they engage with contexts as well as individuals; and taken together, are they consistent, on this occasion, regarding referral pathways, assessments and partnerships?

Step 2 – Observations

The second step in the audit processes is assessing the extent to which the approach outlined in strategic documents is mirrored in local multi-agency working, training and assessment/intervention. Over a period of approximately three months the following multi-agency meetings could be observed, each of which may discuss cases, or trends, of peer-on-peer abuse:

- Child sexual exploitation strategic group (sometimes a sub-group of the LSCB)
- Child sexual exploitation operational group – referred to as a multi-agency sexual exploitation (MASE) group, or sexual exploitation risk assessment conference (SERAC) in addition to other names
- Multi-agency risk assessment conference for domestic abuse (MARAC)
- Violence against women and girls or domestic abuse strategic group
- Harmful sexual behaviour strategic and/or operational group
- Gangs panel, bronze group or gangs action group – operational
- Gangs and/or serious youth violence strategic group
- Fair access panel (regarding school exclusions and managed moves across schools)
- Youth crime disorder or anti-social behaviour panel
- Youth Justice risk and vulnerability panels
- Multi-agency planning meetings (MAP)

While not an exclusive account of all local meetings, the list above indicates the spread of strategic and operational structures/forums in which peer-on-peer abuse may feature.

During observations of meetings, the audit considers the extent to which meetings:

- Explore the contexts in which peer-on-peer abuse has occurred and task partners to intervene with those contexts to reduce risk
- Share trend data and identify overlaps in their cohort of individuals and contexts of concern
- Use consistent language to describe peer-on-peer abuse and the risk associated to the phenomenon
- Assess risk and vulnerability in comparable ways for peer-on-peer abuse cases
- Allocate interventions that are age and gender appropriate in peer-on-peer abuse cases (for example can CSE meetings access appropriate support for boys and young men, do domestic abuse meetings have access to services for young people)

Training sessions are also observed during the audit process, including sessions on:

- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Teenage relationship abuse
- Child sexual exploitation
- Gangs and serious youth violence

During training observations the audit process considers the extent to which sessions:

- Utilise shared definitions and language to describe peer-on-peer abuse
- Promote shared referral pathways and assessments for young people affected by peer-on-peer abuse
- Utilise evidence from research into domestic abuse, child sexual exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour and serious youth violence to inform content
- Draw upon the local problem profile of peer-on-peer abuse

Drawing together the findings of training and meeting observations the audit is able to identify whether:

- Practice differs locally from strategies, guidance and protocols
- Operational and strategic responses engage with contexts as well as individuals
- Operational and strategic responses are sufficiently linked across siloed areas to offer a consistent response to peer-on-peer abuse

Step 3 – Follow-up meetings and practitioner forums

Following a review of strategic documents and observation of their application in practice, the third step in the audit process involves follow up meetings, focus groups and workshops with practitioners. During these sessions practitioners are supported to understand the contextual nature of peer-on-peer abuse by working through a real-life case study, following which they are asked:

- How do you, and the partners you work with, respond to cases like this at present?
- What do you consider to be the most effective components of your local response to peer-on-peer abuse?
- What do you consider to be the most critical challenges in your local response to peer-on-peer abuse?

The answers given are aligned with the findings from observations and the strategic overview to identify the strengths, challenges and areas for development in the local response to peer-on-peer abuse.

Outcomes

The outcomes of the audit process are shared with the LSCB in the form of a report and presentation. Strengths, challenges and areas for development are identified in relation to:

- Assessment of, and intervention with, individuals
- Assessment of, and intervention with, home environments
- Assessment of, and intervention with, peer groups
- Assessment of, and intervention with, school environments

- Assessment of, and intervention with, neighbourhoods
- Leadership and governance
- Multi-agency working
- Strategy, protocol and guidance
- Training
- Overarching findings and recommendations

Laying out the findings in this manner draws attention towards two key aspects of an effective response to peer-on-peer abuse:

1. The extent to which the strategic and operational response can identify and engage with both individuals and environments associated to the issue
2. The extent to which the response is coherently linked across the siloed strategy and practice areas including child sexual exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour, domestic abuse/teenage relationship abuse, gangs and serious youth violence

The recommendations that are made suggest ways in which current strengths can be developed to better realise these two components of effective practice, and in doing so address some of the challenges identified during the audit process.

Conclusion – considerations for practice

The MsUnderstood Partnership has applied this approach to audit the response of 11 local authorities to peer-on-peer abuse. In doing so, we have identified similar challenges across the country which manifest in different ways dependent on local expertise, resources, structures and histories. The process has enabled us to design a package of support for each local area that we will be delivering until July 2016. Our list of delivery objectives will be published on our website in the summer of 2015 along with a thematic briefing outlining the findings of the 11 audits. We would strongly encourage LSCBs to use this briefing to conduct their own local audits into peer-on-peer abuse, and would be happy to assist by answering any questions in the process.

If you have any queries on this briefing, or the training that accompanies it, please contact london@msunderstood.org.uk.

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Thematic Briefing #1:

Responses to boys and young men affected by
peer-on-peer abuse - work across
MsUnderstood local sites

Dr. Carlene Firmin, George Curtis and Jade K. Tate
MsUnderstood Partnership (2015)



Introduction and summary

MsUnderstood (MSU) is a partnership between the University of Bedfordshire, Imkaan and the Girls Against Gangs Project, founded in 2013 to build responses to young people's experiences of gender inequality generally, and peer-on-peer abuse specifically. 40 local safeguarding children's boards applied by support in October 2013, and since January 2014 MSU has directly supported 11 of them, in six sites across England, to develop their response to peer-on-peer abuse, including gang and non-gang associated serious youth violence (SYV), child sexual exploitation (CSE), teenage relationship abuse (TRA) and harmful sexual behaviour (HSB):

- Sheffield
- Buckinghamshire
- North London Cluster (Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey and Islington)
- Lambeth
- Greenwich
- Croydon

The partnership is supporting these six sites across two phases. Phase one involves an audit to identify strengths and areas for development of each site's response. Phase two comprises a support package building on the identified strengths. Drawing upon the audit reports produced for all six sites, this briefing paper outlines the nature of support for boys and young men affected by peer-on-peer abuse in the local areas we support.

The MSU audit reports, upon which this briefing is built, documented multiple interventions with young men impacted by peer-on-peer abuse including 1:1 support in the form of mentoring, youth work, sexual health and youth offending service provision. Across the sites there was universal recognition from senior managers and practitioners of the need to further develop work with boys and young men, both those who abuse others and those who are abused themselves (not necessarily mutually exclusive categories). In particular, audits identified a consistent need to work beyond interventions with individual young men and their families to identify mechanisms for ensuring safety in the public environments in which young men spend their time. There is significant potential to meet this gap given that all sites had access to some form of

engagement with young men in either schools or on the street. In order to achieve this, sites need to address the fact that presently:

- Interventions do not consistently address the multiple forms of peer-on-peer abuse that may be experienced by young men, focusing heavily on gun and knife crime and relatively less on domestic abuse and sexual exploitation
- Work on harmful sexual behaviour remains under-developed and often lacks strategic leadership in local areas. Where more effective practice is identified in this regard it remains focused on individuals who sexually harm and is less able to accommodate sexually abusive peer groups

Once the methodology and structure of this briefing is outlined, the remainder of this document provides a detailed account of the strengths of local responses to boys and young men and the thematic areas of work most in need of development. It concludes by identifying how the MSU partnership will work with sites over the coming year to develop responses to boys and young men, as well as considering whether the themes identified in this briefing reflect a national picture.

Methodology, governance and ethical arrangements

MSU recognises that young people's experiences of peer-on-peer abuse are informed by a range of environments in which they spend their time, including their homes, peer groups, schools and other public places in their neighbourhoods (Firmin 2015, Firmin and Curtis 2015a). The MSU audit was designed from this theoretical perspective, and sought to identify the extent to which intervention, assessment, profiling, training, multi-agency working and strategic planning engaged with all of the environments associated with peer-on-peer abuse as well as the individuals affected by, or engaged in, the phenomenon (Firmin and Curtis 2015b). Audits were not conducted as pieces of independent research – they were conducted under the authority of local safeguarding children's boards who worked with us to build a picture of their local response, and as such were conducted under the auspices of local reviews rather than a university study.

Site audit reports documented the findings of this process and made recommendations regarding the content of the MSU support package. With the consent of our sites, this briefing summarises the thematic conclusions related

to boys and young men that were identified across the reports following a manual analysis. Analysis of reports sought to identify findings that related to boys and young men as both those who had been abused by, and well as those who had abused their peers.

The report analysis process was undertaken in two stages:

- Stage one was used to extract all findings related to boys and young men from each report
- Stage two synthesised the extracted findings to identify themes that were shared across the six reports, and highlight examples of promising practice¹

Structure

This briefing is structured by identifying the strengths across the six MSU sites (11 local safeguarding children boards) followed by the thematic areas in need of development. The briefing concludes by outlining the work that the six sites are currently undertaking with MSU to further develop their work with boys and young men, and outlines how MSU intends to explore whether the picture painted in this briefing reflects the national context.

Across the six MSU sites, the audit process identified evidence of work with boys and young men affected by peer-on-peer abuse. Practice in the MSU sites is currently delivered across a continuum from preventative work on healthy relationships through to forensic interventions and multi-systemic therapy for individuals who have demonstrated abusive or harmful behaviours. While there was less evidence of work to address young men's victimisation the potential to do so was present in all sites. Documented with reference to practice with individuals, families, peer groups, schools and neighbourhoods, the remainder of this sub-section highlights examples of promising practice related to young men's experiences of peer-on-peer abuse.

¹ For the purposes of this briefing promising practice is defined as responses that were either: being used to develop consistency in the response to boys and young men impacted by peer-on-peer abuse; worked with young men across the siloed issues featuring in peer-on-peer abuse cases (for example cutting across harmful sexual behaviour and serious youth violence); sought to understand or intervene with the environments in which boys and young men were exposed to, or engaged in, abusive behaviours

1. Work with individual young men

Some individual services, particularly in youth offending, have developed resources to support discussions around young men's attitudes, beliefs and experiences of teenage relationship abuse as part of wider interventions.

All sites recognise AIM2 as a route to assessment and intervention for young people with harmful sexual behaviour. Given that the majority of those identified with harmful sexual behaviour were young men, this is a finding of importance for this briefing.

Some sites have developed processes and protocols to ensure that an awareness of AIM2 is supported by a consistent approach to referral. Two of these examples are outlined below:

Hackney's sexual exploitation profile, developed from information shared through the Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) forum, has identified that the majority of incidents reported to date involve young women being sexually exploited by male peers. In addition to collating and analysing information in relation to young people identified as being at risk of or subject to sexual exploitation, the MASE meetings have begun to collate information relating to young men for whom concerns have been expressed about sexually harmful or exploitative behaviour towards their peers. Plans are now in place to develop a process for holding Multi-Agency Planning (MAP) meetings to ensure that there are multi-agency plans in place to provide support and intervention to young men who are felt to be at significant risk of abusing others. These will follow a similar format to MAP meetings held in relation to young people identified as being at risk of sexual exploitation. Whilst plans are still in their relatively early stages it is hoped that this development will go some way towards ensuring that these young men's needs are being considered and addressed, that all agencies recognise that doing so is an essential part of a safeguarding response and that intervening proactively at an early stage may reduce the risk of behaviours becoming more entrenched.

The forensic Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) in the Thames Valley is well established, and a tiered consultation and assessment/intervention service is outlined in order to provide input to young people who are causing concern to others by their behaviour. As the service is part of specialist CAMHS services there is an emphasis on consideration of emotional wellbeing or mental health need and high risk, as well as considering concerning cases where the level of risk or need may not be clear. Structured risk assessment (SAVRY or AIM2) is part of this process and this aids the formulation of cases. Other services can be supported through regular consultation and supervision arrangements around case working.

Separately commissioned but linked to this team is the Buckinghamshire Child and Adolescent Harmful Behaviour Service (CAHBS) which is commissioned to offer consultation, assessment and intervention for young people with harmful sexual behaviour. The service uses a psychological framework which includes the AIM2 and other structured risk assessments. This service provides training on sexually harmful behaviour to local partner agencies in conjunction with the local safeguarding boards under its commissioning arrangements. This training supports increased awareness of child sexual development, assessment of problematic behaviour and basic interventions, and not only does it help support professionals in their work, it means that referrals are more appropriate and concerns are more clearly identified.

Case example:

Pete (age 14) was accused of sexually touching a female peer in the toilets at school. When the complaint was made, the school called social care and the police. Social care called CAHBS who were able to support with immediate safety planning and the assessment of Pete and his needs. The police pursued the case and asked CAHBS and YOS their view on an out of court disposal. The AIM2 framework was used to support the decision making. Once given a youth conditional caution (YCC) Pete was asked to undergo an AIM assessment and intervention at YOS and this was supported and supervised by CAHBS. Once the YCC was complete, CAHBS were able to remain involved for a brief time to ensure safety planning continued once other agencies withdrew.

2. Work with young men's families and home environments

- When conducting assessment on boys and young men who have abused, or been abused by, their peers, the nature of their home environment is often considered by professionals across the six sites.
- In a number of sites therapeutic approaches are being used to improve familial relationships as means of responding to peer-on-peer abuse. The use of multi-systemic therapy for both gang-affiliated young men and those who harmful sexual behaviour, as well as family group conferences and family nurse partnership, was identified during the audit process.
- Professionals within MSU sites recognise that parental capacity to safeguard young people can be undermined by the impact of risk factors outside of the home environment. In response to this parent-led projects are being established in some sites, developing peer support for parent/carers whose young people, including young men, had been impacted by gangs and serious youth violence:

The Non-Violent Resistance (NVR) Gangs Project has been developed to promote and pilot the use of NVR parenting support for families in Greenwich whose children are involved in criminal/ gang activity. The collaboration between Oxleas, St. Giles Trust and the Royal Borough of Greenwich ensure practitioners and parents are able to be fully aware of the risk factors and possible implications of their child being involved in gang activity and receive support from council and police while NVR parenting is implemented in the home. The programme involves home visits to assess and support individual family needs, in parallel with a series of group sessions.

Parents or carers attending the programme gain:

- A better understanding of gang culture
- Strengthened family relationships
- Support for the whole family
- Freedom from feelings of powerlessness
- An increased presence in their child's life
- Hope for the future

3. Work with young men's peer groups

- All MSU sites have access to preventative and early intervention activities for young men. In addition to sexual health services and relationship and sex education in schools, most have some form of youth work provision, including that which is detached. Young men make up the vast majority of young people accessing youth service provision in the sites, and do so in their friendship groups. As a result, most sites have a number of routes to access and engage with young men's peer groups as a means of responding to peer-on-peer abuse, and do not need to rely on an individual referral to begin an intervention.
- In addition to engaging with groups of young men, detached activities appear to provide an opportunity to reclaim public spaces in which young men may have felt that they are at risk of harm.
- Most gangs units, and the analysts who support them, routinely produce maps which document associations between young men, particularly those who are affected by or involved in serious youth violence. Such data provides a potential evidence base on dynamics of peer groups involved in, or affected by, peer on peer abuse, and their association to vulnerability and resilience, upon which to develop group interventions.

4. Work with young men's schools

- Some schools within MSU sites are actively working with local partners to address concerns about peer-on-peer abuse, including referring young men with harmful sexual behaviours. Such approaches are facilitated when schools: have trusting relationships with their Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH); are working alongside safer schools police officers; are engaging with specialist external services.
- A number of schools in MSU sites have commissioned, or accepted, early interventions for young men with harmful behaviours and attitudes. During the audits, schools were identified using interventions that were primarily intended to tackle serious youth violence to provide young men with the opportunity to discuss concerns regarding consent, sex and relationships. Such work is generally conducted in single gender groups, before bringing young

men and young women together to engage in peer learning exercises as demonstrated by the delivery of Growing against Gangs in a number of London schools

5. Work with young men in public spaces

All MSU sites have access to, or have developed, activities that are intended decrease tensions and violence in local neighbourhood settings, including the use of football sessions and activity buses, all of which are mostly accessed by boys and young men.

The youth bus is used around the borough of Croydon to provide support and activities to young people in targeted areas. This work is geographically targeted by a variety of intelligence from Housing ASB, Police, Gangs Team, the wider community and young people. The street based team provide weekly contact to groups who are spending their leisure time in parks, in the stairwells of flats, around local shopping centres and out on their local streets. The relationship between the youth team and the young people is entirely voluntary, they can choose to engage or not, working in this way the team are often a privileged witness to the realities of what young people experience out on the streets in their local neighbourhood. The youth bus offers young people a safe place to sit and talk to experienced youth workers about a variety of different issues and workers will prompt discussion on topical issues. Young people are signposted to a variety of different services and the youth bus carries a lot of resources for young people should the need arise to discuss something further. Youth workers also dispense the local condom distribution scheme and offer Chlamydia testing.

6. Strategic support, multi-agency working and data collection

- Across all MSU sites practitioners are afforded the opportunity to engage in training related to peer-on-peer abuse. Training on gangs and serious youth violence, and increasingly training on sexual exploitation, considers the experiences of young men as those who are abused, as well as those who may abuse others
- Some strategic documents, particularly those concerned with serious youth and gang-related violence have recognised that young men can be groomed into abusive behaviours. For example, Barnet's serious youth violence strategy and [Lambeth's Violence Needs Assessment](#)

identify work with boys and young men as strategic priorities for preventing all forms of peer-on-peer abuse

- Some sites have developed safeguarding protocols for responding to harmful sexual behaviour, such as [Buckinghamshire](#), and/or established strategic and operational multi-agency groups to coordinate harmful sexual behaviour interventions such as in Sheffield and Hackney
- A number of multi-agency partnerships in MSU sites are using analytical data to identify young men of concern, and target appropriate interventions. At some gangs panels, this has included identifying young men being groomed into peer-on-peer abuse as observed at a gangs action group meeting in Enfield. On other occasions data has been used to identify links between young women being discussed at sexual exploitation panels and young men identified at serious youth violence panels

The purpose of the MASE Analyst role in Camden is to deliver analytical support in the form of reports, presentations, recommendations and advice on children and young people up to 25 years old who may be at risk of sexual exploitation and supporting the implementation and development of the MASE through the analysis of crime and missing incidents and intelligence. The MASE Analyst reviews all risk assessments completed on young people deemed vulnerable to/at risk of CSE and pulls together and shares any intelligence with various professionals.

The MASE analyst attends the Bronze panel where gang members are discussed and has oversight of the young people discussed at the Youth Disorder Panel (YDP). Intelligence is shared about males heard at these panels and the links they may have with females/males discussed at MASE meetings. Open source social media tracking is used to establish any links/communication between young women discussed at MASE and males discussed at YDP and Bronze. The MASE analyst regularly meets with the Serious Youth Violence Coordinator to discuss any links between gang members and males/females at risk of CSE.

7. Strengths – conclusions

Collectively therefore, the response to boys and young men impacted by peer-on-peer abuse in the six MSU sites engages with individuals, families, and to a lesser extent, environments beyond the home that are associated to peer-on-peer abuse. A range of statutory and voluntary agencies are engaged in the current response, which receives variable strategic recognition. Both training and analytical support are increasing practitioner and policymaker understanding of the phenomenon at local levels. However, it is clear that the response is at its strongest when responding to serious youth and gang-related violence, and in managing young men as those who abuse others. The response to the victimisation of young men in general, and their involvement in the sexual and physical abuse of partners and female peers, requires consideration, as does a more consistent account of the environments in which peer-on-peer abuse occurs as the following sub-section outlines.

Findings: Ten priority areas for development

As indicated above, in order to build on the strengths outlined in this briefing there are ten areas in need of development for responding to young men's experiences of peer-on-peer abuse:

1. Practitioners across agencies require more information about young men's own experiences of harmful sexual behaviour or grooming so that they are better equipped to identify their victimisation as well as their abusive behaviours.
2. The majority of targeted work with young men focused on their involvement serious youth violence (understood as knife and gun crime), and needs to routinely discuss relationships and sex as part of this provision.
3. The largest gaps in relation to provision and training appear to be for young men who are:
 - Being victimised, particularly sexually harmed
 - Sexually harming in groups as opposed to on their own
 - Physically or emotionally abusing female partners as opposed to male peers
4. Interventions with, and assessments of, young men's families/carers are yet to routinely consider, and address, the impact of external

influences on the parental capacity to safeguard. As a result familial support, including parenting programmes, is often delivered without addressing external factors that impact upon familial relationships.

5. Despite examples of effective engagement, inconsistency amongst school responses to peer-on-peer abuse is a challenge for all MSU sites. Examples of inconsistent practice include non-recording or referral of incidents of harmful sexual behaviour or partner abuse in schools; managed moves of those who have been abused between schools rather than those suspected of abusing; and school cultures which reinforce harmful ideas about gender roles and relationships which in turn underpin peer-on-peer abuse.
6. Neighbourhood interventions related to peer-on-peer abuse are largely confined to responding to anti-social behaviour and gang-related violence, and are yet to routinely engage with patterns of peer-on-peer exploitation or teenage relationship abuse. Given that street-based work largely engages with boys and young men this is an under-utilised resource as part of a multi-agency response to peer-on-peer abuse.
7. During audits, concerns were raised about the relocation of young men, particularly those impacted by serious youth violence. Some sites feel ill-equipped to manage the impact of gang-related violence on the young men placed in their local area, and the impact that they in turn have on other young men they are placed with (if within a residential children's home).
8. Local strategies need to provide a consistent account of boys and young men's involvement in, and experiences of, peer-on-peer abuse. For example, many sexual exploitation strategies are built upon assumptions that all perpetrators are adults or fail to provide an account of safeguarding responses to young men with abusive behaviours. There is little strategic recognition of the need for services for boys and young men suspected of abusing partners, and serious youth violence strategies often refer to young men as 'choosing' involvement in gang-related violence in the absence of any consideration of grooming or coercion.

9. Despite most sites having structures, services and processes with the potential to engage with young men in their friendship groups this is arguably the area of work in most need of development. Many peer group interventions offered to young men do not address gender, sexuality or consent in a way that challenges harmful attitudes. Where group work of a more specialist nature is being offered in schools or by youth offending services, individual young men are referred into a group setting as opposed to such interventions being offered to pre-existing peer groups, thereby limiting the ability to challenge and change the behaviour within harmful peer networks.
10. Whilst many practitioners understand the importance of peer influences on young men and have a working knowledge about peer networks, this knowledge is rarely utilised to intervene with peer groups as a whole. For example, whilst analysts and practitioners provide gangs teams with extensive knowledge about abusive peer networks, their interventions remained primarily focused on individuals.

The vast majority of interventions afforded to individual young men were delivered in the absence of any broader contextual intervention to address factors that may have been driving their abusive behaviours. For example, young men who were being groomed into gangs in their local neighbourhoods, or being exposed to sexual harassment at school, may be expected to change their behaviours following a mentoring intervention but in the absence of their neighbourhood or school being made any safer.

Conclusions, recommendations and responses

In auditing the response to peer-on-peer abuse in 11 local authorities in England we have identified strengths and areas for development in supporting boys and young men affected by the phenomenon. The potential to deliver peer group interventions and an increased concern around harmful sexual behaviour can be utilised to build a more consistent and effective continuum of support. Building on these strengths will be important for addressing the 10 primary gaps that currently exist in responding to young men who abuse their partners, inconsistent strategic positions on young men who exploit their peers and the need to address the victimisation and grooming of young men in the round. Cutting across all of this is a need to work more contextually in response to boys

and young men impacted by peer-on-peer abuse, paying particular attention to the influence of peer, school and neighbourhood environments on their sense of agency and safety.

In response to our findings, MsUnderstood made a number of recommendations to the 11 local authorities we audited, and committed to support them in delivering against these until May 2016. With specific reference to boys and young men, the following activities will be delivered within the MSU sites, aimed at building on the strengths and addressing areas in need of development, outlined in this briefing:

1. The Hackney response to young people suspected of abusing their peers will be observed and captured in a framework to be shared across the local authorities in the North London cluster. It is envisaged that this process will initiate the piloting of a consistent response to, and record of, young people who abuse their peers across these six boroughs, the majority of whom are currently boys and young men.
2. Workshops and train-the-trainer programmes with specialist services in Buckinghamshire, supported by a contextual case file review process, will identify the local response to young people who abuse their peers across a continuum from primary through to tertiary prevention. The train the trainer exercise will ensure that all participating services will provide consistent messages on the nature of peer-on-peer abuse when delivering training in the future.
3. The development of peer-mapping techniques in Buckinghamshire, and support for analysts to map peer networks in the North London cluster and Lambeth, will assist in the identification of young men who have been groomed to abuse and in the development of evidence-based interventions with young men's peer group.
4. Support to youth work practitioners who support boys and young men in Lambeth and Greenwich, will ensure that professionals understand, and feel equipped to challenge, peer attitudes which can underpin or challenge abusive social norms with friendship groups.

In addition to our work in local sites, we are interested in the extent to which the picture painted in this briefing is reflected in other areas around the country. During the coming six months we will be contacting other local safeguarding

children boards to ascertain their levels of work with boys and young men at present, identifying whether our current work programme will also be of benefit to them, and whether any examples promising practice can be shared with our sites.

For more information on any examples of promising practice documented in this briefing, or for questions on our national survey, please contact us on info@msunderstood.org.uk.

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Bibliography

[Firmin, C and Curtis, G \(2015\) 'Practitioner Briefing #1: What is peer-on-peer abuse?'. MsUnderstood Partnership, London](#)

[Firmin, C \(2015\) 'Practitioner Briefing #2: Auditing your local response to peer-on-peer abuse'. MsUnderstood Partnership, London](#)

APPENDIX C: CONTEXTUAL CASE REVIEW TEMPLATE AND GUIDANCE SLIDES



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RESEARCHING CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION,
VIOLENCE AND TRAFFICKING



Contextual Case Review Introductory training session


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NOT TO BE REPRODUCED WITHOUT AUTHOR PERMISSION

Outline

- **Methodology**
 - Rationale for the case reviews
 - Theoretical framework
 - Structure of case review template
 - Approach to data collection
- **Resources**
- **Previous contextual reviews**
- **Discussion**



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Methodology




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Rationale for contextual case reviews

Tasked to research the contextual dynamics of abuse during adolescence and implications for safeguarding

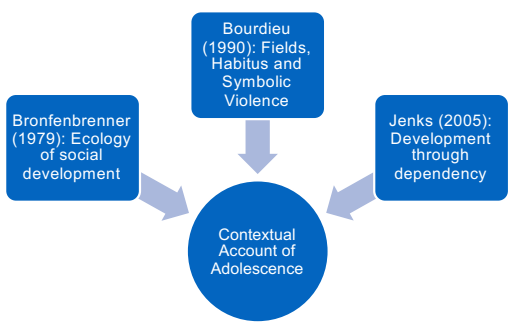
Research into adolescent risk indicates that it is largely associated to extra-familial vulnerability


- Identify context associated to experiences of extra-familial risk
- Identify extent to which safeguarding responses engage with those identified contexts
- Go beyond the 'process' question to whether the response engaged with where the risk was located



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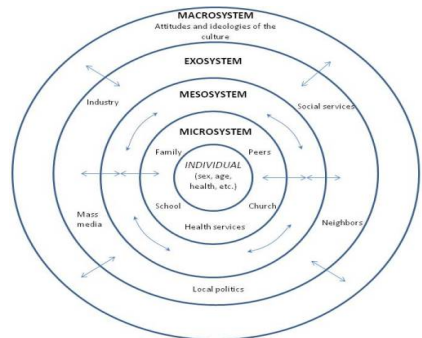
A Theoretical Framework






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VIOLENCE AND TRAFFICKING

Bronfenbrenner – Social Ecological Theory





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VIOLENCE AND TRAFFICKING

Bourdieu – Constructivist Structuralism

Development of Bronfenbrenner's mesosystem

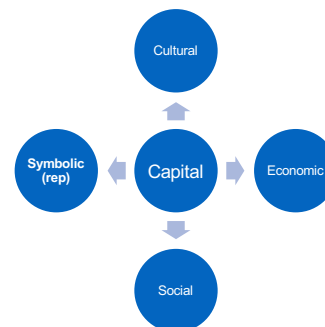
Three key concepts:

- Social fields (structures): the rules (doxa) of the environment
- Habitus (agency): an individual's feel for the rules
- Symbolic violence: engagement in that which is detrimental



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Social Fields, Status and Symbolic Violence



Pursuit for status means that individuals will engage with that which harms them in order to maintain status quo and achieve status



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VIOLENCE AND TRAFFICKING

Symbolic Violence

*Because the foundation of symbolic violence lies not in mystified consciousness that only need to be enlightened but in dispositions attuned to the structure of domination of which they are the produce, the relation of complicity that the victims of symbolic domination grant to the dominant can only be broke through a **radical transformation of the social conditions of production** of the dispositions that lead the dominated to take the point of view of the dominant on the dominant themselves. (Bourdieu, 2001:41-42)*

Learning about healthy relationships while being surrounded by harmful ones



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VIOLENCE AND TRAFFICKING

Habitus – agents not subjects

- Active, not puppets
- 'Generative' capacity
- Potential to act differently through active engagement in alternative social field
- Social rules may be 'entrenched but not unsurpassable' (McNay 2003,97)



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VIOLENCE AND TRAFFICKING

Embodiment: Tennis player example

You need only think of the impulsive choice made by the tennis player who runs up to the net, to understand that it has nothing to in common with the learned construction that the coach, after analysis, draws up in order to explain it and deduce communicable lessons from it. The conditions of rational calculation are practically never given in practice (Bourdieu 1990, 11)



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VIOLENCE AND TRAFFICKING

Constructivist Structuralism – Interplay

- Embodying social rules actively engaged in constructing the social field
- Active two-way relationship - reflexive
- Multiple engagement in multiple fields – limited by their field of influence

For case review purposes: who are the agents engaged in interplay (public, peers, professionals etc.)



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Jenks: Development through Dependency

*Instead of asking 'Why is my child a heroin addict? What went wrong in his or her development' we should, from a sociological perspective, be asking 'What is it about this free, liberal, advanced, technological democracy that makes heroin a desirable, alternative possible course of action?' **Development through dependency** then becomes an instrument in the process of social and cultural reproduction. (Jenks, 2005:40)*

For the purposes of case review: Dependent upon who, where and in what circumstance?



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Conceptual Framework for Contextual Case Review

In relation to young people's experiences of abuse and vulnerability:

1. Young people develop within a range of social systems
2. Social systems interplay with one another
3. Young people construct, and are constructed by, social systems
4. Young people embody rules of social systems and engage in harmful norms in the absence of alternative systems
5. Young people are dependent upon those who run/manage social systems, as well as their peers, for their social development
6. Safeguarding young people, therefore, involves assessment of and intervention with all social systems (both intra and extra-familial contexts) in associated to young people's experiences of abuse



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Method



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Template Approach

- Drawing data from multiple sources:
 - Chronologies
 - Witness statements
 - Assessments
 - Referral forms
 - Historic case notes (social care, policing etc.)
- Template provides a means of uniformity
- Need to log all material reviewed and then material that is drawn upon
- Templates can then be subject to further manual analysis (for individual case review) and Nvivo / SPSS to identify trends across individuals in each case and across cases



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Structure of Case Review Template

Three stage template

- Characteristics of the behaviours and the individuals who were associated
- Nature of the contexts associated to each young people featured in the case
- Nature of the response (prior to incident, identification, response (assessment, meetings, interventions), outcomes

Completed in **non-linear** fashion



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Stage (1) Behaviour and Individuals

Case Overview

- Incident Summary
- Year of incident and response
- Codes for young people featured and role
- Agencies involved pre and post



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Stage (1) Behaviour and Individuals

Incident

- Definitions
- Abusive behaviours (pre, during and post): cross and qualitative
- Weapons used
- Technology featured
- Location/s
- Escalation – qualitative account



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Stage (1) Behaviour and Individuals

Young person's characteristics (by their code – from page 1)

- Age
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Sexuality
- LAC Status
- Record of offending
- Gang-association
- Child protection / child in need
- In education / exclusion

Missing incidents – frequency, length and when reported and qualitative examples



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Stage (2) Associated Contexts

Home/Families, Peer Groups, Schools and Neighbourhoods

	Identified	Qualitative account
Abusive behaviours		
Criminality		
Harmful gender norms		
Lack of capacity to safeguard		
Protective factors		

- Cross if identified and then provide a qualitative account
- Code above each table for the young person associated
- Additional code for context is required (peer group, school, particular location)



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Stage (2) Associated Contexts

HA01 Peers (PG1)	Identified	Qualitative account
Abusive behaviours	X	Violence between peers- HA01 'punched' by HA02 a month prior to the incident Emotionally abusive behaviours and bullying amongst HA01 peer group - HA01 called a 'weakling' by HA02 during an argument
Criminality		
Harmful gender norms	X	Group reinforce harmful ideas about gender roles calling HA03 'a slag' during the rape
Lack of capacity to safeguard	X	HA01 confides in one peer about what has happened. They suggest that HA01 tell a teacher but they don't seek help from anyone else – they are afraid to lose their friends
Protective factors	X	HA01 can identify one peer that he can talk to and uses this person as a confidant



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Stage (2) Associated Contexts

Overview Table for each young person (summary of context tables)

Environment	Evidence of safety	Evidence of risk
Home (add if more than one)		
Peer		
School (insert codes)		
Neighbourhood (insert codes)		



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Stage (2) Associated Contexts

Case Summary (condensing all overview tables)

- Number of homes:
- Safety/harm in featured homes:
- Number of peer groups:
- Safety/harm in featured peer groups:
- Number of schools:
- Safety/harm in featured schools:
- Number of neighbourhood localities:
- Safety/harm in featured neighbourhood settings:



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Stage (3) Engagement with services and response

Prior to the response (for each young person)

	Prior to incident	Prior to identification	Qualitative account
Children's social care			
Health (insert)			
Police			
Private sector (insert)			
School/s			
Voluntary sector (insert)			
Youth offending			
Youth service			



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Stage (3) Response

Identification

- By who and qualitative account of the process
- Initial response

Multi-agency meetings: held, attendance and actions

Assessments (of the incident)



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Stage (3) Response

Interventions – with individuals and contexts

Code	Service	Assessment	Qualitative account



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Stage (3) Response

Outcomes

Specific parts of the process (charge, relocation etc.)

- For each individual (code used)
- Qualitative account where available

Safeguarding outcomes:

- Individuals – code, safeguarded, qualitative explanations
- Contexts – evidence of safety and/or on-going risk



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Conclusions

- Written into template post analysis
- Changes to local responses since incident (based on interviews with professionals and reviews of any strategic documents)
- Thematic issues – risks and resilience
- Recommendations



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Data Collection

- Taken from multiple sources
- Anonymised at the point of input into the template
- Quotations noted with " marks
- Spreadsheets
- Logging documents: reviewed and used
- Codes: Table of codes for individuals and contexts



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Analysis

- Manual analysis for initial overview tables within the template
- Second phase coding framework in Nvivo to link sections of the template:
- Where appropriate third phase using SPSS for counting statistical information for large numbers of individuals / contexts



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Coding Framework

- Escalation (contextual child/tree nodes)
- Behaviour
- Individual characteristics
- Contexts – Home, Peer Group, School and Neighbourhood (behaviour child/tree nodes)
- Assessments (contextual child/tree nodes)
- Interventions (contextual child/tree nodes)



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Resources



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Resources

Case file folder in shared file – restricted access

- Case Template
- Spreadsheet – source record
- Spreadsheet - individual codes
- Spreadsheet – contextual codes



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Previous contextual reviews

- Three stages (Prof Doc, Sites, Commissioned)
- Template has been revised at each stage to accommodate team use and ease of collection
- Overarching findings:
 - Assessment inconsistently captures extra-familial risk
 - Escalation occurs beyond family but impacts familial capacity to safeguard
 - Contextual risk is managed by relocation not contextual intervention
- Used to produce case studies and accompanying resources in training



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Confidentiality

- Case reviews include the use of confidential material
- Sites that commission case reviews are confidential unless agreed with the sites
- Case reviews cannot be discussed beyond the case review team
- Case review materials must be saved in secure folders at all times



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Discussion and Questions



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For more information and resources visit
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Contextual Case Review

Evidence collection
document

Author: INSERT NAME

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Evidence Base, collection and analysis plan

Evidence base and data collection

Relevant files, where available, are required regarding:

- the incident itself (investigation documents, minutes of meetings to discuss response and young people affected, assessments)
- paperwork related to the featured young people prior to and following the incident/s under review (records for children's social care, youth offending, police, education etc.)
- supplementary contextual data of relevance (i.e. Ofsted reports for named schools, crime data for the geographical area)

In addition to available paperwork additional data can be sourced through interviews (telephone or in person) with professionals:

- involved in the response to the incident
- who have a current role in responding to incidents of a similar nature

Evidence is to be taken from the paperwork and interviews and placed into the following template. As such, evidence on the nature of the contexts associated to the young people involved, as well as them as individuals, will be drawn out from the evidence base and placed into the template

Analysis plan

Data to be taken from case file template and:

- Quantitative evidence abstracted and submitted into SPSS
- Whole template loaded onto NVivo to be subjected to qualitative analysis

Drawing upon Bourdieusian social theory, which identifies a relationship between context and individual action, data will be analysed to ascertain:

- Nature of the incident and escalation towards it
- The relationship between individuals and environments prior to, during and following the incident
- The extent to which professionals responses addressed the identified nature of the incident/s and the relationships between individuals/environments outlined in the previous bullet point
- The extent to which the response may differ in current circumstances

All four points will be used to generate both recommendations for future practice and vignettes to be used in local training.

Case Overview

Incident/s or Offence/s under investigation (qualitative account):

Year (of incident):

Year (of response):

Young people featured:

Code	Complainant	Suspect	Witness	Other	Leader

Agencies featured:

Prior to identification	Code (if relevant)	Post identification	Code (if relevant)

Incident/s under review/investigation

Definition of incident/s

Child sexual exploitation	Domestic Abuse	Serious youth violence	Gang-associated violence	Harmful sexual behaviour

Abusive behaviours:

Behaviour	Prior (during escalation)	During incident	Following incident
Physical			
Sexual			
Emotional			
Financial			
Coercive control			

Insert qualitative description:

Weapons used:

Technology featured:

Location/s of incident/s:

Escalation (qualitative account):

Young people featured

Code:

Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Disability	Sexuality	LAC	Offending	GA	CIN/CP	Education

Qualitative examples:

Code:

Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Disability	Sexuality	LAC	Offending	GA	CIN/CP	Education

Qualitative examples:

Code:

Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Disability	Sexuality	LAC	Offending	GA	CIN/CP	Education

Qualitative examples:

Missing episodes

Code	Missing	No of episodes	Length of missing	Reported

Qualitative examples:

Environments associated to featured young people

Below to be completed for each featured young person

Code:

Overview table:

Environment	Evidence of safety	Evidence of risk
Home (add if more than one)		
Peer		
School (insert names)		
Neighbourhood (insert localities)		

Home:

	Identified	Qualitative account
Abusive behaviours		
Criminality		
Harmful gender norms		
Lack of capacity to safeguard		
Protective factors		

Peer group:

	Identified	Qualitative account
Abusive behaviours		
Criminality		
Harmful gender norms		
Lack of capacity to safeguard		
Protective factors		

School

	Identified	Qualitative account
Abusive behaviours		
Criminality		
Harmful gender norms		
Lack of capacity to safeguard		
Protective factors		

Neighbourhood

	Identified	Qualitative account
Abusive behaviours		
Criminality		
Harmful gender norms		
Lack of capacity to safeguard		
Protective factors		

Once completed for each featured young person condense to identify:

Number of homes:

Safety/harm in featured homes:

Number of peer groups:

Safety/harm in featured peer groups:

Number of schools:

Safety/harm in featured schools:

Number of neighbourhood localities:

Safety/harm in featured neighbourhood settings:

Professional engagement prior to incident and identification

Code:

	Prior to incident	Prior to identification	Qualitative account
Children's social care			
Health (insert)			
Police			
Private sector (insert)			
School/s			
Voluntary sector (insert)			
Youth offending			
Youth service			

Code:

	Prior to incident	Prior to identification	Qualitative account
Children's social care			
Health (insert)			
Police			
Private sector (insert)			
School/s			
Voluntary sector (insert)			
Youth offending			
Youth service			

Professional response following identification

Identification

Identified by:

Qualitative account:

Initial response to identification:

Multi-agency meetings

Risk assessment of incident

Intervention with young people

Code	Service	Assessment	Qualitative account

Intervention with contexts

	Service	Assessment	Qualitative account
Home (code)			
Peer group (code)			
School (code)			
Neighbourhood (code)			

Outcomes

Overview

	Code	Qualitative account
Investigation		
Charges		
Convictions		
Relocations (home)		
Managed move (school)		
Exclusion (school)		
Child protection plan		
Looked after		

Individual young people

Code	Safeguarded	Qualitative account

Contexts

	Safety	Qualitative account
Home (code)		
Peer group (code)		
School (code)		
Neighbourhood locality (code)		

Changes to the local response since

	Time of offence/response	Current
Multi-agency working		
Local strategies		
Risk assessment tools		
Specialist services		
Partnerships with schools involved		
Training		
Local problem profile		

Thematic findings follow analysis

To be inserted

Recommendations

To be inserted



Practitioner Briefing #6: Profiling peer-on-peer abuse

Carlene Firmin with David Hancock, Sandeep Broca,
Manish Umaria, Gareth Sloane, Sepia Golding, Solenne
Levesque, Farah Dadabhoy and Matthew Abbott
MsUnderstood Partnership (2016)



Background

Since 2013 the MsUnderstood Partnership (MSU), led by the University of Bedfordshire, has been working with local areas across England to develop responses to peer-on-peer abuse which are:

- a) Contextual: Engage with the families, peer groups, schools and public, neighbourhood spaces associated to peer-on-peer abuse
- b) Holistic: Recognise the intersecting dynamics of peer-on-peer sexual exploitation, serious youth violence, harmful sexual behaviour and teenage relationship abuse which are often subject to siloed definitions and responses

Informed by a contextual audit, MSU delivered support plans with 11 participating local safeguarding children's boards, comprising six sites. Each site received a different package of support designed to build on the strengths identified during their audit process. One site was a cluster of six London boroughs – Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey, Hackney, and Islington – referred to as the North London (NL) Cluster. In the NL Cluster one area of activity focused upon building profiling capacity through the delivery of a support package to analysts. This briefing has been co-produced by the University of Bedfordshire with analysts who participated in the support programme. It aims to share lessons learnt from the process with other analysts who have been tasked with profiling the nature of peer-on-peer abuse.

Introduction and Structure

If we want to build comprehensive and effective responses to abuse between young people we need to know how the issue manifests in our local areas. Which young people are affected, in what ways and importantly where is this happening? Profiling the issue, and associated trends, is one route to answering these questions. Across the NL cluster, local authority children's services, as well as community safety teams, have invested in analytical capacity to profile the nature of, and inform local responses to, peer-on-peer abuse. Since 2014 this work has been supported by the MsUnderstood partnership, under the leadership of Dr Carlene Firmin, through a series of seminars which have explored the concept of contextual profiling and identified the datasets/data-holders that can be drawn upon when profiling peer-on-peer abuse.

This briefing shares what we, a group of CSE and gangs analysts along with Carlene, have learnt about profiling peer-on-peer abuse by:

- 1) Introducing the aspiration of contextual profiling and the goal we are trying to achieve
- 2) Sharing ideas about data sources for building contextual peer-on-peer abuse profiles
- 3) Sharing the ways in which we have contextually profiled to date
- 4) Identifying challenges to be addressed in order to advance profiling activity

- 5) Making recommendations for policymakers to alleviate the aforementioned challenges
- 6) Sharing next steps for us and our involvement in a contextual safeguarding network

Contextual Profiling: An Aspiration

Research tells us that the risk associated to peer-on-peer abuse is often located in the neighbourhoods, schools, peer groups and families associated to the young people who have been affected. Young people are abused by, and abuse their peers in parks, disused houses and garages, stairwells, high streets, schools and alternative education provisions, within friendship groups, and sometimes in their own homes. Vulnerabilities, exposure to victimisation/violence, and resilience in each of those contexts will inform young people's experiences of peer-on-peer abuse. In addition, different manifestations of peer-on-peer abuse (serious youth violence, peer-on-peer sexual exploitation, teenage relationship abuse and harmful sexual behaviour) may all affect some of the same young people and/or be occurring in the same peer groups, schools, parks etc.

As a result, in order to profile peer-on-peer abuse to best effect, our activity needs to identify:

- a) The individuals affected across the different definitional siloes of peer-on-peer abuse (identifying any overlap)
- b) The various social and public contexts to which those young people are associated and/or where they experience peer-on-peer abuse

Profiling in this way will enable managers, multi-agency operational/strategic groups, local safeguarding children's boards and community safety partnerships to know:

- a) Whether there are 30 young people, for example, who are vulnerable to CSE in their local area and a different 30 who are vulnerable to gang-association (totalling 60 young people), or if 15 young people feature on both lists (totalling 45 young people)
- b) Whether different manifestations of peer-on-peer abuse are emerging in shared, or distinct, contexts. For example, if in any given area there are two peer groups spread across five schools who are associated to peer-on-peer abuse or if young people who are affected by the issue are spread across all schools in the local area

Such knowledge should assist with risk assessments, commissioning decisions and the targeting of reactive and proactive interventions. If achieved, this aspirational model of profiling would generate knowledge in all the intersecting areas outlined in Figure 1:

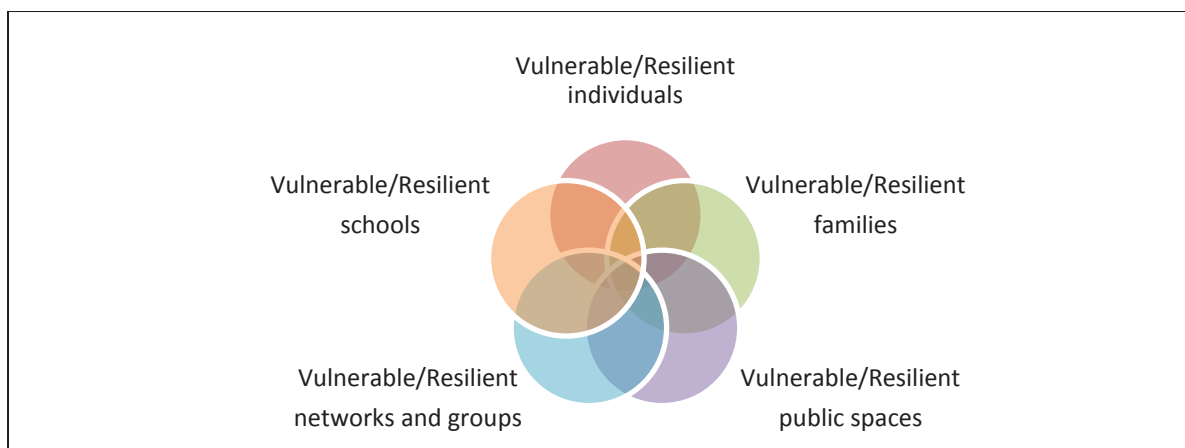


Figure 1: Contextual Profiling Categories

Potential sources of contextual data

To date, most analysts who are profiling peer-on-peer abuse draw their data from children's social care and police referrals – in some areas this data is provided via a multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) and in others analysts may have direct access to particular databases from which to access this information. However, these datasets, while helpful, only take us so far in profiling peer-on-peer abuse. In essence they help us profile what is already known by statutory services, and assist us in identifying trends amongst those referrals. But if we want to proactively profile vulnerability, thus providing opportunities for early intervention, as well as profile contextually, we need to consider other sources of data.

During the MSU Analysts Seminar Series we considered four broad sources of data that we could draw upon to further profiling activity:

- Education data: exclusions and children missing education
- Health data: collected in A&E, CAMHS and sexual health services
- Community safety data: anti-social behaviour, household disturbances and domestic abuse
- Transport data: driver incident reports, vulnerability and youth flags and journey data

Education data

Children go missing from school for a number of reasons, one of which can be experiences of peer-on-peer abuse (Barter, et al., 2009; Firmin, 2016, Forthcoming; Ringrose, et al., 2011). Children who are being abused by peers in school may stop attending to avoid being harmed. Others may be drawn out of school by abusive partners who are seeking to control their behaviour, or by peers whom they are offending alongside etc. As a result, identifying ways of monitoring and recording changes in young people's attendance at school, and any unusual patterns (such as specific times of the day when absence occurs) can assist in building a vulnerability profile in a local area.

Each local authority should have an identified single point of contact to access data on children who are missing from education (either as a result of truancy or longer term missing concerns). An information sharing agreement between this single point of contact and an identified analyst should assist this data collection process. In some instances the MASH will provide the access point for this dataset. Children who have been missing from education may also be discussed at a range of multi-agency panels/groups in local areas and at the monthly Fair Access Panel meeting.

In terms of more thematic profiling, data on children missing from education is collected as part of the census data three times per year.

In addition to being missing from education, children can be excluded from mainstream education as a result of them abusing peers or due to behaviours which can arise as a consequence of being abused by peers (for example a deterioration in a young person's behaviour following a sexual assault). When a young person sexually abuses a peer they may be excluded for 'sexually inappropriate behaviour' – therefore drawing upon this dataset may give an initial indication of any peer-on-peer abuse incidents associated to particular schools. However, this exclusion code is not always applied in peer-on-peer abuse cases and on its own will not give sufficient indication of prevalence rates in schools.

To access a broader dataset, and one that involves fixed term exclusions as well as those that are permanent, engagement with organisational partners and multi-agency panels are important. Youth offending team practitioners, for example, may know if some of the young people on their caseload have been subject to exclusion. Exclusions are also discussed at monthly fair access panel meetings. Being able to draw upon dynamic exclusions data is important for proactive profiling work. If professionals already have concerns about a young person and then they are excluded these concerns might escalate. Therefore on a case management level, as well as a thematic profiling level, exclusions data may prove useful.

Health data

Peer-on-peer abuse can compromise the physical, sexual and mental health of young people (Firmin & Beckett, 2014). As a result, health services may collect information of relevance to local profiling activity and should be considered partners in safeguarding young people from peer-on-peer abuse. At a case management level we recognise good relationships with health services that attend local multi-agency agency meetings and share information about specific children who are being abused by and/or who are abusing their peers.

However, in terms of broader profiling activity, different services within health hold a large number of datasets, much of which won't be of relevance (or use) for profiling activities, and as a result relationships are important. For example A&E, sexual health and CAMHS services will all capture demographic data on the young people accessing their services, and will also collect data on the nature of concerns the

young person presents, but sharing these broad datasets (in an anonymised format) will not necessarily assist with this specific profiling task.

However, if the local sexual health service is aware of the emerging peer-on-peer abuse profile being generated by an analyst they may know what warning signs to look out for and understand when sharing information may be of use. For example, there are concerns that young people are being sexually abused by peers in a local park. A group of young people then attend a sexual health service and a number of them disclose staying out in that same park overnight. If the nurse is aware of the potential concern around the park, they are in a better position to share information with an analyst and/or safeguarding partnership of which the analyst is part of. A number of local hospitals are also recruiting youth workers into A&E departments. These workers may also identify concerns related to some young people who attend with injuries that they have sustained following a physical assault from peers. The ability to share information about the nature of the assault, its location etc. with analysts, even when the young person doesn't feel able to give a statement to the police, can assist with proactive profiling activity. As a result, analysts should identify routes to proactively share redacted versions of their profiles to healthcare providers to enable the identification of trends and the sharing of that information.

Community safety data

Peer-on-peer abuse often occurs in public spaces – high streets, parks, disused garages, take-away shops etc. – and as a result is a community safety, as well as safeguarding, issue. Some analysts tasked with profiling peer-on-peer abuse are based within community safety departments. However, there are broader community safety issues which may also indicate a risk of peer-on-peer abuse and could be drawn upon to profile concerns.

Young people who are exposed to domestic abuse at home are vulnerable to being abused by, or to abusing, their peers (Barter, et al., 2009). Young people may run from home during domestic abuse incidents, placing them at risk of sexual exploitation and youth violence on the streets – as well as being exposed to harmful relationship norms within their household (Firmin, 2016, Forthcoming). As a result, domestic abuse data can assist in identifying the number of young people who may require additional support in this regard. Furthermore, when families affected by domestic abuse are discussed at the multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC), knowing which ones have young people in them who may be exposed to the abuse, and which ones have children who may already be of concern regarding youth violence and/or sexual exploitation, can ensure a more coordinated response. Profiling across multi-agency groups, as well as layering trends in domestic abuse over trends in sexual exploitation, youth violence, or harmful sexual behaviour, can therefore provide more holistic accounts of adolescent vulnerability within your local area.

Data on neighbour complaints or household disturbances can provide another route for accessing data on domestic abuse. However, work in local sites has told us that peer-on-peer abuse can occur in disused houses or in households where parents are working late and young people are left unsupervised after school. In these cases a group of young people can use one person's house or a disused house to engage in harmful behaviours. Complaints about noise, alcohol use or shouting/fights within such premises could indicate a safeguarding concern associated with peer-on-peer abuse.

Finally, data on anti-social behaviour is also helpful when profiling peer-on-peer abuse. Research into harmful sexual behaviour suggests that many young people who sexually abuse their peers, particularly those who do so in groups, may also be engaged in other forms of anti-social behaviour (of which sexually harmful behaviour is only a part) (Hackett, 2014). Anti-social behaviour can also escalate to serious youth violence and other forms of peer-on-peer abuse. Therefore, including trends related to anti-social behaviour when profiling peer-on-peer abuse could assist in identifying contexts or individuals to target through prevention and early intervention activity.

Transport

Young people experience peer-on-peer abuse on transport networks – whether being sexually assaulted on their way out with friends, having their mobile phone stolen, or being physically assaulted on their way to school (Firmin, 2016, Forthcoming). Furthermore, fights and disputes can spill over from school onto journeys to-and-from school, and young people can be threatened on public transport, should they have to travel through 'rival' neighbourhoods to access education (Pitts, 2008). As a result, data collected on transport networks can provide information on incidents of peer-on-peer abuse which may not be held by the police or other services (if young people/professionals have not reported them).

Across the country different transport providers collect data in a range of formats, as do the British Transport Police. However, in London, Transport for London (TfL) also collects data which may be of use to analysts who are profiling peer-on-peer abuse in the capital. Drivers on London's bus network have a red button to press if an incident occurs on their bus or if they see an incident at a stop. As well as receiving assistance, pressing the red button connects the driver to the central communications system where a driver incident report is recorded (DIR). DIRs can also be recorded for lower-level incidents of concern that do not require immediate assistance (as they would do with a red button). The call handler can apply a flag to these incidents and cause codes, include a youth flag and a newly introduced vulnerability flag. DIRs and cause codes can be used to generate hotspot maps as well as providing information related to time of incident and some incident details.

When an incident occurs on a bus but the driver doesn't need to call it through to central communications at the time, they can also complete an anti-social behaviour incident form (ASIF) at the end of their journey. These can also be submitted by station controllers regarding incidents at bus stations. These reports are all uploaded onto a system called the Transport Policing Online Mapping Application (TPOMA) which can be accessed by community safety and policing analysts.

Beyond these two incident report features, TfL's Education and Training team maintain a list associated to schools where there have been a high number of reports from members of the public or bus controllers – this data informs the work of their schools programme. Data is also held on any Zip cards (discounted travel cards for young people under 16 or young people 16-18 who are in full-time education) that have been withdrawn due to persistent behaviour concerns on the transport network.

Given this wealth of data it is critical that local CSE and gangs analysts make contact with TfL and draw upon transport-related data as part of their work to profile peer-on-peer abuse. Identifying opportunities to incorporate this data into existing activity, as well as identifying new ways to profile (for example profiling concerns on transport routes between schools rather than just static concerns associated to schools) should advance contextual approaches to identifying peer-on-peer abuse.

Towards contextual profiling: examples of our activity to date

As a small cluster of analysts we have developed a range of approaches to contextually profile peer-on-peer abuse:

Example 1: *In my borough I have begun to meet with individual schools with the highest identified number of young people i vulnerable to CSE attend. This has given me a good starting point for peer mapping within one particular school and has led to cross borough strategy meetings using the intelligence that was gathered and linking it to the intelligence that we already had. There is also work underway for me to receive data around children who are missing throughout the school day. A template has been developed by one school which is currently being reviewed before it is disseminated amongst other local schools. Once this data is received we will be able to review this against missing from home/care data and should give us a near to complete picture of all reported missing episodes for young people.*

Example 2: *Peer group mapping has been conducted by my borough, in conjunction with a neighbouring borough, encompassing intelligence and data from a wide range of partnership agencies. This has included information from Police, Community Safety, Social Care, Youth Offending Service, Children and Young People's Service and many others. This information has been brought together into two products – 1) a geographical mapping product to highlight risk by location, 2) a network association (i2) chart of females and males believed to be linked to CSE, Gangs, County Lines etc. Bringing together cross-border information for these products has allowed for significantly more extensive research and analysis to be conducted than*

has traditionally been done when focussing on single boroughs, as the issues being uncovered are not limited by administrative boundaries.

Example 3: *Our borough has seen a big increase in online exploitation in the last year, this in part due to peer exploitation online. This has led to a profile specifically around peer exploitation and online exploitation and what it looks like in our borough. Specific schools have been identified where a high volume of ‘sexting’ reports have been received and additional training/awareness-raising has been rolled out. We have also been able to look at the most common social media sites/apps that are being used for online exploitation and have started a dialogue with one of these pages around what steps we can take to address these issues.*

Example 4 *After going through CRIS reports I noticed that three young women had sustained a minor stab wound to the thigh. In at least 2 of those reports the suspects were young men known to the females. All three young women were part of the same of peer group. This profiling work would have benefitted from having access to data off all females u18 who had similar wounds. I could have identified more young women who belonged to this peer group, or if the young women weren’t known to each another, this could have highlighted something that young men were doing as a way of punishing or branding young women across different peer networks. The data was requested, but the way the information was recorded firstly made it difficult to see whether the injuries were to the thigh and the information at that time could only be shared in an anonymised fashion.*

We will continue to share these approaches, and develop responses to these challenges, via the contextual safeguarding practitioner’s network detailed below.

Challenges

As outlined earlier, this is a briefing on aspirational profiling. We have outlined opportunities for broadening profiling activity and demonstrate how we have drawn upon some of these datasets to undertake our work to date. However, we recognise that there are a number of challenges to address to ensure consistent inclusion of the aforementioned datasets in the profiles that we generate. Key challenges identified during the seminar series included:

- Inconsistent use of flags and codes. From the codes used when young people are excluded from school, through to the codes set by public health and the application of ‘youth’ flags within TfL, flags are inconsistently applied. As a result, it is not possible to rely on any of the above datasets to tell us a complete picture, and we continue to rely on relationships and young people themselves to fill in the gaps
- Agreement regarding information sharing: different areas apply different restrictions for sharing information. Some of us are able to access some datasets that our colleagues in neighbouring boroughs cannot. Further investigation is still required about the legality surrounding information sharing

in some contexts – for example sharing journey data from transport providers or sharing trend data from health services. Despite guidance from central government regarding information sharing further support is still required

- Agreeing the purpose of profiling: Over the past two years a number of areas have invested in analysts as a means of strengthening their local response to peer-on-peer abuse. In general people recognise the value of profiling an issue and the potential it holds for targeting interventions and the allocation of resources. However, at the moment some colleagues report that they are asked to share information for the purposes of profiling but are not clear how that information will assist with building a problem profile. It is important that multi-agency partnerships are clear on what they want from a problem profile, how it will be used, and how this objective will be shared with partners to ensure proportionate and valuable information sharing.

Recommendations

As a result of the challenges outlined we make the following recommendations to national and Pan-London policymakers to facilitate improvements in profiling activity in the future:

1. Learning from work on domestic abuse, identify means through which to consistently apply 'safeguarding', 'vulnerability' and/or 'youth' flags to key datasets concerned with peer-on-peer abuse
2. Provide more detailed guidance on the legal framework for information sharing – and the differences between sharing information for case management or profiling purposes and sharing information on families, peer groups, schools and public spaces, compared to information on individuals
3. Produce a 'why profile' information sheet or template that can be circulated to key agencies who hold data of use to particular profiling activities. This can be shared, with redacted examples of problem profiles, prior to data requests within a given local area

Next Steps

This briefing, and the seminar series that accompanied it, provided a foundation for building a contextual profile of peer-on-peer abuse. Broadening the pool from which we source data increases our opportunities for collecting data on the families, peer groups, schools and public spaces that are most associated with, or affected by, peer-on-peer abuse. This in turn provides means of targeting contexts, as well as individuals, with support and intervention. In order to continue to apply the learning from the seminars, address some of the challenges and pursue the recommendations outlined above the University of Bedfordshire will:

1. Continue to promote and support profiling activities through our Contextual Safeguarding Practitioners' Network: Launching during 2016 this network will showcase contextual profiling tools/activities undertaken by analysts across the country and provide peer-learning routes between analysts to sustain and embed learning
2. Pursue recommendations through our policy and influencing plans: We will work with Pan-London policymakers to explore the challenges and recommendations outlined above and publish updates on the MsUnderstood webpage, twitter feed and the Contextual Safeguarding Practitioners' Network hub
3. Work beyond peer-on-peer abuse: We will provide support and advice, through the practitioners' network to local areas who are seeking to apply the approaches outlined in this briefing to broader issues related to adolescent safeguarding as a means of promoting holistic responses to vulnerability and exploitation

If you have any queries on this briefing please contact carlene.firmin@beds.ac.uk

www.msunderstood.org.uk

[@MsUnderstoodUK](https://twitter.com/MsUnderstoodUK)

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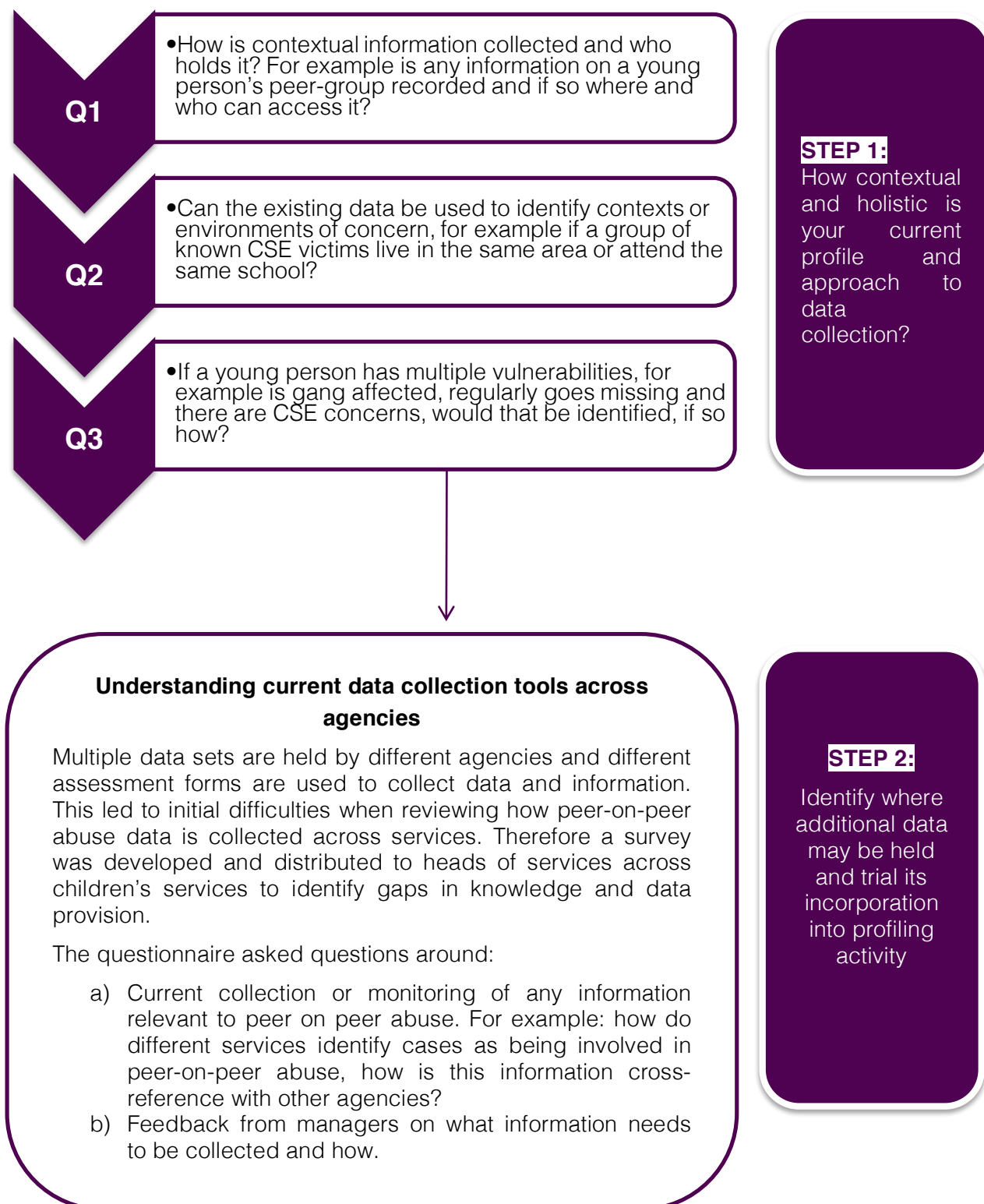
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APPENDIX E: FLOWCHART FOR BUILDING A CONTEXTUAL PEER-ON-PEER ABUSE PROFILE



APPENDIX F: PEER GROUP INFORMATION CAPTURE FORM

Peer Group Mapping – a pilot to contextualise assessment processes

Introduction

Since January 2014 the MsUnderstood Partnership¹ has been working with practitioners in this site to build their local response to peer-on-peer abuse. Peer-on-peer abuse includes peer-on-peer sexual exploitation, serious youth violence, teenage relationship abuse and young people who display harmful sexual behaviour. Following an audit of existing practices within this site a delivery plan was devised to build upon the current strengths of the local response. The audit process identified that both youth offending and social work practitioners were engaging in peer group mapping activity to assess the needs of those affected by peer-on-peer abuse – a unique strength in this site – but approaches required greater oversight, strategic leadership and consistency. In light of this finding the delivery plan, signed off by LSCB in November 2014, included an action to create greater consistency in the consideration of peer group dynamics when conducting assessments. This paper outlines a proposal for how to progress this action for approval by the LSCB.

Background – wider research and findings from the site case review exercise

During the past decade international and UK research has increasingly highlighted that the nature of young people's peer groups will influence the extent to which they are vulnerable to peer-on-peer abuse (Barter et al., 2009; Firmin, 2015; Letourneau and Borduin, 2008).

A review of five cases of peer-on-peer abuse in this site illustrated that such vulnerabilities exist in the county – with young people committing physical and sexual offences alongside their peers (three out of the five cases) and being encouraged by peer group norms to normalise harmful attitudes (five out of the five cases).

As noted in the introduction, the audit of this site's response to peer-on-peer abuse identified that individual youth offending and social work practitioners were mapping young people's peer groups as part of their assessment process in an ad hoc rather than consistent fashion. The fact that peer group mapping was occurring at all was a strength in the local response, and the ways in which practitioners were using such exercises enabled them to contextually consider the vulnerability of the individual young people on their caseload. The practice also enabled practitioners to link individuals with whom they were working and to, on occasion, design complementary intervention plans for young people who they knew were offending alongside one another or who were routinely exposed to risk when together.

This paper proposes an approach, to be piloted, that could enable greater consistency (in terms of quality and process) in the collection of information on peer group dynamics during the assessment of young people affected by peer-on-peer abuse in this site.

Objectives of peer group mapping

In February 2016 a workshop was held to identify, and discuss the potential for, peer group mapping in the site. The following services were represented:

- Children's social care (SWAN Unit)
- The CSE Service
- Youth service
- The Police
- Youth offending service

By discussing peer group mapping exercises currently underway in the site and the potential to quality assure and develop these approaches in the future, attendees agreed a number of

¹ MsUnderstood is a partnership led by the University of Bedfordshire that was formed in 2013 to develop local and national responses to peer-on-peer abuse www.msunderstood.org.uk

objectives for peer group mapping exercises. Attendees agreed that peer mapping exercises in the site could be used for the following three reasons:

- Concerns regarding peer groups could be shared proactively to enable early identification and intervention
- Information on peer groups and peer dynamics could be shared upon request to assist with the assessment of individual young people who were at risk of being abused by, and/or abusing, their peers
- Information on identified peer groups of concern could be shared reactively with requests for disruption activity with those agencies who are able to engage with them (such as schools, the youth services and community safety services)

Each of these approaches had slightly different primary objectives – the first being to identify concerns, the second to assess individual young people and the third to disrupt escalating issues – however each would arguably enable the other.

Meeting the identified objectives

During the workshop attendees identified range of ways in which practitioners are, or could, meet the identified objectives, and the challenges/barriers to developing peer mapping processes as they currently stand:

- A lengthy discussion took place regarding IT systems, data protection and existing pathways such as the MASH and where information sharing and mapping processes currently sit, who owns that information and the purposes for which it is shared
- Examples were given regarding how information is currently shared and mapped at present, partnership examples of schools, the CSE service and children's social care working together to map groups associated to existing cases
- The potential for engaging youth workers with identified peer groups within the detached programme of work was also identified
- A need to distinguish, and recognise the relationships, between information sharing, intelligence gathering and building an assessment was also discussed. This is critical as the processes required for intelligence gathering (in terms of police investigation) is not the same as those in place for information sharing in order to conduct an assessment of a young person, or to identify a need for early intervention from a safeguarding perspective

An overarching concern associated to all of the above was the need to improve the consistency with which peer groups were considered when identifying, assessing and responding to the risk of peer-on-peer abuse. Further discussion about this document at the April site steering group meeting highlighted the importance of quality assurance, consent and data ownership for all of the above, and the importance of communication and partnership for any further development of peer mapping exercises.

Given that the MsUnderstood partnership only operated in this site until the end of May 2016 much of this work will need be developed beyond the life of this particular programme. It is recommended that the LSCB and Community Safety Partnership consider this as part of their wider development programme in relation to exploitation and Carlene Firmin, Head of the MsUnderstood Partnership, provided some advice in regards to this matter at the close of the programme.

However, within the delivery period the second objective outlined above (ensuring the collection of peer-group information as part of the assessment process) could be pursued. This objective was not about the gathering of intelligence or the tasking of disruption activity – both of which would be relatively new to current practice in the site. Instead it is focused on developing a level of consistency, quality assurance and oversight to peer mapping exercises that are already underway (in an ad hoc fashion) in responses to peer-on-peer abuse in the site.

It is recommended that a template form (outlined later in this document) is piloted with a small number of identified practitioners in the youth offending service, children's social care and the

CSE service. They will use the template with a small number of practitioners from identified schools, alternative education providers and the youth service to:

- Capture information on young people's peer groups and peer dynamics in a consistent format as a routine part of existing assessment processes.
- Provide a baseline against which participating practitioners can consider whether peer group influence is a protective or risk factor (or neither) to be considered in any future intervention plan for that young person

The principle aim of this pilot was to advance the ability of the assessments to identify the strengths and risks within young people's peer associations and what this may mean for the plan that professionals devise for them. It is not an intelligence gathering tool. It is seeking to capture peer information in a similar fashion to information gathering on family dynamics at present, and to provide an order/framework to that which is already underway. The data gathered through this exercise therefore, should be treated in the same way as any other information that a practitioner gathers during an assessment. The information form is not a standalone document and is only to be utilised as part of a wider assessment process for a young person considered to be at risk abusing, or being abused by, their peers. As the youth service and education providers engage with young people in peer settings these seem to be the best sources of such information for the initial stage of this pilot.


Pilot timetable and participants

This paper was presented to the site Steering group on Tuesday 5th April and the LSCB on Tuesday 26th April. It was amended following initial feedback from the MSU steering group. Following the presentation to the LSCB and electronic feedback requests to the site steering group revisions were made (following recommendations) and a final template (and process) approved for a pilot by relevant members of the LSCB.

At the site steering group on the 5th April an initial discussion of pilot participants took place. It was agreed that, pending recommendation/approval from the LSCB 2-3 educational establishments (at least one mainstream) would be contacted to participate in addition to the youth service.

Managers from the CSE Service, Youth Offending Team and Children's Social Care agreed to identify members of staff to participate from their services.

Proposed participants to engage in the pilot phase are outlined in the table below:

Participants requesting information and conducting assessment (two practitioners from each)		Participants providing information and receiving feedback post assessment
Youth offending team		Education providers x 4 (two mainstream and two alternative)
Children's social care		Youth service
CSE Service		

In short, participants from YOS, the CSE service and children's social care were proposed as services that would use the form to request information on a young person's peer group when they are referred into their service with concerns related to peer-on-peer abuse (peer-on-peer CSE, teenage relationship abuse, serious youth violence, harmful sexual behaviour). This form would be sent to the youth service and relevant school (if participating in the pilot). The information that was returned would be incorporated into the existing assessments conducted by those services. Any particular concerns/actions that emerged from the peer group information form would be communicated back to the information providing practitioners (education and

youth service) with a request that should the information change the requesting organisation was notified – and their assessment updated accordingly.

Ethics approval for the University of Bedfordshire to monitor the pilot had been given by the two stage University of Bedfordshire ethics approval process (as part of the wider application for the MsUnderstood partnership work programme).

It was proposed that the pilot take place for 2-3 weeks during May for initial review and feedback to the University of Bedfordshire, prior to recommendations being made for further testing and adaptation beyond the life of the MsUnderstood process. The pilot needed to consider:

- the feasibility of the exercise
- the usefulness/outcomes of the exercise
- the extent to which the process aids the assessment process
- what quality assurance processes would need to be in place to safeguard appropriate use of the form, and information gathered, during a wider roll-out

Upon completion these questions would be answered. It would then be the decision of the LSCB as to whether further testing was required, gradual roll-out was pursued or if other approaches were taken to achieve consistency and quality assurance for peer group mapping work in the site.

Peer-Group Information Capture Form

The peer group information capture form has been developed in order **to inform existing assessment processes** of young people who have been abused by, and/or who have abused, a peer. It provides a routine and consistent format for requesting, collating and analysing this type of information as part of the assessment process, which in turn yield opportunities to quality assure activities that are already underway. For the purposes of the pilot it was recommended that:

1. A maximum of four, minimum of two, education providers were identified to participate (and individual practitioners within those agencies) in addition to identified practitioners in the youth service
2. The youth offending service, the children's social care and the CSE service also identified practitioners each who were willing to pilot the tool.
3. All participating professionals meet together with Carlene Firmin to discuss the tool and ask any questions that they may have had prior to the pilot phase
4. Participating practitioners from the youth offending service, children's social care and the CSE service send the peer group information capture form (PGI) to identified practitioners within education and youth service as part of their assessment processes upon receipt of any relevant referrals
5. Participating practitioners in education and the youth service completed the form based on the information they had and return it to the requester
6. The requesting service, having incorporated the information into the assessment, reported back to the information provider, outlining whether the information informed the assessment and whether any other actions were required to safeguard the young people discussed
7. An information sharing agreement was required to ensure that the information flow outlined above was adhered to and that information was used for the purposes of assessment alone (during the pilot phase)

Draft Form

Peer Group Information Capture Form (PGI) (as it was prepared for the site pilot – would need editing into for reuse by other sites in terms of tense and background information)

This form has been produced to pilot a more consistent way for education providers and the youth service to share information about the nature and dynamics of young people's peer groups with practitioners who are assessing their vulnerability to peer-on-peer abuse (both being abused by peers and abusing others).


This pilot:

- Has been approved by the LSCB and forms part of the MsUnderstood peer-on-peer abuse support programme that has been operating in the site since 2013
- Has been devised to explore ways to consistently record and consider information on young people's peer groups when assessing young people at risk of peer-on-peer abuse. We know such information sharing occurs in an ad hoc basis and the pilot intends to explore one way of providing quality assurance, monitoring and consistency to such activities
- Will only involve services (and practitioners within those services) who have been recruited into the pilot beforehand
- Will only be collecting information for the purposes of informing existing assessment processes
- Will hold the information collected to the same standards as any other information that is collected when a young person is subject to an assessment following a referral to either the CSE service, the youth offending service or children's social care
- Is intended to capture information which more explicitly reflects the contribution, and potential contribution, that education providers and the youth service can make to assessing the vulnerability and safety of young people affected by peer-on-peer abuse
- Will be subject to review with all participating practitioners to feedback views for development/adaptation/roll-out across other services in the future
- Is not an intelligence gathering exercise

Should you have any queries/concerns about this form or the process being followed please contact Carlene Firmin carlene.firmin@beds.ac.uk.


Information requester: (name and agency)		
Information provider: (name and agency)		
Name of young person concerned:		
Type of assessment being conducted by requesting organisation:		
Are you (the information provider) aware of any peer relationships of the young person concerned?	Yes	No
If yes please complete the remainder of this form, if no please return this form stating so		
Does the young person of concern have many peer relationships or a small number? Are they socially isolated?		
Please provide the names of the young people with whom this young person spends their time:		
Do you consider any of the above individuals to have a positive or protective influence on the young person concerned? (Please explain answer)		
Do you consider any of the above individuals to have a negative or risky influence on the young person concerned? (Please explain answer)		
Does the young person concerned appear to follow the influence of any their peers? (Please name which peer and explain your answer)		
Does the young person concerned appear to lead or influence the behaviour of any of their peers? Please name which peer/s and explain your answer)		
Is there any other information regarding the nature and quality of this young person's peer associations that you think would inform my assessment? (if so please share here)		

APPENDIX G: ASSET PLUS TRAINING SLIDES AND RESOURCES



Asset Plus Supplementary Training Peer-on-Peer Abuse and Contextual Safeguarding

Dr Carlene Firmin MBE
@carlene.firmin



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Session Outline

Section (1) - Nature of the challenge:

- Evidence base:** why a good assessment and intervention plan would be **CONTEXTUAL**
- Case Studies:** Explore the contextual nature of extra-familial violence and abuse with reference to the case reviews undertaken by the MSU partnership in Sheffield (interactive exercise)


Section (2) - Building a response:

- Information gathering:** Identify ways to gather contextual information to ensure that social and environmental factors comprising safety and well-being are fully explored
- Conclusions and information:** Identify ways to draw contextual conclusions and explanations in relation to abuse and violence and appropriately weight the interplay between individual, familial and social/environmental factors
- Pathways and Planning:** Develop contextual pathways and plans to address the social contexts that compromise young people's safety and well-being



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Contextual nature of peer-on-peer abuse, adolescent risk and resilience



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Current Definitions


- Domestic Abuse
- Child sexual exploitation
- Serious Youth Violence
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour



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Domestic Abuse – Definition


Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional



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Definition – Child Sexual Exploitation

*Sexual exploitation of **children and young people under 18** involves **exploitative situations, contexts and relationships** where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, **sexual activities**. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have **power over them** by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the **child or young person's limited availability of choice** resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.*



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Definition – Serious Youth Violence

Any offence of most serious violence or weapon enabled crime, where the victim is aged 1-19' i.e. murder, manslaughter, rape, wounding with intent and causing grievous bodily harm. 'Youth violence' is defined in the same way, but also includes assault with injury offences

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Definition – Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Children and young people presenting with sexual behaviours that are outside of developmentally 'normative' parameters

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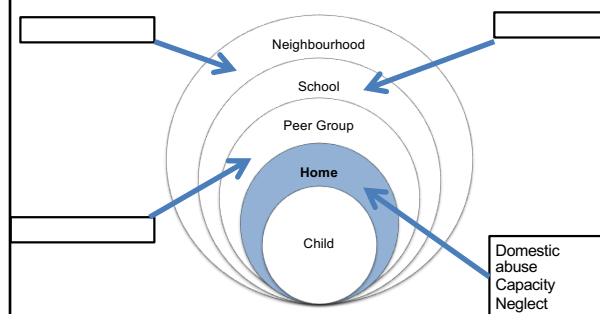
Peer-on-peer abuse in England

- When surveyed, a quarter of girls and 18% of boys report experience some kind of physical violence from a partner (Barter, et al., 2009)
- Between 30 and 70% of young women report encountering sexual harassment in school (EVAW, 2010; GirlGuiding UK, 2014)
- 10-15 year olds in 2013 were estimated to have experienced 465,000 incidents of violent crime, 79% of which had been perpetrated by someone also aged 10-15 (ONS, 2015)
- More than four in ten teenage schoolgirls aged between 13 and 17 in England have experienced sexual coercion. (University of Bristol and University of Central Lancashire, 2015)
- A survey of adult survivors of child sexual abuse in England in Wales in 2011 founds that around two thirds had been abused by a young person and not an adult (Radford, et al., 2011).

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Homes



Mother stated that 'there were things going on in Sara world that she did not have access to' ... She described that Sara was 'being controlled by others who were more powerful' than her mother.

(Firmin, 2015)

Sean's mother had reported that her son's behaviour was 'out of control' a year before ... Sean's mother had called the police to report her son missing stating that she was struggling to manage his behaviour and that he was returning home with unexplained amounts of money and would pack a bag and stay with friends

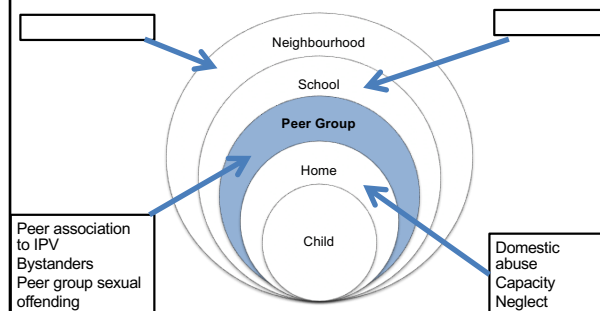
(Firmin, 2015)

Most of the young people and family members interviewed saw factors outside the family as having a greater influence on their gang association. Issues widely seen as more significant included growing up in a 'hostile' environment where gang membership, criminality and violence was normalised; negative experiences of school; the pull of peer subculture...and the search for identity, independence and respect.

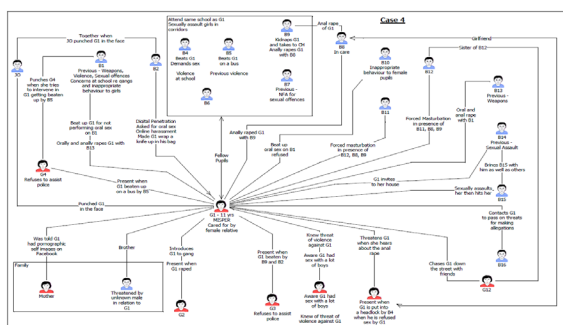
(Catch 22, 2013:4)



Peer Groups



Peer Groups



(Firmir, 2015)

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Suspects had sexually harmed and assaulted young women together...Suspects reassured one another and blamed the complainant

(Firmir, 2015)

One suspect had no recorded offences in his history and yet committed a serious sexual offence when initiated by two of his peers...Two suspects told a third when join in the assault and when to stop. Two suspects held the complainant down while a third assaulted her

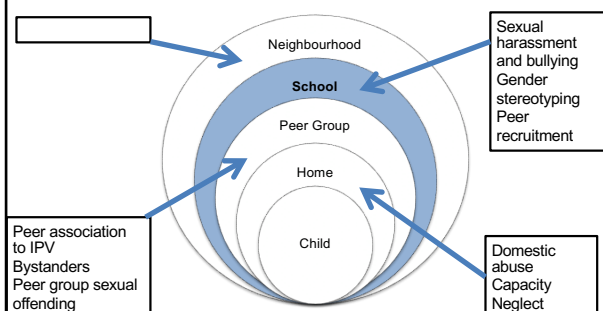
(Firmir, 2015)

For some young men...control could be a collective endeavour, facilitated via social media, to insult; those men deemed unable to keep their girlfriends on lockdown.

(Corr, et al. 2013:8-9)



Educational Settings



Following the witnessing of a physical assault on a female student, 6B1 is 'spoken to' and staff note that he is 'already on a red report from the head teacher'. The girl (6G6) has informed the teacher that he had done this before and that he is in a local gang.

(Case 6) (Firmir, 2015, bold added by author)

School moves Susan to another part of the school to avoid contact with the boy ...Susan is having 'problems' with another girl her class – school change Susan's timetable so that she is not in class with this girl. ...In the New Year staff log that Susan has been threatened by someone from a different school...school assign a mentor to Susan – the following week Susan is recorded as making 'rude and offensive comments during mentoring time, threatening a member of staff' – school gives a fixed term 3 day exclusion.

(Case 4) (Firmir, 2015, Bold added by author)

A related point in some schools was that, while they placed a laudable emphasis on treating each student as an individual, they sometimes lost sight of group behaviour that was impinging strongly on the behaviour of individuals

(Institute of Physics, 2015:10)



After a few minutes he stopped and left 6G1 there. She put her clothes back on and went to join her friends. Later that day boys in the school started shouting 'sket' at her.

(Case 6) (Firmir, 2015)

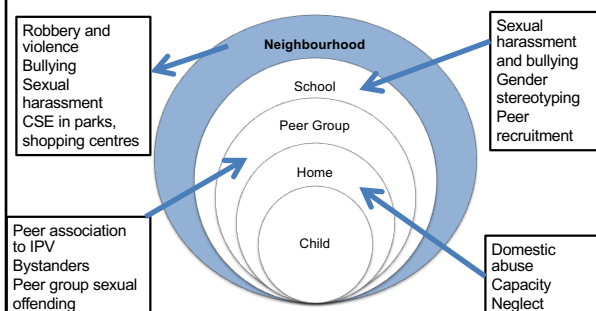
There is some boys in the school that like keep asking me to have sex with them and I am just like "no", like on a daily basis...like they will walk around school and try dragging me into corners and feel me up and everything and it's just irritating because they don't understand.

(Barter, et al. 2009:110)

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Neighbourhood



(8B1 was) surrounded by a group of males and had his bag poked by a sharp implement. He was patted down and slapped around the head. (On another occasion) searched by a lone male and had his phone taken.

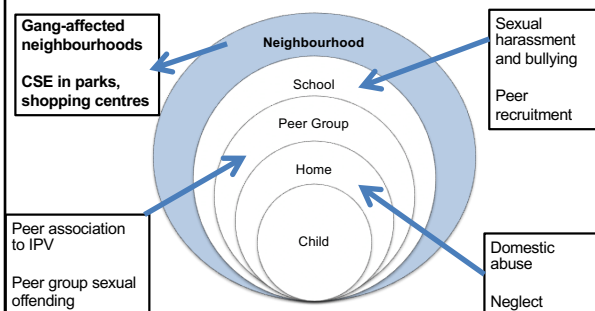
(Case 8) (Firmin, 2015)

"Big men will stop little girls in the road and the street. In person, it's real. But you can block it online." "I was on my own the other day and a man said, 'Come here and get in my car and we can go for fish and chips.' It was on a main road so it was okay, but it would have been more scary if it had been at night." "I get approached all the time when I am in school uniform."

(Coffey, 2015)



Implied association to context



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The impact on a young person

- Missing
- Physical Injuries
- Drugs and alcohol
- Offending
- Sexual Health
- Disengagement from school
- Change in appearance
- Mental health and emotional well-being

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Contextual Framework for Exploring Adolescence

In relation to young people's experiences of abuse and vulnerability:

1. Young people develop within a range of social systems
2. Social systems interplay with one another
3. Young people construct, and are constructed by, social systems
4. Young people embody rules of social systems and engage in harmful norms in the absence of alternative systems
5. Young people are dependent upon those who run/manage social systems, as well as their peers, for their social development

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Exploring these dynamics case studies

Case Review Methodology

Four cases submitted (1 x IDVA, 1 x CSE Service, 1 x YOS, 1 x CYT)

1 x DV, 1 x CSE, 1 x HSB, 1 x SYV.... But not that straight forward

Case template completed using case file information plus Care First and IYSS records

- The incidents
- The associated contexts
- The response

Coded using 12 nodes and 90 tree nodes

Analysis run on nature of behaviour and nature of response

Used to build vignettes

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Example Sheet

Young Person	Family	Peer Group	School	Neighbourhood
Personal, Family and Social Factors - Using engagement and assessment tools - Parenting, family and relationships - Young person's development - Learning, education, training and employment	Child to parent violence Historic exposure to domestic abuse	Pro-criminal peer associations Limited association with safe and pro-social peers Associated to sexually exploitative young people through his partner	No access to education	Long different neighbourhood Exposure to crime, drugs and violence
Offending and Anti-social behaviour - Offending and Anti-social behaviour - Patterns and attitudes - Other behaviours of particular concern	Potential attitudes related to gender, power and control Reputational pressures	Older siblings involved in offending behaviour	Offends along peers – especially Seb Exclusion from education providers creates greater risk on time on the street or with peers	Targets street based offending in 8 parts of Bradford
Environments for Change - Resilience and goals - Engagement and participation - Factors affecting desistance		On-going involvement of peers in offending behaviour	Lack of access to education	On-going criminality in the local area

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Explanations and conclusions

Today – Using same A3 Sheet and case study

- 1) Rate future desistance factors: How does the research into peer-on-peer abuse help us think about weighting these contexts
- 2) Past behaviours and significant life events – how did they impact contexts as well as individuals?
- 3) Make some judgements: which contexts of risk/resilience are likely to change
- 4) Identify which contextual risk/protective factors can be used to EXPLAIN ratings

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Explanations (2)

Beyond Today:

- **Using Episodes** – opportunity to identify interplay between different contexts and any circumstances/influences that have stronger influence than others: is context the most appropriate aspect connecting offences
- **Predicting adverse outcomes and safety/well-being** – ensure record of contextual concerns (for example continued risk of violence on the street, or peer group attitudes continue to be problematic etc.) so that the plan can seek to target those contextual concerns

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Contextual Pathways and Planning

Today: Review the assessment sheet and take the intervention plan sheet

1. Reviewing the assessment sheet identify factors that you would 'flag for action' for include in the intervention plan
2. Take the intervention plan sheet – contextual adaptation of the integrated plan. Use the information in the assessment sheet and the factors that have been flagged to build the plan

Beyond Today: Quality assurance

- Identify key external controls that the service can draw upon to address extra-familial risk or enhance extra-familial resilience
- Quality Assurance – has interplay between the different contextual factors (and the relevant weighting of them) been appropriately considered?

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Intervention Plan Example

Key Area of Intervention	Young Person	Family	Peer Group	School	Neighbourhood
Abusive behaviours in intimate relationship	Referral: Therapeutic support for impact of exposure to domestic abuse Young Person's Target: Develop skills to build healthy and safe relationships Actions: Attend therapeutic support sessions	Meeting with mum to explore the impact of domestic abuse on family dynamic	Map peer group dynamics and identify if Mical is the leader or follower with Seb		
		OTHER CONTROLS			

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Next Steps

1. Post-It Reflection:
 - a) What will you take away from this session
 - b) What will you do to implement the learning from today
2. Monitoring implementation: looking for volunteers
3. Join the contextual safeguarding practitioners network – June onwards

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Keep in touch

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Contextual Information Gathering Exercise - Example

	Young Person	Family	Peer Group	School	Neighbourhood
Personal, Family and Social Factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Living arrangements and environmental factors - Parenting, family and relationships - Young person's development - Learning, education, training and employment 		Child to parent violence Historic exposure to domestic abuse	Pro-criminal peer associations Limited association with safe and pro-social peers Associated to sexually exploitative young people through his partner	No access to education	Gang-affiliated neighbourhood Exposure to crime, drugs use and violence
Offending and Anti-social behaviour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offending and Anti-Social Behaviour - Patterns and attitudes - Other behaviours of particular concern 	Potential attitudes related to gender, power and control Reputational pressures	Older siblings involved in offending behaviour	Offends along peers – especially Seb	Exclusion from education providers creates greater risk on time on the street or with peers	Largely street based offending in X part of the local area
Foundations for Change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resilience and goals - Opportunities - Engagement and participation - Factors affecting desistance 			On-going involvement of peers in offending behaviour	Lack of access to education	On-going criminality in the local area

Contextual Integrated Plan Exercise

Key Area of Intervention	Young Person		Family	Peer Group	School	Neighbourhood
Abusive behaviours in intimate relationship	Referral: Therapeutic support for impact of exposure to domestic abuse	OTHER CONTROLS	Meeting with mum to explore the impact of domestic abuse on family dynamic	Map peer group dynamics and identify if Micah is the leader or follower with Seb		
	Young Person's Target: Develop skills to build healthy and safe relationships					
	Actions: Attend therapeutic support sessions					

APPENDIX H: REVISIONS TO FAIR ACCESS PANEL FORMS

2015/2016

Secondary Referral Form to Fair Access Pupil Placement Panel

1. Referral & Recommendations

Child Details	Name:		Other Names:		Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>
	Ethnicity:					
	UPN:		Date of Birth:		Year Group	
	Current Provision/School			Preferred School/type of School		

Parent/Carer Information (1): (please indicate primary carer)

Parent/Carer Name:		Relationship:	
Tel No:		Email:	
Address:		Postcode:	

Parent/Carer Information (2):

Parent/Carer Name:		Relationship:	
Tel No:		Email:	
Address:		Postcode:	

Dates of any previous schools attended:

Name of School	From	To

Name of School	From	To

Reason for Referral and provision requested where appropriate: <i>(See Page 7, Type of provision/assessment)</i>	Name of Lead Professional:

Comment [g1]: Moved to front page so that the reason for referral can be seen at first glance

Additional information relating to reasons for FAP referral	Information	School response, including referrals to external agencies
Individual's strengths		
Individual's attitude to work		
Home environment Parent/carer E.g. Response to concerns, relationship with school, does the child go missing from home.		
Peer Group E.g. role within peer-group, School concerns about peers and friendship group, Bullies others or is bullied, isolated or lacks friendship groups		
School e.g. linked to other incidents or concerns within the school		
Neighbourhood E.g. impact of gangs, experience of violence/abuse outside of school including travelling to school		

Comment [g2]: By having two separate columns requires the referrer to think both in terms of what information is known and to also think about if any response has been implemented to respond to the concern. Therefore, start thinking about responses and interventions beyond just relocating students post-incident

Comment [g3]: Box included to capture schools response added so panel can see what support/interventions have been implemented prior to the FAP referral.

Comment [g4]: Added contextual information about peer-groups, school and neighborhoods. This information was often mentioned in the previous form but not in a place that was explicitly recorded. Researchers wanted to have a clear place to input the information and what if any interventions have been attempted. Also to identify peers who may be staying at the school but would benefit from on-going support – particularly if there are multiple incidents of concern within and affecting particular peer groups.

Comment [g5]: Researchers noted that consistent disruptive behavior was often listed as a reason for referral to FAP or that it was one final incident that resulted in the referral. This box aims to capture how the incident is related to others and identify any patterns or trends within the school

Comment [g6]: The impact of gangs and gang violence was often mentioned in the previous form. Researchers wanted to capture how safety concerns outside of school impact on education, for example some students experienced assaults travelling to and from school or some students had an escalation in disruptive behavior following an assault in the neighbourhood

Risk Assessment for placement at PRU: Please describe any intervention or adaptation that has proved effective in the past

2. Social Profile

Is the student open to social care?		Yes / No (if yes, please provide contact details)	
Name:		Tel No:	
Does the student have a current Early Help Assessment or CAF?		Yes / No (if no, why not, please provide reasons)	
Name:		Tel No:	
Is the student on the Child Protection Register?		Yes / No	

Known Issues	Support provided by School
Family Overview (i.e. Position of child in relation to siblings, parental details etc.)	

Peer –on-peer abuse (tick all that applies):

Child Sexual Exploitation	
Affected by Gangs and or serious youth violence	
Relationship Abuse/Domestic Abuse in own relationships	
Displays Harmful Sexual Behaviour	
Sexual bullying	
Missing from Education	
Missing from Home	

Other Agency Involvement (tick all that apply):

	Current	Expired	Contact Name	Email
YOS				
Police				
CAMHs				
Education Psychology				
Other (state) (See below)				

Current Status:

Does the student fall in to a vulnerable group?

Yes / No (if yes, tick all that apply)

Children Looked After ☐

Traveller Child

☐

Child of asylum seeker

☐

Young carer

☐

Teenage parent

☐

School refuser

☐

Young offender

☐

Eligible for FSM

☐

EAL

☐

Medical Needs (please provide details):

Medical:	
Known Allergies:	
Dietary Requirements:	
Accessibility Issues:	

3. Education Profile

Student's prior attainment:

CATS Scores	Verbal	
	Non-Verbal	
	Quantitative	
	Key Stage 2	Current Level
English:		
Maths:		
Science:		
Reading Age:		
Spelling Age:		
KS4 Courses:		

Attendance Information:

Current Attendance: (%)	Authorised Absence (%)	Unauthorised Absence (%)	Date of last Attendance:	Is the student expected to attend 5 days/week?
				Yes / No
If no, please provide further details:				
EWO Involvement	Yes / No (If yes, please provide contact details)			
	Name:		Tel No:	

Exclusion history:

Dates of Exclusion		Length of Exclusion (days)	Reason for Exclusion	
From	To			

Internal Exclusions History:

Dates of Exclusion		Length of Exclusion (days)	Reason for Exclusion	
From	To			

Internal Support:

Support Used	Yes / No	Comment and Impact
Adapted timetables		
1:1 Sessions		
Respite – use of AP		
Internal Learning Unit		
Internal Exclusion		
LSA Class Support		
Alternative Curriculum		
Peer Mentoring		
Use of External Mentoring		
Counselling		
Smoking Cessation		
Drugs Worker		
School Nurse		
Safeguarding		
Therapies e.g. Drama therapy		
Other		

SEND [if applicable]

Please provide details of the student's:

Primary Need	
--------------	--

Secondary Need			
Tertiary Need			
IEP	Yes / No (If yes, please attach)		
Does the student have a specific diagnosis? (e.g. ADHD, ASD, Epilepsy, Dyslexia)	Yes / No		
Does the student have a Risk Assessment in place?	Yes / No		

For Office Use Only			
Referral Number			
Referred by:		Date Form Completed:	
Tel No:		Email:	

Checklist

These must be included within the referral documents: please tick to confirm

<input type="checkbox"/>	Pastoral Support Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed referral form
<input type="checkbox"/>	SIMS attendance record	<input type="checkbox"/>	Most recent school report
<input type="checkbox"/>	CAF	<input type="checkbox"/>	Behaviour log

The following should be included if applicable

<input type="checkbox"/>	Individual Education Plan (IEP)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Statement of Educational Needs
<input type="checkbox"/>	Educational Psychologist Report	<input type="checkbox"/>	YOS Report
<input type="checkbox"/>	Statement Review	<input type="checkbox"/>	Active PSP
<input type="checkbox"/>	Careers Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	Risk Assessment

Panel Decision

Which of the following issues currently affect this pupil which, in your opinion, means they fall within the Fair Access protocol? (Please tick box and attach appropriate reports). If the pupil has left a previous school, please include reasons for this if known.			
Complex Issue Cases (CIC)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Homeless	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children with unsupportive family backgrounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	Returning from the criminal justice system	<input type="checkbox"/>
Permanent Exclusion previously or currently attending the PRU	<input type="checkbox"/>	Children without a school place and a history of serious attendance problems	<input type="checkbox"/>
At risk of Permanent Exclusion/Managed Move	<input type="checkbox"/>	Out of education for more than 1 school term (includes movers in and returnees from EHE)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Traveller	<input type="checkbox"/>	Children of refugees and asylum seekers not in accommodation centres.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Withdrawn by parents following fixed term exclusion and unable to find a school place	<input type="checkbox"/>	Changing school in Year 10 or 11	<input type="checkbox"/>
Moved between a number of schools in Croydon and previously			<input type="checkbox"/>

Type of provision/assessment	Please tick	Placement Agreed	Support costs	
			Please tick	
Placement at mainstream school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	PRU Support	School costs
Respite place in PRU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alternative Provision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please elaborate)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signed by Chair of panel: Date:

Please return completed form to:

APPENDIX I: BRIEFING PAPER ON WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACHES

Peer-on-peer abuse: Developing a whole school approach

Rationale

As schools and local authorities look to develop their response to peer-on-peer abuse, it is useful to consider how approaches used to tackle other issues can be adopted, for example developing a whole school approach to addressing peer-on-peer abuse.

A whole school approach is a co-ordinated response to all the issues that impact on peer-on-peer abuse and young people's experiences of it, therefore combining:

- Child sexual exploitation
- Gangs and serious youth violence
- Missing children
- Harmful sexual behaviour and sexual bullying
- Domestic abuse and teenage relationship abuse

At the moment these issues are addressed separately with individual policies and responses for each one. In the context of schools, this often means that different delivery organisations deliver training sessions for staff and support for young people on the different issues; but what if an approach could be designed that addressed all of the different forms of abuse by coordinating delivery providers and organisations?

What is a whole school approach?



Preliminary questions to consider

1. Which organisations currently deliver support to schools and education providers on issues related to peer-on-peer abuse – includes:
 - a. Teenage relationship abuse (TRA)
 - b. Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB)
 - c. Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
 - d. Missing
 - e. Serious youth violence (SYV)
2. Details of delivery – who is delivering what and where?
3. Who, if anyone, has oversight of work delivered in schools?
4. What is the process for quality assurance and ensuring consistency of messages?
5. How can this work be coordinated and partnerships formed to develop a whole school approach based on current research and evidence base? For example, young people experience multiple forms of abuse and this needs to be reflected in interventions
6. What policies, procedures and recording processes are in place within the school to respond to peer-on-peer abuse?
7. What training have senior leadership and school staff received about preventing and responding to peer-on-peer abuse?

APPENDIX J: SCHOOLS RESPONSES TO PEER-ON-PEER ABUSE, SLIDES AND NOTES

Supporting school's develop a response to peer-on-peer abuse

These slides and notes can be used alongside the Introduction to Peer-On-Peer Abuse slides to provide a back-ground to the issue

1

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Slides for school safeguarding leads

(If wish insert general introduction to peer-on-peer abuse slides)

Aims:

- Provide the opportunity for reflection on schools current response to peer-on-peer abuse
- Highlight principles for an effective contextual response, including whole school approach

2

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Discussion Activity (20mins)

In pairs/small groups think about 2-3 incidents of peer-on-peer abuse that took place in your school/s. Briefly summarise the incident, being mindful of confidentiality - think about the following:

1. How many students were directly involved?
2. How many students were indirectly affected?
3. Was the incident related to any previous incidents or any others since?
4. How was the incident/s responded to by the school?
5. Were any other agencies involved or referrals made?
6. What was the outcome?
7. How do you feel about the outcome, could anything have been done differently?

Feedback to the whole group

3

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Current responses to peer-on-peer abuse in schools

4

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Example of a challenging response to an incident

- Following the sexual assault on school premises the female victim stays away from school for two weeks.
- Upon her return the victim is kept away from suspects prior to charge.
- Following charge attempts are made to keep all suspects out of school but this cannot be implemented, so bail conditions forbid contact between all suspects.
- The victim is physically assaulted in school by other students in a bid to get her to withdraw her statement and as a result she moves and leaves the school before the trial commences.
- Following the trial two of the suspects are incarcerated.
- **School response:** No changes are made to the school environment during this time period

Q: Could the school have responded differently - if so, how?

5

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Challenging responses to escalation

- A yr 8 male student pushed a female student against a wall, threw her to the ground and kicked her in the ribs.
- The female student stated that this was not the first time that the male student had done this to her and that she was afraid of him because he was in a gang.
- **Schools response:** Male student was put on report
- One year later, the same male student is involved in a fight with Yr10 and Yr11 boys
- The following term allegations are made that he was seen sexually assaulting a female student by a member of staff and overheard talking about his gang.
- **Schools response:** He was spoken to by vice principal for 'inappropriate behaviour towards females'

Q: Could the schools have responded differently - if so, how?

6

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Moving our response forward

7

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Developing a whole school approach

Leadership position

Training, awareness and multi-agency working

Policies, procedures and recording systems

Universal and targeted intervention

Specialist partnerships

8

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Principles of an effective response

- Prevention – creating a culture/climate in which gender roles are not stereotyped and where disclosures can be made safely
- Awareness – engage with partners to ensure that you are aware of local patterns and the impact they may have on students
- Responding to sexual bullying and harmful sexual behaviour – agree the process for recording, responding and referring with multi-agency partners.
- Support the process of peer network mapping to ensure that multi-agency assessment and intervention is accurate and useful
- Flag missing from education patterns with multi-agency partners

Q: Any suggestions – what do you think?

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Questions to take back to your school

1. How is sexual bullying and peer-on-peer abuse being prevented in your school – could more be done, if so what?
2. What is the schools policy for identifying, recording and responding to sexual bullying and peer-on-peer abuse?
3. How is the policy disseminated and understood by staff and students?
4. What are the strengths in your schools response to sexual bullying?
5. What are the challenges?
6. What additional support would you benefit from, who can provide it?
7. What multi-agency partnerships does the school have and would the school benefit from developing others, if so with who?

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Understanding the impact of peer-on-peer abuse in schools

1. How does peer-on-peer abuse impact on your students and school environment? (examples)
2. What does your current response look like - strengths and challenges of it
3. What support (guidance, training, services etc) would help you to more effectively respond to the impact peer-on-peer abuse has on your students and school environment ? In particular thinking about the role of the GSCB.

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APPENDIX K: DISCUSSION GUIDE WITH STUDENTS ON SCHOOL SAFETY

Group discussions on how schools can be safer places for all students

Introductory Information:

- Acknowledging that schools are not always safe places for students, particularly young women
- Discuss how *local authority* acknowledge this and wants to work to ensure all students are safe – this will include making big changes to school culture as well as policy and how they respond to incidents
- Reminders: you are not being asked about your own personal experiences - instead to talk generally – also respect privacy of others

Questions to guide discussion in which students identify how to make schools safer places

- Are there any attitudes or behaviours that you think schools need to challenge more than they are?
- What are schools doing well and should be continued or increased?
- What would you like to see change – what are the problems?
- How do you think these changes could be made? What would you do if you were the principle?
- What can you do to bring about change?
- Anything else?

A framework for developing MAP/ Strategy meetings for young people who display harmful sexual behaviours

Background and purpose of framework

Over the past year the International Centre¹ at the University of Bedfordshire, and the MsUnderstood partnership² which it manages, have received repeated requests for information regarding processes that provide oversight of responses to young people who display harmful sexual behaviours (HSB)

During the same time period the a site with whom we have been working has trialled a process of using MAP (multi-agency planning) meetings for young people identified as displaying harmful sexual behaviour (including those who are the subject to an NFA decision by the police and CPS but where concerns remain). This process has been supported by the development of a Terms of Reference, governance structure and an agreed information sharing process.

Where relevant these MAP meetings are related to the multi-agency sexual exploitation meeting where all CSE cases are thematically discussed. Themes related to peer-on-peer exploitation will then have MAP meetings for all young people involved (those identified as exploited and those identified as exploiting them).

The MsUnderstood partnership has monitored this process, and matched it against research evidence into harmful sexual behaviour, to develop a framework for developing processes which monitor responses to young people with harmful sexual behaviour.

In the site two HSB MAPs were observed, as was the multi-agency CSE meeting and complex case discussions. Minutes of all HSB MAPs conducted in the last year (15 meetings) were then subject to manual analysis using a coding framework to identify:

- Key points of consistency across all meetings
- Points of inconsistency that could be addressed through a framework
- Opportunities for contextual assessment and intervention planning for

The findings of this process were used to produce a draft framework for an oversight process – outlined in this document. The University of Bedfordshire worked with the site to further pilot and refine this method further before offering the framework to be piloted in other local authorities beyond this site through the contextual safeguarding practitioner's network³.

¹ The International Centre is a research centre based at the University of Bedfordshire with an exclusive focus on sexual exploitation, trafficking and violence www.beds.ac.uk/ic

² MsUnderstood is a partnership between the University of Bedfordshire and Imkaan committed to develop responses to young people's experiences of gender inequality in general and peer abuse specifically

³ From 2016 the International Centre will host a network for practitioners interested in developing contextual responses to adolescent safeguarding

The Framework

The remainder of this document outlines the key components of a framework for using HSB MAPs (or an equivalent meeting) for monitoring responses to young people who display HSB – followed by a set of appendices with resources and further points of reference to aid the application of this framework into local practice

1. Meeting objective: agree the objective of the meeting/process that is being introduced

Introducing the consistent use of HSB MAP meetings as a means of creating consistency and oversight into response to HSB requires a clear, and multi-agency held, objective. According to the Terms of Reference developed by the site:

The purpose of the HSB MAP meeting is to explore the risk of a young person sexually harming others and agree an intervention plan to address this risk. HSB MAP meetings should be distinctly different from other professional or network meetings e.g. CIN Review/LAC Reviews and concentrate on the risk posed by and to a young person who demonstrates harmful sexual behaviour.

Not all local authorities use the MAP model – however the objective above and following principles, structure and resources within this framework can be used to guide discussions related to HSB at strategy meetings and other HSB specific considerations.

2. Underlying principles: messages from research into HSB and the learning from the site's initial pilot process indicated some key principles that are central to the implementation of this framework

The following principles provide the foundations for HSB MAP meetings including: all decisions that are taken at such meetings; the tools that are used to guide decision-making and record actions; and any quality assurance processes that are employed to monitor implementation and maintain standards/consistency of approach:

- When young people display, or are thought to have displayed, harmful sexual behaviour this is primarily a safeguarding concern of which enforcement may, but does not have to, form a part of the response
- The choices, attitudes and behaviours displayed by young people who have sexually harmed others, or are at risk of doing so, are informed by a range of social systems upon which they are dependent for their development – HSB cannot be understood in isolation of context
- Intervention plans for young people who have displayed, or are at risk of displaying, harmful sexual behaviour should address both the behaviours/attitudes of concern and the contextual factors that may be facilitating or challenging these behaviours/attitudes
- Associated to the above point professionals have a role to play in establishing the social conditions (within families, peer groups, schools and neighbourhoods) in which young people can engage in safe and healthy relationships

3. Routes of referral: identify a route for referring HSB concerns into the process that is being introduced

Routes of referral will differ for each local authority however it is recommended that they follow the same route in operation for CSE referrals albeit potentially with a different

professional acting as a SPOC for HSB as opposed to CSE queries. Likewise if the identified HSB indicates that peer-on-peer sexual exploitation is a concern then discussions from a HSB MAP, any plan that is produced and any associated concerns should be fed into the work of the local operational partnership response to CSE.

Those piloting this framework should insert the referral route in keeping with their local structure into this section of the framework including contact details of any SPOC

4. Key models for reference: Draw upon research-based models for identifying the severity of the presenting behaviour, the contexts to which it is associated and the required response

- Agreeing the severity of the behaviour - Hackett's continuum of sexual behaviours (Appendix 1): Behaviours of concern should be considered with reference to this continuum and minutes consistently record the discussion and decision
- Identifying associated contextual concerns: Firmin's contextual circles of safeguarding (Appendix 2): The contexts of socialisation that should be considered in relation to the young person's behaviour. To what extent does the young person's engagement in these contexts challenge or reinforce the harmful norms that underpin the behaviour of concern
- Building and monitoring the required response: Intervention Plan table outlined in (Appendix 3)

Introducing these models into HSB meetings provides a route to build consistency into the process from the outset and guides, rather than prescribes, professional judgement

5. Attendance and governance: agree attendance and reporting/oversight structures

In keeping with the principles of this framework when a young person displays HSB this is safeguarding concern. As such HSB meetings should be led and coordinated by children and young people's services to ensure that it is embedded primarily within safeguarding structures

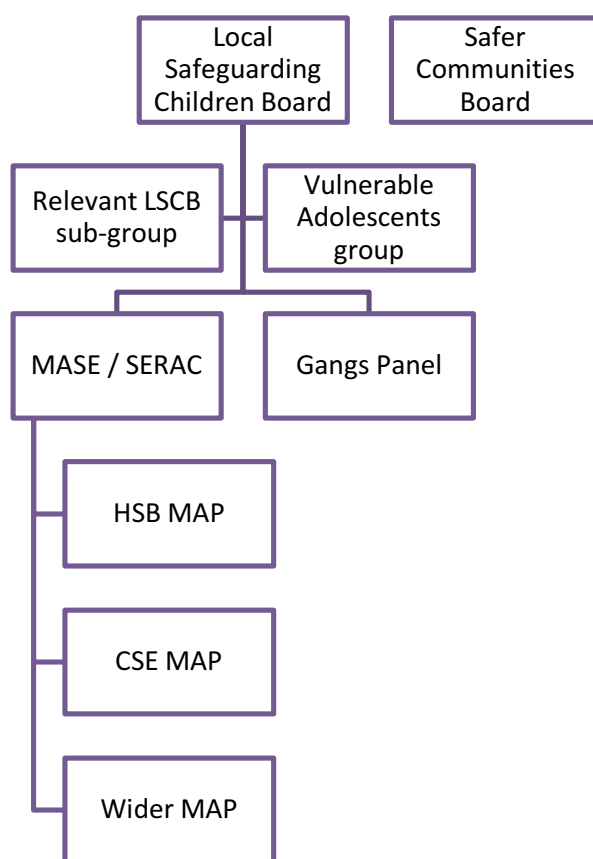
To develop some consistency during the pilot phase it is recommended that all HSB MAP meetings are chaired by the same individual – this individual should be identified at the outset of the pilot phase. Once the process is embedded it may be possible to consider a small number of chairs to share responsibility for HSB MAP meetings.

Other agencies that should be present (or considered) as a matter of routine are:

- Children's Social Care
- Police (CSE and/or HSB leads and where necessary those involved with gangs/serious youth violence)
- CSE and gangs analysts where available (community safety or performance analysts may be able to assist where there is a gap)
- Education provider of young person concerned
- Youth service provider
- Safeguarding Reviewing Service
- Key VCS providers which may be able to, or are already, engage the young person
- Youth Justice Service (manager and case holder where appropriate)
- Health: School Nurse and/or LAC Nurse where appropriate

- Community safety and/or neighbourhoods team (if behaviour is occurring in public spaces)

The thematic trends identified at HSB meetings should be fed into the multi-agency operational structures for child sexual exploitation (sometimes referred to as MASE sometimes as SERAC) and where necessary or relevant the local gangs and serious youth panel. At a strategic level then these themes/actions should be fed into the LSCB (and any established vulnerable-adolescents strategic group or on occasion through a designated sub-group of the LSCB). Community-based trends/concerns can also be fed into the meeting of the Community Safety Partnership Board.



6. HSB MAP Meeting structure: Agree a structure which will act as a template agenda for all HSB meetings.

Below are the key headings proposed for a HSB meeting agenda:

- Summary of young person's current situation and their background
- Specific concerns about young person's harmful sexual behaviour
- Identification of vulnerability, risk and resilience factors associated to the HSB (including those identified in any risk assessments already utilised) (list used by the site is built into the tool in Appendix 3)
- Strengths
- Current professional involvement with the young person and any associated contexts
- Decision regarding level of risk (using Hackett continuum)

- g) Decisions regarding interventions – young person, family and broader environmental/social contexts

The proposed agenda is an adaptation from the original site pilot – informed by a review of meeting minutes. During the pilot phase contexts were considered independently of risk factors, behaviours etc. – However this framework recommends that they be considered throughout the process as displayed in Appendix 3. Therefore:

- The young person's behaviour would be summarised and then contextualised- what did they do and then in what context did this behaviour occur and/or what contexts were associated to the behaviour and how
- Vulnerability, risk and resilience factors (those used by the site are listed in Appendix 4 – although not exhaustive) – some of these are individual; others are familial or based in schools etc. Therefore as they are recorded it would help to split them out into contexts at that point as suggested in Appendix 3
- Strengths – are they contextual or individual? These can also be plotted against the relevant columns in Appendix 3
- Professional involvement – this also needs to be plotted against contexts (Appendix 3). If there are risk/resilience/vulnerability factors in the school or peer group for example has there been professional involvement to address these issues? The same questions can be asked regarding the future plans for intervention.

Developing the MAP structure in this way, assisted by the template in Appendix 3, should aid consistency in both minute-taking and consideration of contexts

7. Quality assurance and monitoring: identify routes to monitor actions agreed at different MAP meetings, scan trends and ensure that meetings are held in accordance with the principles and objective highlighted earlier in this framework

Reviewing the minutes of 15 HSB MAPs identified that beyond an agreed agenda other processes are required to aid a consistent level of quality in terms of the discussion at a MAP meeting and the actions that are agreed. The tool provided in appendix 3 provides a structure for recording the discussion and monitoring the actions taken at MAP meetings. It also provides a visual account of all meetings that can be used to identify trend data.

In order to achieve this it is recommended that the sheet in Appendix 3 is used:

- As part of review to meetings identify where factors/behaviours/contextes have shifted and consider implications for intervention
- To monitor agreed interventions using a traffic light tool (red, amber, green) to flag where interventions have been progressed and where they are yet to be actioned
- To identify if any risk/resilience/vulnerability factor has been identified which isn't subject to any intervention at present. Mapping issues in this way creates a visual demonstration of factors, particularly those that are contextual, for which there are no plans in place

Additional considerations

In addition to the components of the framework, partnerships planning to implement this pilot process need to consider:

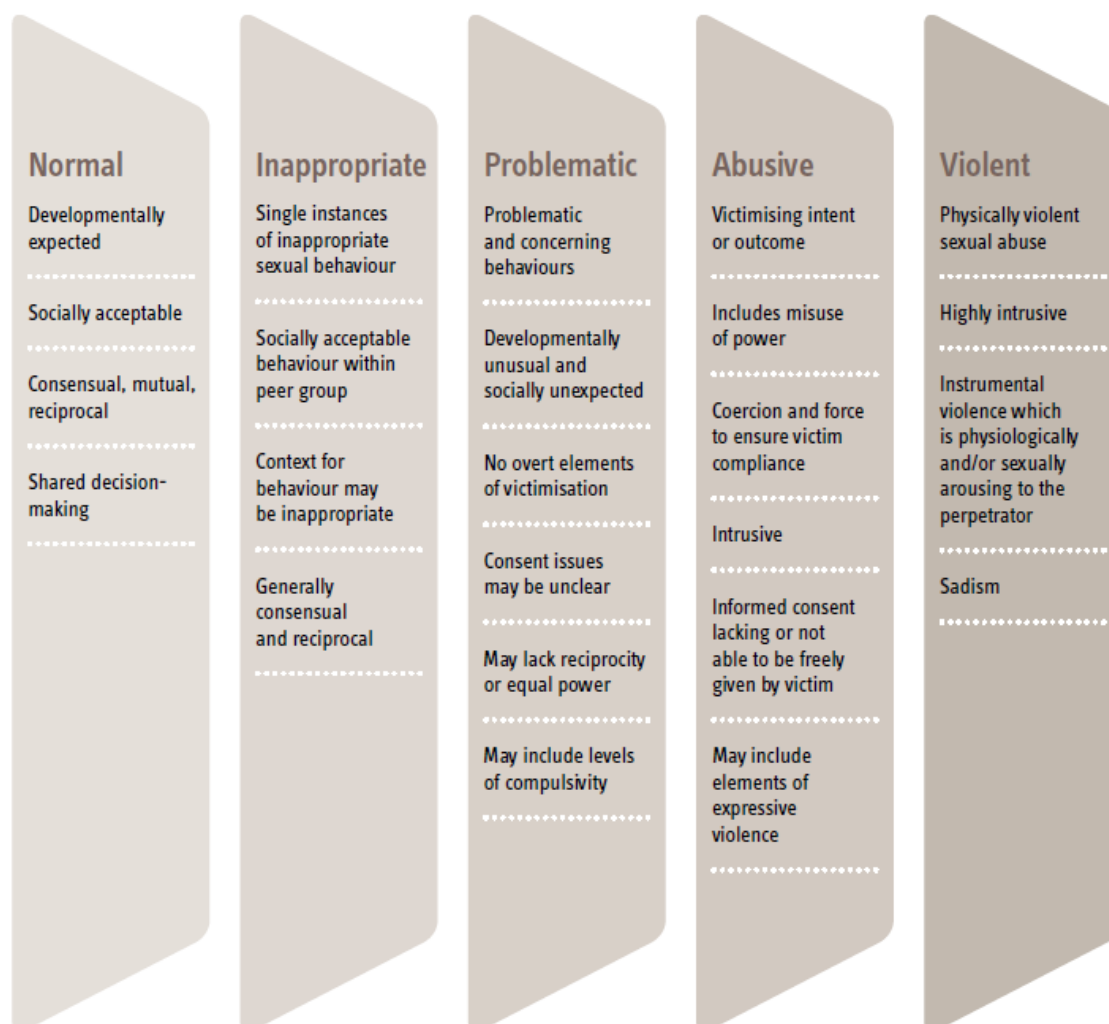
- What information-sharing agreements are in place to facilitate open and appropriate sharing of information to meet the objective of the meeting? Who owns the data following the discussion? Ideally processes in place for existing MAP meetings (or their equivalent) should suffice
- Communications: how will these meetings be communicated to the multi-agency partnership in a way that facilitates participation and information sharing?
- How will trend data identified across multiple HSB MAP meetings be fed into the MASE, Bronze/Gangs panel and any other key multi-agency operational groups concerned with violence and abuse between young people?

Interested in piloting this approach?

For those interested in piloting this model please contact danielle.fritz@beds.ac.uk to arrange a discussion with Carlene Firmin regarding a plan for setting up a pilot and monitoring delivery

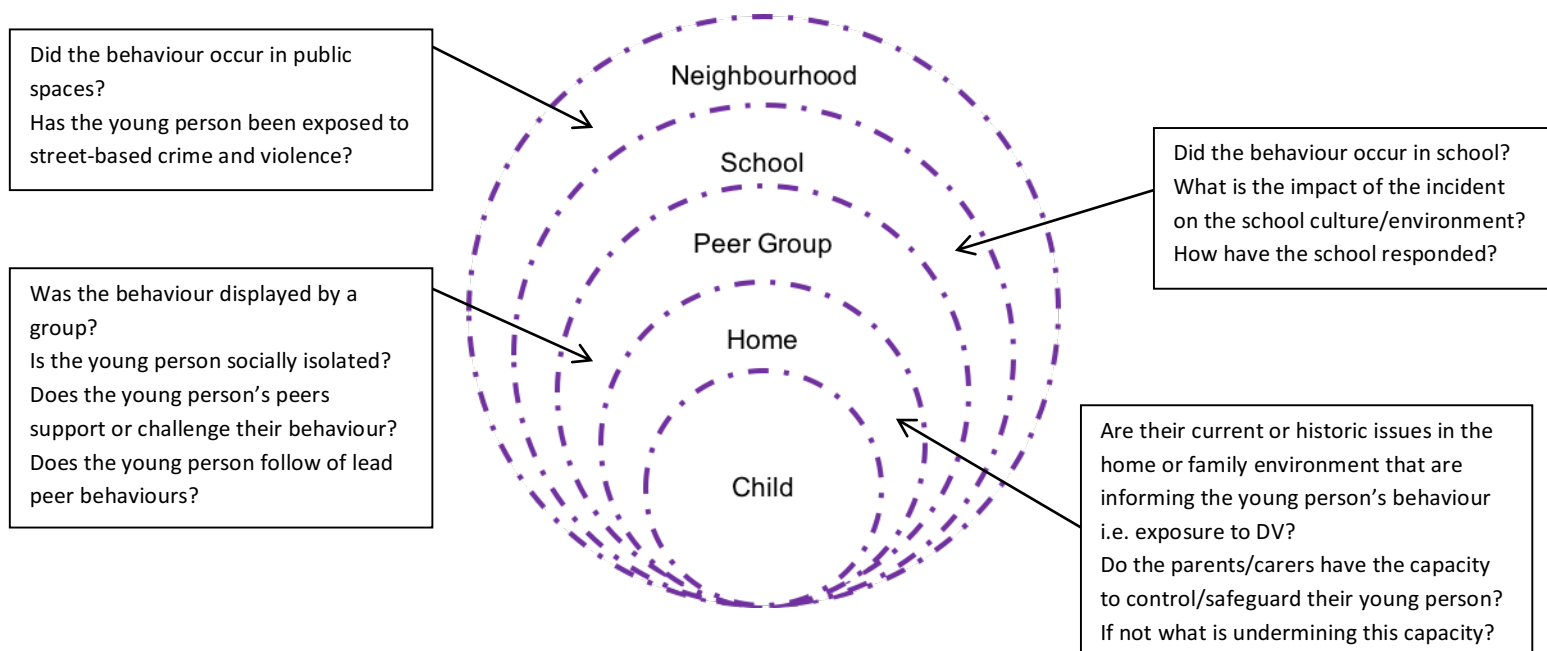
Appendix A- Hackett Continuum of Sexual Behaviours

Which point on this continuum best accounts for the young person's behaviours? When making the decision explicitly state the reason for the drawing this conclusion



Appendix 2: Firmin's Contextual Circles of Safeguarding

- In what ways are the: identified behaviours; risk/vulnerability/resilience factors; interventions associated to these different sites of adolescent socialisation?
- In what ways do these contexts interplay with one another in relation to the young person under discussion?
- Which contexts are most strongly associated to behaviours under consideration?



Appendix 3: University of Bedfordshire's Contextual Table for gathering information and planning (print on A3 paper for meetings)

Group or Sole Office:		Points for discussion / recording at HSB MAP meeting								
		Young person's current situation	Young person's HSB	Vulnerability factors	Risk factors	Resilience factors	Strengths	Professional involvement to date	Planned actions / interventions	Challenges / barriers to intervention
Individual and contextual factors to consider	Individual young person's characteristics									
	Family / Home(s) characteristics									
	Peer group(s)									
	School(s)									
	Neighbourhood spaces (specify)									
Contexts Summary										

Appendix 4: Risk, Resilience and Vulnerability Factors

When considering the factors below during a HSB meeting allocate them onto the table in Appendix 3 – which are factors that are part of the young person's engagement in the neighbourhood, which are peer-based factors and which for example are about their home or familial situation etc. Many are repeated in each section in the table below as some young people may, for example, encounter abuse and violence in their school whereas others may experience this at home

	Risk	Resilience	Vulnerability
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal diagnosis of Conduct Disorder or other formal mental health diagnosis • History of aggressive behavior • History of cruelty to animals • Socially and emotionally isolated • Disclosures made then withdrawn by subject or victim • Recruiting others into exploitative situations • Concerns raised regarding sexualised or sexually harmful behaviour during childhood Cold, callous attitude towards offending & appears to lack of empathy • Harmful/Oppressive attitudes towards young women, relationships and consent • Obsession/ pre-occupation with pornography • Evidence of sexual bullying and/or distributing sexually inappropriate images • Allegations have been made against them in respect of sexually harmful behaviour, including when NFA'd 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abusive behaviour appears to be peer influenced rather than led by young person • Abusive behaviour ceased when victim demonstrated non-compliance or distress • Accepts responsibility for the offence • Engages in positive talents and or leisure interests • Good negotiation/ problem solving skills • Developmentally appropriate level of sexual knowledge • Makes positive use of support network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsure about their sexual orientation or unable to disclose sexual orientation to their families or peers • Learning disabilities • Recent bereavement or loss • Low self-esteem or self-confidence • Experience of being bullied themselves and/ or coercion into bullying others • Alcohol and/ or substance misuse

	Risk	Resilience	Vulnerability
Familial / Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Witnessed domestic violence • Disclosures made then withdrawn by subject or victim • Recruiting others into exploitative situations • Concerns raised regarding sexualised or sexually harmful behaviour within family • Harmful/Oppressive attitudes towards young women, relationships and consent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to a positive relationship with at least one adult • The most significant adults in a young person's life demonstrate protective attitudes and behaviours • Makes positive use of support network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living in a chaotic or dysfunctional household • Experience of abuse or neglect • Gang association • Missing from home or care • Unsure about their sexual orientation or unable to disclose sexual orientation to their families or peers • Recent bereavement or loss • Bulling/ sexual bullying • Alcohol and/ or substance misuse
Peer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of aggressive behavior • Disclosures made then withdrawn by subject or victim • Recruiting others into exploitative situations • Concerns raised regarding sexualised or sexually harmful behaviour amongst peers • Harmful/Oppressive attitudes towards young women, relationships and consent • Obsession/ pre-occupation with pornography • Evidence of sexual bullying and/or distributing sexually inappropriate images 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abusive behaviour challenged by some peers • Developmentally appropriate level of sexual knowledge • Makes positive use of support network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of abuse or neglect • Gang association • Attending school or are friends with young people who are involved in sexually harmful behavior/ sexually exploited • Missing from home or care • Unsure about their sexual orientation or unable to disclose sexual orientation to their families • Recent bereavement • Bulling/ sexual bullying or loss • Alcohol and/ or substance misuse
School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disclosures made then withdrawn by subject or victim • Recruiting others into exploitative situations • Concerns raised regarding sexualised or sexually harmful behaviour within school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for extra-curricular and or leisure interests • Clear messaging about consent, relationships gender • Clearly applied bullying policies and procedures • Response to corridor cultures are 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of abuse or neglect • Gang association • Attending school or are friends with young people who are involved in sexually harmful behavior/ sexually exploited • Unsure about their sexual orientation or

	Risk	Resilience	Vulnerability
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harmful/Oppressive attitudes towards young women, relationships and consent • Evidence of sexual bullying and/or distributing sexually inappropriate images 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consistent • Access to a positive relationship with at least one adult • The most significant adults in a young person's life demonstrate protective attitudes and behaviours • Positive relationships with professionals • Makes positive use of support network – engaged in multi-agency partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unable to disclose sexual orientation to their families • Absent or exclusion from education or training • Missing from home or care • Bulling/ sexual bullying • Alcohol and/ or substance misuse
Neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disclosures made then withdrawn by subject or victim • Recruiting others into exploitative situations • Concerns raised regarding sexualised or sexually harmful behaviour within local areas where they spend their time • Harmful/Oppressive attitudes towards young women, relationships and consent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available extra-curricular and or leisure interests • Access to a consistent and positive relationship with at least one adult • The most significant adults in a young person's life demonstrate protective attitudes and behaviours • Positive relationships with professionals • Places for safe socialisation are available • Clear response to identified trends in crime and anti-social behaviour • Relevant neighbourhood partners engaged in response to emerging trends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of abuse or neglect • Gang association • Missing from home or care • Bulling/ sexual bullying • Alcohol and/ or substance misuse

APPENDIX M: ENGAGING WITH PEER GROUPS – INTRODUCTORY TRAINING SLIDES AND QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Supporting services develop peer-group responses to peer-on-peer abuse

These slides and notes can be used alongside the Introduction to Peer-On-Peer Abuse slides to provide a back-ground to the issue

1

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Initial reflections

Individually or within small groups, think about and discuss

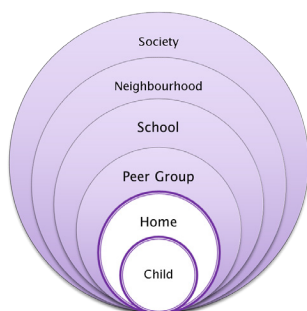
1) What impact does peer- on-peer abuse have on your work and the young people you work with, in particular think about the role that peer-groups play?

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Peer-groups and young people



3

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Peer-on-peer abuse: The role of peer-groups

Emerging evidence on the role of peer-groups in instances of peer-on-peer abuse

Review of 9 peer-on-peer abuse cases

- 3 murder cases
- 6 rape cases
- Identified 21 peer groups (Firmin 2015)

4

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“you wouldn’t have done this if you were on your own”

- Most consistently harmful environment (physically, emotionally and sexually abusive) in the cases reviewed
- Clear roles of ‘leaders’ and ‘followers’
- Dynamics of peer group informed ‘consent’ and ‘culpability’
- Pursuit of ‘hegemonically’ masculine ideals
- Harmful gender norms evident in 97% of peer-groups
- Some young people acted alternatively but attempts were unsuccessful
- Linked to other environments
- Violence way of gaining power

5

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How do we respond?

Reflecting on your individual role and the wider organisation, how are you currently able to **respond** to the impact that peer-on-peer abuse has on the young people you work with?

- 1) Identify strengths – what is being done well, what are you most confident in etc.
- 2) Identify challenges, what are you less confident in, what makes your role more difficult etc.

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Current peer-group responses

- Often lack of knowledge about peer-groups
- Across all services focus is on individual interventions
- Peer-group analysis is not followed up with peer-group interventions
- Huge gap in research and knowledge into work with peer-groups, particularly around harmful sexual behaviour

7

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Doing it differently ..

Thinking about what we have discussed

- What ideas do you have to develop support for young people and staff
- What changes would you like to see
- Skills/knowledge/support
- Involvement in young people
- Links to other services

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APPENDIX N: PEER-ON-PEER ABUSE TRAIN-THE-TRAINER SITE SLIDES



Peer-on-peer abuse Train-the-Trainer programme
Session 1

Dr Carlene Firmin MBE
 @carlenefirmin



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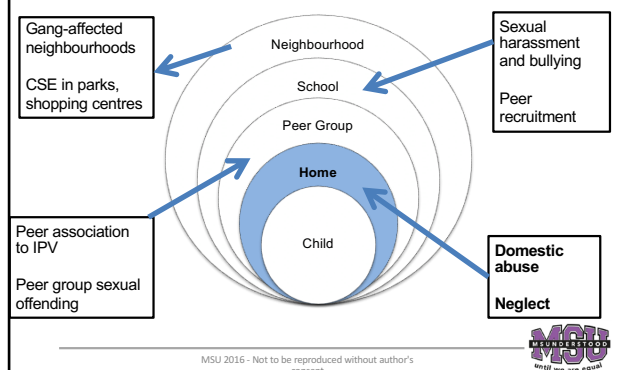
Session 1: A contextual account of peer-on-peer abuse

1. Provide research and evidence into contextual associations (domestic abuse and neglect at home, peer group influence, school and community cultures) and theoretical framework
2. Develop case study activity and identify additional resources that would be required
3. Explore/identify the ways in which the issues of CSE, serious youth violence, harmful sexual behaviour, domestic abuse and missing are linked

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Implied association to context



Homes (1)

- A significant minority of young people who have abused, and been abused by, have been exposed to domestic abuse between parents and carers (Boswell 2006, Catch 22 2013, Gadd, et al. 2013, Hackett, Phillips, et al. 2013).
- Studies comparing young people who have been exposed to violence between carers and those who have not have found 'increased adolescent aggressive behaviour' in the former cohort (Herrera & Stuewig, 2011).
- Social learning theory : exposed to in family and repeated amongst peers (Losel and Bender 2006).
- Impact on young people's ability to experience empathy (Herrera & Stuewig, 2011)
- Boundary setting and neglect (Barter et al., 2009; Catch 22, 2013; Letourneau et al., 2009)
- Harmful gender norms or normalising attitudes amongst parents and carers
- Linked to missing episodes and home not acting as a protective factor (Firmin, 2015)
- Many of these outcomes can be mediated or aggravated by additional individual and environmental factors.

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Homes (2)

- Sibling association to involvement in peer-on-peer abuse (Catch 22, 2013; Firmin, 2011; Hagell & Jeyarajah-Dent, 2006; Khan, et al., 2013), from introductions/pathways, co-offending
- Undermining of parental capacity: (Catch 22, 2013; Hackett, et al., 2013; Losel & Bender, 2006; Nieuwbeerta & van der Laan, 2006; D'Arcy et al., 2015)

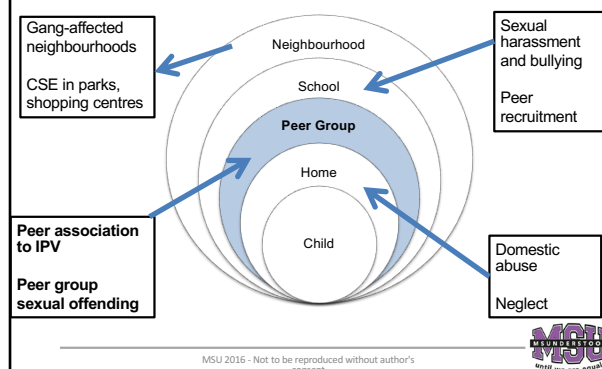
Mother stated that 'there were things going on in Sara world that she did not have access to' ... She described that Sara was 'being controlled by others who were more powerful' than her mother.

Sean's mother had reported that her son's behaviour was 'out of control' a year before ... Sean's mother had called the police to report her son missing stating that she was struggling to manage his behaviour and that he was returning home with unexplained amounts of money and would pack a bag and stay with friends

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Implied association to context



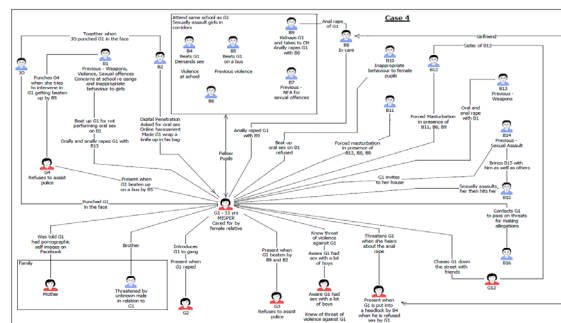
Peer Groups (1)

- A large amount of peer-on-peer abuse is instigated by, or associated to, peer groups (Cialdini & Trost, 1998; Cowie, 2011; Warr, 2002; Zimring, 1998).
- Particular to adolescent development (Frosh, et al., 2002; Gardner and Steinberg, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2012)
- Aggravating nature of peer presence (Franklin, 2004; Lambine, 2013; Woodhams, 2013)
- Peer normalisation and links to relationship abuse (Barter et al. 2009; Corr, 2013)
- Peer group dynamics: leaders, followers and bystanders (Firmin, 2015; Horvath and Woodhams, 2013; Lambine, 2013; Pitts, 2008) and complexity of power
- Impact on parenting capacity (Catch 22, 2013; Firmin, 2015)
- Bystander intervention (Cossar et al., 2013; Cowie, 2011; Firmin, 2015; Powell, 2013)

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Peer Groups (2)

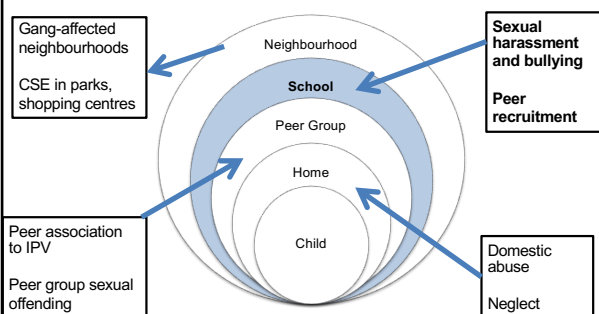


(Firmin, 2015)

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Implied association to context



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Educational Establishments

- Sites of social development for young people (Cowie, 2011; Frosh, et al., 2002; Jenks, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2012)
- Schools as locations of peer-on-peer abuse – physical, sexual and emotional bullying (Frosh, et al., 2002; Ringrose et al., 2011; Squires & Goldsmith, 2011).
- Inappropriate responses and facilitation of abusive norms (Cowie, 2011; Firmin, 2015; GirlGuiding UK, 2014)

School moves Susan to another part of the school to avoid contact with the boy ...Susan is having 'problems' with another girl her class – school change Susan's timetable so that she is not in class with this girl. ...In the New Year staff log that Susan has been threatened by someone from a different school...school assign a mentor to Susan – the following week Susan is recorded as making 'rude and offensive comments during mentoring time, threatening a member of staff' – school gives a fixed term 3 day exclusion. (Case 4) (Bold added by author)

- Inconsistency resulting from a lack of whole school approaches (AVA, 2016; EVAW, 2010; The Bristol Ideal, 2012)

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Educational establishments (2)

- Harmful gender stereotypes and sexual harassment (Firmin, 2015; Frosh, et al., 2002; GirlGuiding UK, 2014; Institute of Physics, 2015; Light, 2007; Ringrose & Renold, 2011)

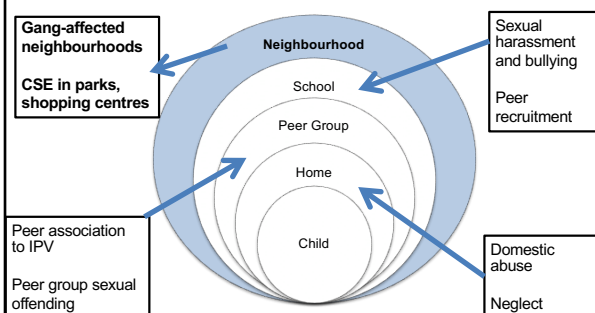
There is some boys in the school that like keep asking me to have sex with them and I am just like "no", like on a daily basis...like they will walk around school and try dragging me into corners and feel me up and everything and it's just irritating because they don't understand. (Barter, et al. 2009:110)

Sam and Jeff used to touch Rema regularly during the day as they were all attending the same school.... The boys would also grab the girls in the corridors and simulate the 'dagging' dance move on them. (Sexual harassment of students in school of Rema, Case 4 from Firmin, 2015)

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Implied association to context



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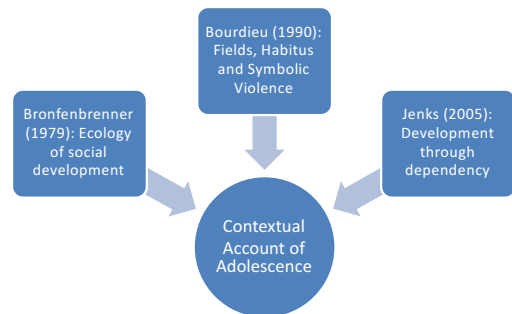
Neighbourhoods

- Street as a site of adolescent socialisation in many Western social contexts (Catch 22, 2013; Finkelhor, et al., 2009; Jenks, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2012; Skelton & Valentine, 1998; Squires & Goldsmith, 2011)
- Young men's gendered experiences of street-based victimisation (Anderson, 1999; Beckett, et al., 2013; Hallsworth & Young, 2011; Pitts, 2008) – exemplified by Crime Survey Data
- Gang-associated and serious youth violence routinely associated with neighbourhood-based risk and criminality
- Street based sexual harassment (Bates, 2014; Coffey, 2014)
- CSE associated to public space environments (parks, disused garages, high streets) (D'Arcy, Dhaliwal and Thomas, 2015 Jay, 2014)

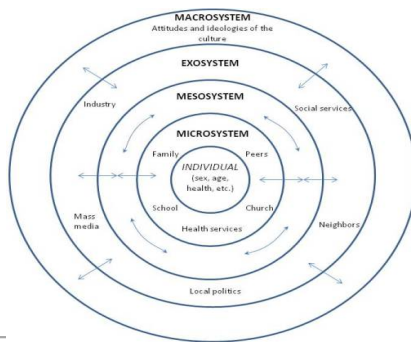
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A Theoretical Framework



Bronfenbrenner – Social Ecological Theory



Bourdieu – Constructivist Structuralism

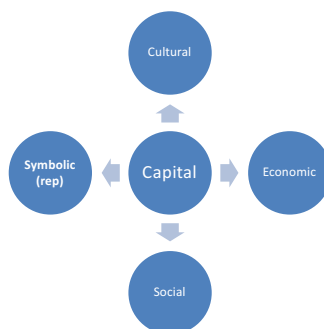
Development of Bronfenbrenner's mesosystem

Three key concepts:

- Social fields (structures): the rules (doxa) of the environment
- Habitus (agency): an individual's feel for the rules
- Symbolic violence: engagement in that which is detrimental



Social Fields, Status and Symbolic Violence



Pursuit for status means that individuals will engage with that which harms them in order to maintain status quo and achieve status



Symbolic Violence

*Because the foundation of symbolic violence lies not in mystified consciousness that only need to be enlightened but in dispositions attuned to the structure of domination of which they are the produce, the relation of complicity that the victims of symbolic domination grant to the dominant can only be broke through a **radical transformation of the social conditions of production** of the dispositions that lead the dominated to take the point of view of the dominant on the dominant themselves. (Bourdieu, 2001:41-42)*

Learning about healthy relationships while being surrounded by harmful ones



Habitus – agents not subjects

- Active, not puppets
- ‘Generative’ capacity
- Potential to act differently through active engagement in alternative social field
- Social rules may be ‘entrenched but not unsurpassable’ (McNay 2003,97)



Embodiment: Tennis player example

You need only think of the impulsive choice made by the tennis player who runs up to the net, to understand that it has nothing to in common with the learned construction that the coach, after analysis, draws up in order to explain it and deduce communicable lessons from it. The conditions of rational calculation are practically never given in practice (Bourdieu 1990, 11)



Constructivist Structuralism – Interplay

- Embodying social rules actively engaged in constructing the social field
- Active two-way relationship - reflexive
- Multiple engagement in multiple fields – limited by their field of influence
- Query – who are the agents engaged in interplay (public, peers, professionals etc)



Jenks: Development through Dependency

Instead of asking ‘Why is my child a heroin addict? What went wrong in his or her development’ we should, from a sociological perspective, be asking ‘What is it about this free, liberal, advanced, technological democracy that makes heroin a desirable, alternative possible course of action?’ Development through dependency then becomes an instrument in the process of social and cultural reproduction. (Jenks, 2005:40)



Contextual Framework for Adolescence

In relation to young people’s experiences of abuse and vulnerability:

1. Young people develop within a range of social systems
2. Social systems interplay with one another
3. Young people construct, and are constructed by, social systems
4. Young people embody rules of social systems and engage in harmful norms in the absence of alternative systems
5. Young people are dependent upon those who run/manage social systems, as well as their peers, for their social development



Applied to the literature

- Local crime and violence will inform the association of familial characteristics to peer-on-peer abuse (Aisenberg & Herrenkohl, 2008; Losel & Bender, 2006), and the same can be said for schools (Squires & Goldsmith, 2011)
- The nature of home environments can increase the likelihood of peer or street influence/dependence (Firmin, 2015, Warr, 2002)
- The nature of school environments can inform peer group norms and the extent to which harmful behaviours can be challenged (Cowie, 2011), as well as enabling/discouraging bystander intervention
- Young people, adults, professionals, public are ALL AGENTS in this process

And so on.....

(Next time we will apply this framework to responses)



Exploring these dynamics through the case study resources

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Initial feedback on the cases

1. What were your initial thoughts about the cases – what stood out to you?
2. Do you have any questions about the case content?
3. Have you come across anything similar?

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Original Exercise

STAGE 1) Introduce the case

STAGE 2) Introduce the strips

STAGE 3) Introduce assessment and intervention sheets

STAGE 4) Build case – context by context – leaving time for reflection, review and decision-making

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Alternative Exercise

What else could you do with these cases?

What else could you do with the original exercise?

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Overlapping Issues

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How did they overlap in the cases?

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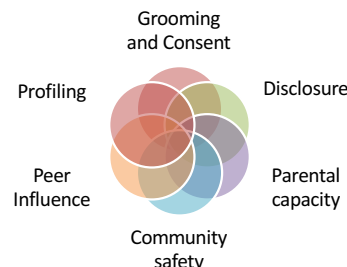


In what ways are they different?

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Factors that connect...



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Next Session

Preparation

- Present ideas for using the case differently – and for how you could include them in your current training with reference to current RESPONSES in Bucks?

Content

- Case file exercise presentations
- Research evidence on young people who abuse peers (physically, sexually and emotionally)
- Hackett continuum, Brook and other tools to identify abusive behaviours
- Evidence on interventions – approaches that practitioners can take beyond referrals

Resources to come

- Quotes from young people for each context
- Key statistics

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Peer-on-peer abuse Train-the-Trainer programme Session 2

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Session 1 Recap: A contextual account of peer-on-peer abuse

1. Explored the research evidence around the different contexts associated to peer-on-peer abuse...
2. Outlined the theoretical positions of Bronfenbrenner, Bourdieu and Jenks to develop a framework for understanding the literature....
3. Began to apply this learning to how we assess and intervene with cases – using case study methodology

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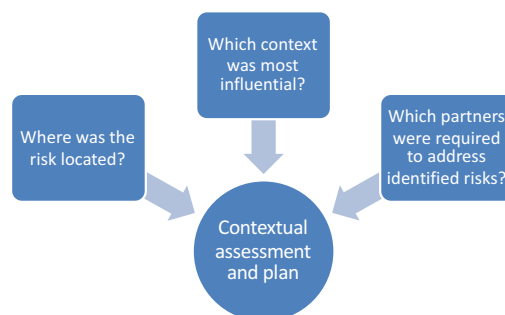
Session 2: Outline

1. Applying the learning to cases: what does this mean for assessment and intervention planning
2. Adapting the exercise in your training and consultancy activities
3. Identifying overlap and distinctions between different forms of peer-on-peer abuse
4. Evidence base on young people who abuse their peers

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Intervention and Assessment in Cases



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Alternative Exercise

What else could you do with these cases?

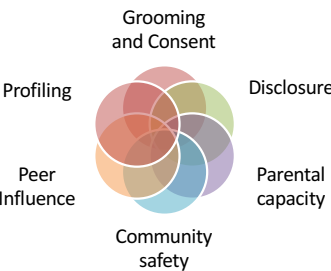
What else could you do with the original exercise?

Overlapping Issues

How did they overlap in the cases?

In what ways are they different?

Factors that connect...



Evidence on young people who abuse their peers

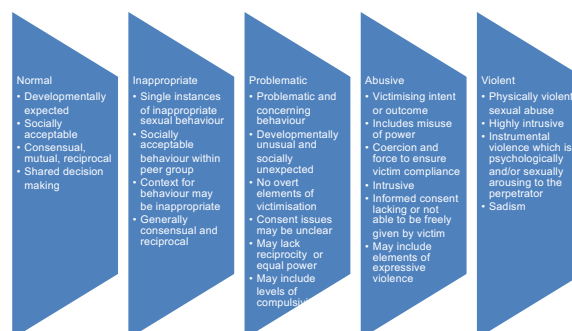
Language and terminology

- Domestic abuse perpetrator
- Instigator
- Recruiter
- Juvenile sex offender
- Young people with harmful sexual behaviours
- Gang member or associate
- Suspect

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Behaviours (1) (Hackett, 2011)



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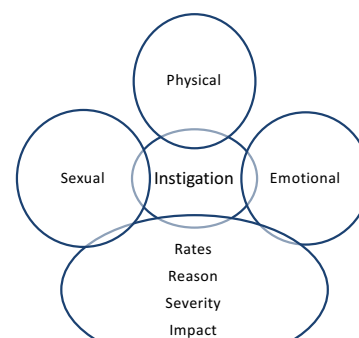
Behaviours (2) (Brook Traffic Light)



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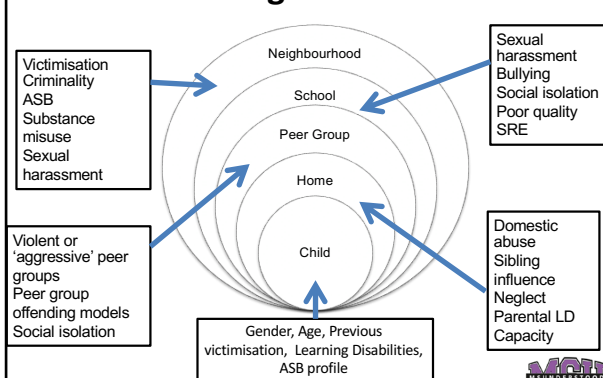
Behaviours (3) (Barter, 2009)



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Returning to the circles



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Key Authors

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- Batchelor (2005)
- Beckett et al. (2013)
- Beckett and Gerhold (2003)
- Bijleveld et al. (2007)
- Chung (2005)
- Finkelhor et al. (2009)
- Franklin (2004)
- Gadd et al. (2013)
- Hackett (2014)
- Hackett et al. (2013)
- Letourneau (2008) (2009)

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Findings related to the ‘suspects’ in the study

Categorisation of young people	Frequency	Percent
Complainant	9	6.2
Suspect	76	52.4
Witness	45	31.0
Other	15	10.3
Total	145	100.0



Individual demographics

- Predominantly young men: 92%
- Aged: 40% aged 13 – 14 (slightly older than complainants)
- Ethnicity: recorded for 69, over 90% BME (although similar to complainants)
- Disability: 2 x learning disability
- Care status: 7 x looked after young people
- 15% were bereaved
- 75% were recorded as ‘truanting’
- 33% were identified as misusing substances
- 5% were recorded as suicidal (although data was missing for 20% of young people)
- Previous victimisation: Physical (76%), Emotional (89.5%), Sexual (2.6%)
- Previous offending: 68% NFA, 42% conviction, and 56% in school environment.
- Missing: frequency and length of time



4B3 went missing for a week and stated that he had taken £40 which had got him food for the week; reported missing again nine months later. (Case 4, intermittent report of missing episodes)

9B3 went missing for three days after an arrest for affray, following a stop and search...The missing report states that 9B3 returned at approximately 23:00 and was banging on the door to be let in, but his mother refused to open the door because it was late – she knew he had lost his key. He then went missing again and didn’t arrive at education, and neither did many of his friends, the following day. (Case 9)

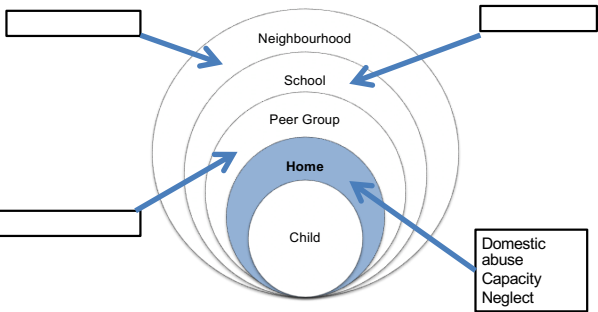


[Female] followed home by a group of males. They pushed her up against a wall and put their hands up her skirt, touching her vagina. They stopped when they realised she was crying. (Case 7, a suspect a year prior to the murder)

During a (social media) conversation 5B1 asked a young woman for sex, she refused so he asked her to strip and threatened to show people (at their school) their conversation if she didn’t. She stripped naked for him. A few weeks later she stripped again after he blackmailed her into giving him money in order to leave her alone. (Suspect in Case 5 in the months prior to the rape in question)



Implied association to context



Home environments

- Harm identified (42%)
- Domestic abuse (24%)
- Intra-familial CP issues (24%)
- Other safeguarding concerns (30%)
- Capacity to safeguard (46%)
- Help-seeking (25%)

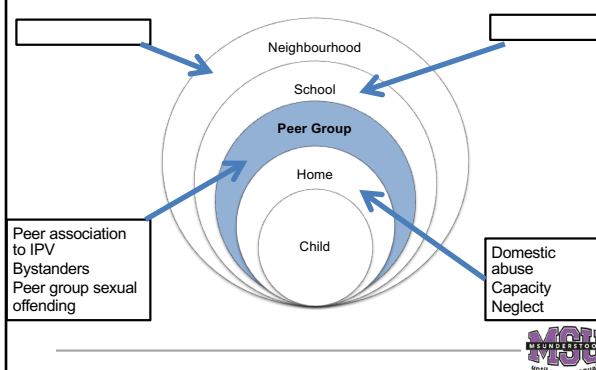


6B1 mother came into the school stating that she was concerned about 6B1 'behaviour and attitude at home' (when he was 13)... '6B1 does not do as asked at home. Switches his mobile off so he does not have to speak to parent.' (Case 6, suspect's parent)

3G14 Mother had threatened to kill herself and her father had also threatened to kill himself on separate incidents. (Case 3, parents of lead suspect)



Implied association to context



Peer Groups

- Provided a conducive context for rape in all six cases
- 16% (n=20) adopted a leadership role (primarily through participation)
- 5 of 6 cases leaders also abused alone, followers did not
- Role shift (14%F, 6%B)
- Exposure to harm in peer group - 8 out of 9 cases, including routine physical violence
- Other criminal behaviours – 79%
- Hosting intimate relationship abuse
- Harmful gender norms – 97%
- Positive bystander intervention 35% - two in ten suspects of peers



Suspects assisted one another in sexually harming the complainant e.g. holding the head of the victim while another suspect orally rapes her...Suspects directed one another about how they should harm the victim...Harmful gender stereotypes were stated out loud during the assault

One suspect had no recorded offences in his history and yet committed a serious sexual offence when initiated by two of his peers...Two suspects told a third when join in the assault and when to stop. Two suspects held the complainant down while a third assaulted her

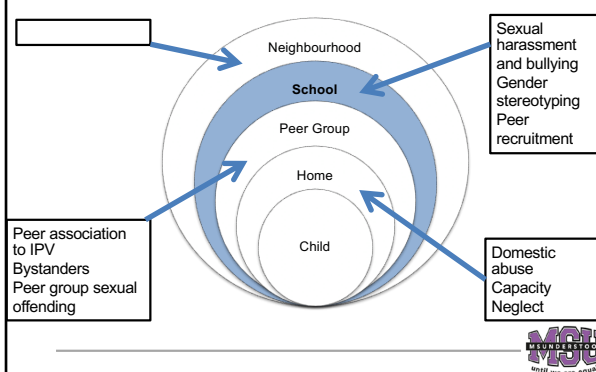
Suspects had sexually harmed and assaulted young women together...Suspects reassured one another and blamed the complainant



Abuse Type	% Role during the offence			
	Leader (n=20)	Follower (n=52)	Bystander+ (n=31)	Bystander- (n=20)
Domestic Abuse	40.0	15.4	12.9	5.0
Child Protection	40.0	19.3	12.9	10.0
Capacity to parent	75.0	40.4	19.4	10.0



Implied association to context



Schools

- At least 47% of suspects had committed offences in school prior to the abusive incident
- Five of a 6 cases suspects sexually harassing young people in school
- Five out of six cases suspects physically assaulted in school (and in seven cases threatened by older students)
- Prevalence of bullying and emotional abuse
- Wider student and staff attitudes



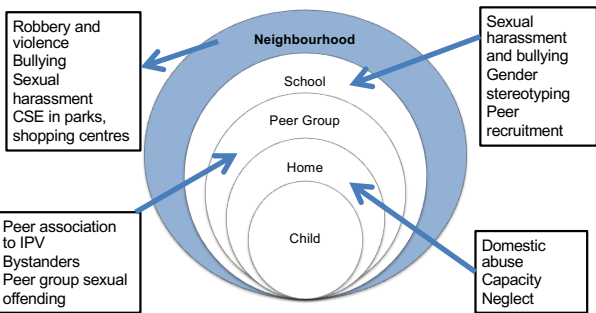
On record as having told a girl ‘I will rape you’, forced the head of another girl towards his groin area, and another allegation of indecent exposure. (Case 3)

After a few minutes he stopped and left 6G1 there. She put her clothes back on and went to join her friends. Later that day boys in the school started shouting ‘sket’ at her. (Case 6)

Following the witnessing of a physical assault on a female student, 6B1 is ‘spoken to’ and staff note that he is ‘already on a red report from the head teacher’. The girl (6G6) has informed the teacher that he had done this before and that he is in a local gang. (Case 6, bold added by author)



Implied association to context



Neighbourhood

- 75% encountered harm in their neighbourhood of which
- 95% experienced or were exposed to physical harm
 - 84% were exposed to harmful sexual behaviours
 - all came into contact with criminal activity in that field.
 - 95% fearful in local area
- Timeframe difference to complainants and witnesses



2B3 was stood at a bus stop when he was approached by a group of 20 males. They showed him a picture of his (social media) page and stated that they knew he was from another area. One of the males took a knife from his back pocket and put it up his sleeve. Another male also had a knife. 2B3 ran from the stop into a shop and was chased by the group who then waited for him outside. (Case 2, rape) (8B1 was) surrounded by a group of males and had his bag poked by a sharp implement. He was patted down and slapped around the head. (On another occasion) searched by a lone male and had his phone taken. (Case 8, murder)



Gaps in evidence base

- Difference between group and sole perpetration
- Difference between those who abuse younger children and those who abuse peers
- Comparators of those involved in physical and sexual peer victimisation
- Contextual interventions that have been subject to evaluation and review

BUT: enough to consider implications for intervention



Next Session

Preparation

- Prepare a training content that includes learning from the session and/or a case study activity

Content

- Evidence on interventions – approaches that practitioners can take beyond referrals
 - ✓ CP Processes – genograms and peer group maps
 - ✓ Principles of MST
 - ✓ Bystander intervention
 - ✓ Co-managed cases
 - ✓ Trauma-informed practice and attachment
 - ✓ Whole-school approaches
 - ✓ Place-based approaches
- Equalities

Resources to come

- Quotes from young people for each context
- Key statistics

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Peer-on-peer abuse Train-the-Trainer programme Session 3

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Session 2 Recap

1. Applied learning from cases to assessment planning
2. Identified initial ways to embed messages and case resources into existing training / consultancy
3. Identified where peer-on-peer abuse siloes overlap and where they are distinct (processes vs. experiences)
4. Evidence base on young people who abuse their peers

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Session 3: Outline

- Preparing session content – incorporating lessons from the sessions
- Research on interventions
 - ✓ Principles of MST
 - ✓ CP Processes – genograms and peer group maps
 - ✓ Bystander intervention
 - ✓ Co-managed cases
 - ✓ Trauma-informed practice and attachment
 - ✓ Whole-school approaches
 - ✓ Place-based approaches
- Mapping Bucks Interventions against contexts



Incorporating learning into existing training



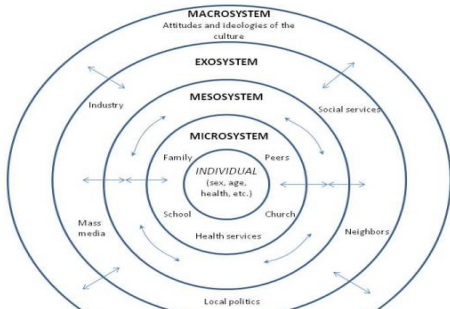
Interventions – the Research



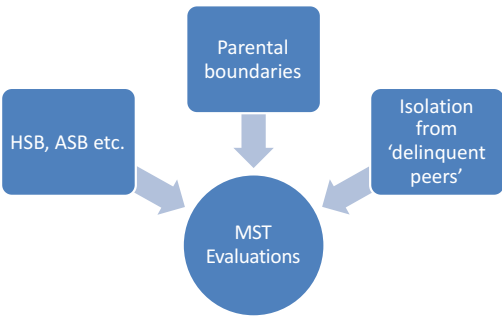
Creating social conditions for alternative action



Principles of MST (1)



Principles of MST (2)



Child Protection Processes (SCR)

Children Acts 1989 and 2004

- Statutory duty to protect young people from risk of significant harm
- What is significant harm:
Any physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, neglect, accident or injury that is sufficiently serious to adversely affect progress and enjoyment of life. Harm is defined as the ill treatment or impairment of health and development.

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Child Protection Processes (2)

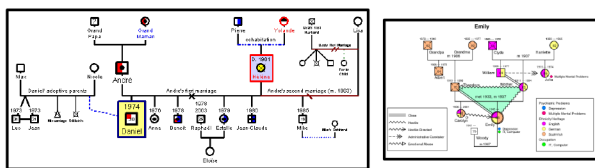
Key components of the legislative framework:

- Harm caused by the parent/carer
OR
- Capacity of parents to safeguard young people from significant harm
- Processes in place to respond – S.17 (Child in Need), S.47 (Child Protection)
- Case conferencing and child protection plan
- Legal removal of the child or placement on voluntary agreement

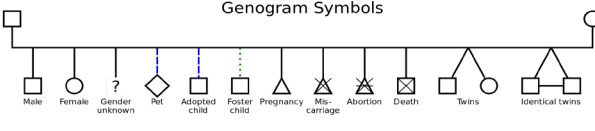
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Child Protection Processes (3)



Genogram Symbols



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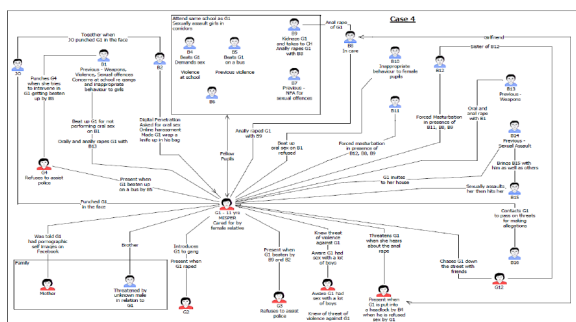


Transferring Approaches

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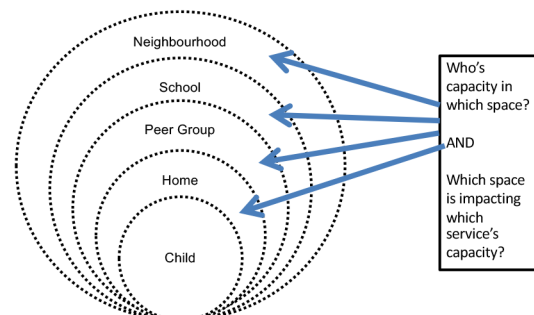
Transfer (1) – Genos to Peers



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Transfer (2) – Capacity to Safeguard

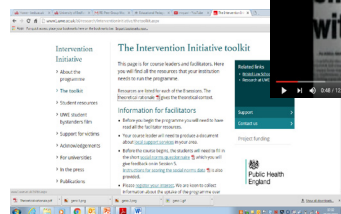


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Bystander approaches

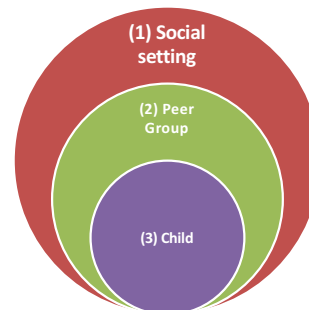
GET SAVI
Students Against Violence Initiative



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Bystander approaches (2)



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Co-Managing Cases

Examples from:

- CAMHS within alternative educational provision
- YOS and R U Safe Provision (learning from case review)

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Trauma-Informed Practice

Any event that overwhelms a person's capacity for positive coping

"exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence in one (or more) of the following ways:

1. Directly experiencing the traumatic event(s)
2. Witnessing, in person, the event(s) as it occurred to others
3. Learning that the traumatic event(s) occurred to a close family member or close friend; in cases of actual or threatened death of a family member or friend, the event(s) must have been violent or accidental;
4. Experiencing repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details of the traumatic event(s), (e.g., first responders collecting human remains; police officers repeatedly exposed to details of child abuse).

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Trauma-Informed Practice (2)

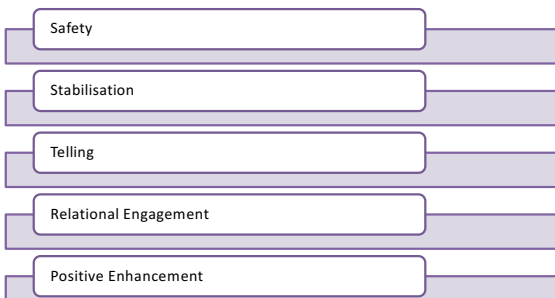
The Five Core Values of Trauma-Informed (one interpretation)

- Safety: ensuring that the young person feels physically and emotionally safe
- Trustworthiness: young people know that that providers and practitioners will ensure that expectations are clear and consistent and that appropriate boundaries (especially interpersonal ones) are maintained
- Choice: preferences of young people are taken into consideration
- Collaboration: input from young people will be considered in practices and decisions.
- Empowerment: services are developed and delivered to maximise young people's empowerment

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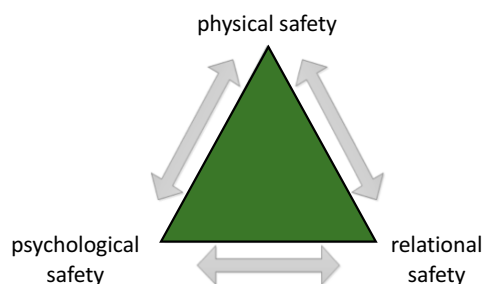
Trauma-Informed Practice (3)



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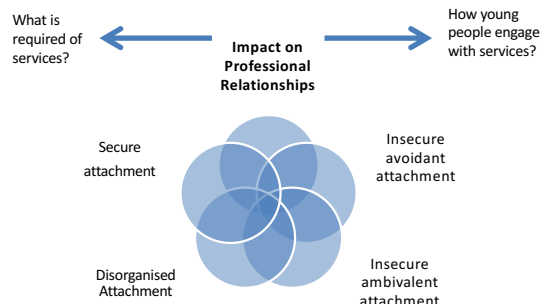
Consideration during placement



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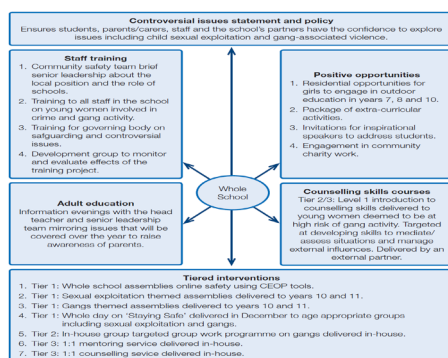
Theories of Attachment



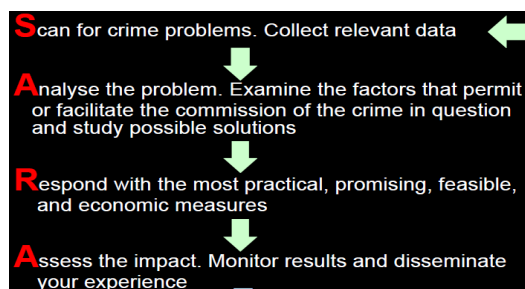
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Whole-School Approaches (Handout A)



Place-Based Approaches and Situational Prevention (Wortley)



Realised through the contextual approaches in sites

Fair Access Panel

- PRU's that are identified as places that can hold very vulnerable young people
- Fair access panel referral from altered to capture contextual information
- Fair access panel forms analysed to identify trends and ongoing issues within schools
- LA and partners monitor referrals and the PRU do not accept all young people based on judgements regarding vulnerability
- Assessment with referral in context

Consistent processes for NFA referrals

- Sites with majority or significant minority of MASE referrals peer-on-peer
- All YP featured in peer-on-peer referrals subjected to MAP meeting
- Twin processes run for identified suspects and complainants
- Review of peer connections and behaviours against Hackett spectrum
- Intervention designed against contextual model



Site work (2) (Handout B)

	Factors for discussion / recording in risk assessment meeting						
	Young person's current situation	Young person's MASE	Vulnerability factors	Risk factors	Resilience factors	Strengths	Professional involvement to date
Individual young person's characteristics							
Family / Home / Peer characteristics							
Peer group(s)							
School(s)							
Neighbourhood / Area (locality)							
Planned actions / interventions							

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Next Steps

- Maintain the group / network – lead identified?
- Join the practitioners network – a route to monitor implementation and gather more resources
- Embedding into existing training sessions
- Embedding into case consultancy
- Informing multi-agency discussion
- Informing quality assurance
- Informing policies



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Practitioner Briefing #5:

The role of detached youth work in creating safety for young people in public spaces

Danielle Fritz

with Dr. Paul Olaitan and Dr. Carlene Firmin

MsUnderstood Partnership (2016)



Young people's perspectives on detached youth work

'It doesn't have to be the whole world telling you, but if someone...come[s] out of nowhere trying to help you change this and say, "Yo, you can do something good" – that little piece of comfort can help you mentally as well. And you could be like, "You know what, cool, let me try again"'. (Young man)

'With the youth worker you can tell them, like, most things and they will actually help. They will actually act on it.' (Young woman)

'[The detached youth workers will] speak to you in a reasonable way – they'll chat to you and be like, "Yo, why'd you do that? These are your consequences now". But for someone to come up to the circle and be like – expect they know you from the system – Nah, don't do that. I don't know you. Nah, stay in your league... For [the detached youth workers] to come and speak to me – it's not like they're disrespecting me. There is privacy... Obviously, you think eventually when you're by yourself, "you know what, yea. I shouldn't have done that." Not everyone is bad in these estates. It's the choices we do, innit. Certain choices are good, certain choices 'aint good. No one's perfect. But obviously that's where they come in – they help us a little bit and they can talk to us like that'. (Young man)

Introduction

This briefing paper discusses the benefits and limitations of detached youth work provision in creating safety for young people in public spaces. It forms part of a programme of work by the MsUnderstood Partnership to assist the development of local responses to peer-on-peer abuse. The briefing considers unique features of detached youth work; whether workers enhance young people's safety in public spaces and transform the spaces themselves; factors that constrain the impact of detached youth work; and implications of the findings on safeguarding and commissioning.

Background

Young people experience peer-on-peer abuse in a range of social environments. As children move into adolescence, they spend more time socialising with peers, at school and in public spaces. Within these contexts, young people may encounter healthy norms that promote pro-social relationships or they may encounter harmful norms that are conducive to abusive and exploitative relationships (Firmin, 2016). Local responses need to identify, assess, and intervene in all of the social environments where peer-on-peer abuse occurs – in essence to take a 'contextual' approach to the phenomenon.

Detached youth work is one method of engaging with and intervening in young people's social environments. While detached youth work has changed over time and according to local contexts, it may broadly be defined as a type of youth work provision that delivers informal education to young people on their own terms and in spaces of their choosing. Detached youth workers develop relationships with young people over time and then work with them around a range of issues, such as employment and education, youth violence and child sexual exploitation. Detached youth work itself becomes one of the social fields around young people (Van de Walle et al, 2011).

Methodology

Over a six-month period, researchers observed detached youth work sessions and conducted focus groups in two London boroughs. In total, researchers observed eight sessions, conducted two focus groups with detached youth workers, two focus groups with young people, and two focus groups with multi-agency partners. Preliminary findings of the study were presented to and discussed by youth workers from six London boroughs during a roundtable discussion held in May 2016. Fieldwork data was then qualitatively coded and analysed using NVivo 11 software.

Features of Detached Youth Work

Participants in focus groups identified the following as crucial to detached workers' engagement with young people: working in locations of young people's choosing; and building relationships.

Location

Detached youth workers engage directly in young people's social spaces: estates, parks, shopping centres, and other places where young people socialise. Engaging with young people in these spaces reverses the typical power dynamic between young people and professionals. Within offices and buildings, professionals are in positions of authority, whereas detached youth workers must negotiate relationships on young people's terms. By maintaining a consistent and long-term presence in an area, young people begin to trust detached workers. Detached workers are then able to witness young people interacting in peer groups and understand the power dynamics within these groups in the localities in which they form. Workers come to understand the contexts in which young people live, allowing them to empathise with young people's realities (Lavie-Ajayi, 2013).

'When you're walking the streets and getting to know the neighbourhood and seeing deprivation, or you're seeing the vandalism or whatever, then when young people are talking to you about their area, you know what that means - you know that the shop down the road has been closed and looks awful, and the rubbish is out there, and it's shit, and the door doesn't work. You understand that'. (Detached youth worker)

'I always say it, when I go to the areas I work in, I can taste it, I can feel it, I can smell what's going on in that area. I put a foot on that pavement and I can feel, I can sense ... I have a good empathy and understanding of what's life like in that particular area on a day-to-day basis'. (Detached youth worker)

Relationship building

Detached youth workers must establish relationships before starting programmes of work with young people. In addition to maintaining a physical presence within an area, participants in focus groups identified the following as important to relationship building:

- Time: Detached youth workers often need time (months to years) to establish themselves as trustworthy and capable in the eyes of young people and their wider peer networks;
- Lack of an obvious agenda: Detached workers do not approach young people with an articulated agenda. The work is led by and developed with young people, which contrasts with young people's experiences of other services;
- Voluntary engagement: Young people choose to engage with detached workers – it is not imposed on them by a statutory service or court.

'It's because we've got a certain level of trust that I can have the confidence to tell them things. But if they came up to me and kept asking questions and nagging me like social workers... But again, that comes through the years. It don't just come straightaway. Like they've been there since we were little'. (Young man)

'Because S. acts like our friend so we feel like we can tell her more things by her doing that'. (Young woman)

Detached youth workers also form relationships with peer groups and community members surrounding individual young people. During focus groups, detached youth workers described the process of slowly establishing a presence in an area over months. To establish a relationship with the wider community, workers often reach out to shopkeepers and other local business owners, older members of the community, professionals working within educational settings, family members of young people and, sometimes, older gang members. In other words, detached youth workers form relationships with contexts as well as individual young people.

Creating Safety in Public Spaces

Once detached workers establish relationships with young people and their peer groups, they are adept at then enhancing the safety of young people within risky environments. In some circumstances, they are able to improve the safety of the risky contexts themselves. As conceived within this briefing, ‘safety’ refers to a young person’s physical, relational and psychological safety (Shuker, 2013). Detached youth workers help create safety for and around young people by:

- Challenging behaviour and attitudes through dialogue;
- Building resilience to risk and creating safety plans;
- Identifying opportunities to disengage from risky or harmful behaviours; and
- In some circumstances, transforming the risky context itself

Building resilience to risk and creating safety plans

Detached workers encourage young people to think about their own safety in different environments. Although detached workers are engaging young people within their peer groups and neighbourhoods, efforts to build resilience tend to focus on an *individual’s* resilience to risk. In practice, this could look like a discussion between a worker and a young person in which they discuss and agree upon measures for staying safe in different situations. Other times, discussions around safety may arise during planned activities. One detached worker described the activities they run as the ‘carrot’ that attracts young people to the sessions. During the sessions, workers can begin to address some of the issues that place young people at risk.

‘She kinda like helps us be safe. She tells us what to do in case anything happens. She gives us an idea of what to do in that situation’. (Young woman)

Challenging behaviour and attitudes through dialogue

Detached workers engage young people in a range of discussions around issues of personal safety, risky behaviours and attitudes that promote harmful or risky behaviours. Workers may engage young people within peer groups or have side conversations with individuals—the interactions are often fluid. Young people are able to express their opinions and discuss their actions without fear of judgment. In turn, workers challenge young people, offering

them opportunities to critically interrogate their actions and opinions in an open environment, often within peer groups.

During one session, for example, researchers observed how the detached worker challenged the use of harmful language within a peer group. A young person would select a song to play and if a member of the group pointed out a lyric that promoted harmful stereotypes, then the group member who identified the lyric could put on a song of his choosing. Within the context of the youth work session, young people were able to practice and experience alternative ways of thinking and acting.

Opportunities to disengage from risky or harmful behaviours and contexts

Detached workers help young people exit risky environments by encouraging them to access other forms of support and opportunities. Detached workers in focus groups explained that stigmas around services like social care and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) often prevent young people from seeking support they are entitled to. Young people were more willing to engage with a service if recommended by their youth worker because of the trust in their relationship.

Transforming Contexts

Youth workers' presence itself can create a temporary sense of safety for young people and their peer groups in public spaces. Detached youth workers create safe social environments in which young people can engage in alternative ways of thinking and acting. In one borough, for example, workers brought young people from neighbourhoods in conflict together for a mechanics programme. Through the sessions, workers also engaged the young people in thinking around conflict resolution. While the mechanics programme did not resolve inter-neighbourhood tensions, it provided young people an opportunity to spend time with young people from rival areas and experience, temporarily, an alternative to area conflict.

At times, detached workers make the environment around the young person safer by addressing a need in the area that has created risk within an environment. For instance, detached workers in one borough identified that young people's involvement in anti-social behaviours (ASB) was largely caused by a lack of activities or opportunities. By engaging young people on the street, detached workers were able to co-design activities that occupied young people's time in constructive ways, which led to a drop in ASB in the area.

Yet detached youth workers are limited in their capacity to transform risky or harmful contexts. Detached workers are often not able to change the structural barriers and underlying harmful norms that create risky environments. The main impact of detached workers on young people's safety remains largely individualised – they help young people exit or be safer within risky environments.

‘There’s nothing they can do about it to be honest. What can they do about us leaving the area and having other people want to harm us? What can they really do about that? Nothing. What they can do is just try and make us stop that lifestyle really’. (Young man’s response to the question: What role detached workers can play in mitigating violence between groups of young people?)

Challenges facing detached youth workers

Although detached youth work is a neighbourhood-based service, workers’ ability to work more widely on issues of community safety is limited, in part due to a targeted youth work culture that emphasises individualised outcomes on specific issues. Partners’ expectations place further pressure on detached workers to perform functions outside of the traditional remit of detached work.

Targeted Youth Work Culture

As a non-statutory service, detached youth work (and youth work more generally) holds a precarious position relative to other services. Within local authorities that have retained detached youth work after recent funding cuts, detached teams often form part of a larger ‘targeted youth work’ service. Targeted youth support aims to identify the needs of vulnerable teenagers and enable them to access early support; it is a preventative approach undertaken by different agencies.

Yet a targeted approach conflicts with what many see as core values of detached youth work, and youth work more broadly: maintaining flexible and participative methods around informal education. Detached workers no longer have the same flexibility to work on issues identified by young people. Instead detached workers in some areas must try to achieve prescribed outcomes – often around getting young people into education or employment, or eliminating particular behaviours (Pitts et al, 2002). An individualised approach further limits workers’ ability to direct interventions at young people’s environments (Lavie-Ajayi and Krumer-Nevo, 2013).

Detached workers also have less time to speak with shopkeepers, parents and other members of the community. In the past, detached workers were out in neighbourhoods 3-5 times a week for hours at a time. With that consistent presence they created a wider sense of safety for the community and provided community reassurance. Presently, detached work forms part of a much broader suite of youth workers’ responsibilities. Managing multiple roles can impact detached workers’ ability to engage with young people, especially when workers manage youth conditional cautions.

'We haven't got enough time to invest in the old style – going into the area and meeting with the neighborhood and the parents. I often find myself these days more – almost like – like avoiding certain roads because I know that we'll walk there and the parents will be hanging out on their balcony ... I know that sounds awful'. (Detached youth worker)

'You're wearing two different hats – if you've got a young person you're working with on a [youth conditional] caution and has no intention of going ... then you're the person that has to send that back to court ... But then you can see them as part of your group on a Thursday night, and you don't want the young person to avoid coming to group because they don't want to see you because they've not been going to you for cautions. That has happened. It puts you in a really difficult place'. (Detached youth worker)

Partners' Expectations

Partnership working has also changed for detached youth workers. In the past, within a community-based approach to detached youth work, partners included shopkeepers, park wardens, housing caretakers, etc. With the focus now on individualised outcomes for young people, partners have shifted to include social care, youth offending services, police, etc. Yet partners do not always understand what detached youth work is, and sometimes expect detached workers to perform functions that do not align with the skills or expertise of workers. For example, detached workers described the tension between the interest from partner agencies in receiving intelligence from detached teams, and the workers' interest in maintaining the trust of young people and the wider community.

Participants also expressed frustration that detached work is often seen as a tool for 'rapid response' after an incident. Some partners expect that detached workers will gather information after a serious incident or provide support to affected young people. Detached workers point out that they need an existing presence within the community and relationships with young people in order for such interactions to be meaningful.

'As I say all along, we are not fire fighters. We are not rapid response. What are we going to do? So what, you're going to send us out there. For what? It can actually be more dangerous. You don't know the area. You don't know the group'. (Detached youth worker)

Conclusion

Detached youth work offers unique opportunities to engage young people in their social environments. By entering these social spheres, workers are able to slowly develop relationships with young people and public environments and ultimately improve individuals' safety within contexts that pose a risk of harm. Workers also create safe spaces in which young people can interrogate their own opinions and behaviours, and try to embody healthier alternatives. In some circumstances, workers are able to transform risky environments themselves by addressing gaps that created risk in the first place. Yet despite detached youth work being a neighbourhood-based service, workers' ability to create safer

environments is limited, in part due to a targeted youth culture that emphasises individualised outcomes on specific issues. As detached workers adapt to the realities of limited funding, they often take on multiple roles, which undermines their capacity to develop relationships with young people and the broader community. Overall, detached workers continue to engage and intervene in contexts around a young person, but the impact is often individualised.

Implications for Safeguarding and Commissioning

- Commissioners should consider where detached youth work sits in relation to other services and partners. The methods and ethos of detached work do not always fit neatly within a targeted youth work model. As a neighbourhood-based service, consideration needs to be given to the ways in which detached youth work can maintain/create relationships with community safety partnerships.
- Commissioners should consider funding long-term, full-time detached youth work so that detached workers are able to build meaningful relationships with young people, their peer groups and wider communities. Detached work should not be seen as a rapid-response tool after serious incidents involving young people.
- Those with oversight of detached teams could consider developing group outcome measurements to capture the impact of detached work on peer groups. Individualised outcome assessments will not capture progress made within groups – for example, whether a peer group becomes a supportive, healthy context for those within the group.
- Awareness of the role and purpose of detached youth work varies among other services. This affects partners' expectations and ability to share information with detached teams. Those with oversight of detached teams could work to better inform partners and engage detached workers in decision-making within multi-agency meetings.
- The contribution of detached youth work in building a response to peer-on-peer abuse needs to be expressly considered in relevant strategic documents, actions plans and multi-agency structures. This is particularly important in areas seeking to develop a more contextual response to the issue.

If you have any queries on this briefing, please contact Danielle.Fritz@beds.ac.uk.

www.msunderstood.org.uk

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APPENDIX P: BRIEFING: COORDINATING STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS ASSOCIATED TO PEER-ON-PEER ABUSE

Introduction

Research tells us that a significant minority of young people in the UK will be abused by another young person before they turn 18 (Barnardo's, 2011; Barter et al., 2009, 2015; Corr, 2013; Firmin, 2015). A third of child sexual exploitation cases nationally are peer-on-peer and surveys of school-aged children have found that up to a third of young women report experiencing sexual violence from a partner before they turn 18, a quarter report physical abuse, and close to half report emotional and online abuse (Barter et al., 2015; Corr, 2013; Pearce and Pitts, 2011).

In this site we are beginning to build a picture of the local peer-on-peer abuse profile, particularly through the work of specialist agencies and the multi-agency panels that discuss child sexual exploitation, domestic abuse and serious youth violence. A number of young people living in this site were referred to our specialist harmful sexual behaviour service in the past year, and peer-on-peer exploitation cases have been identified at our sexual exploitation risk assessment conference. A small number of teenage relationship abuse cases have been referred to our MARAC, and the work of our commissioned young person's domestic violence advocate is identifying new cases.

Our strategic response to peer-on-peer abuse currently features across a number of safeguarding strategies, policies and procedures including:

- LSCB procedure safeguarding children affected by gang activity (2014)
- LSCB procedure children who exhibit problematic / harmful sexual behaviour (2014)
- LSCS practice guidance child sexual exploitation (2014)
- The Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy (2015-2018)
- LSCB domestic abuse policy DRAFT (2015)
- LSCB child sexual exploitation strategy DRAFT (2015)

This document links these five documents together, highlighting the strategic priorities for responding to peer-on-peer abuse in this site, and identifying inconsistent messages across documents that require strategic clarification.

Strategic Priorities

The following are evident from the documents reviewed:

- Abuse experienced by young people is a strategic priority for this site
- This site's partnerships are committed to providing services to young people experienced by violence and abuse
- Routes that enable information sharing, assessment and referral are central to identifying and responding to abuse experienced by young people
- Professionals need to be alert to the signs of abuse, and made aware of the issues via training and partnership working

Consistent messages

- All documents recognise that young people may be harmed by other young people and not necessarily adults – hence all recognising peer-on-peer abuse, for example:

The definition of sexual abuse is the same for sexual abuse by children as for sexual abuse by adults, and includes the use of technology. Abusive/inappropriate behaviour is often characterised by lack of true consent, the presence of a power imbalance and exploitation (LSCB children who exhibit HSB 1.1)

Every child and young person can expect to be supported and protected, whether as children and young people by violence against their parents or carers, or as young people abused by partners, friends or acquaintances (Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy page 5)

A child or young person may also be a victim of domestic violence and abuse through her or his own involvement in a violent relationship (LSCB Domestic Abuse Policy page 4)

- All documents recognise peer-on-peer abuse as a safeguarding and child protection issue, albeit without specifically using the language of 'peer-on-peer abuse'. For example, child sexual exploitation, domestic abuse, serious youth violence and harmful sexual behaviour are all presented as safeguarding issues and so therefore is peer-on-peer abuse by proxy
- The safeguarding procedures for young people affected by gang activity and young people who exhibit harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) recognise the overlap that can occur between victim and perpetrator:

Children who are harmed and children who harm should both be treated as victims, and professionals should bear in mind that a child may be a perpetrator and also a victim of violence (LSCB safeguarding children affected by gangs procedure 4.1)

Agencies should also be alert to the possibility that a child or young person who has harmed another may well also be a victim (LSCB children who exhibit HSB 1.3)

- All procedures recognise formal structures in this site, and that children's social care have a role in responding to peer-on-peer abuse
- All procedures outline similar warning signs displayed by young people affected by peer-on-peer abuse, and all identify individual, familial and environmental vulnerabilities associated with abusive behaviours and victimisation

Messages in need of clarification

- Procedures for harmful sexual behaviour, domestic abuse, sexual exploitation and children affected by gang activity all suggest different referral routes and multi-agency arrangements for raising concerns. While some attempt to cross-reference, for example the gangs procedure refers to the sexual exploitation policy, this is inconsistent. The harmful sexual behaviour and gangs protocols have the clearest references to the referral and case management procedure and are most closely aligned, but it is not clear how a case of gang-associated, sexual exploitation (where by default a young person was displaying harmful sexual behaviour) would be managed using these documents
- The strategic position on young people who abuse their peers is inconsistent in existing documents. While the victim/perpetrator overlap is recognised in the harmful sexual behaviour and gangs protocols, the domestic abuse policy and related strategy do not recognise the roles of these processes in managing young people who abuse partners
- The two inconsistencies outlined above means that while children's social care are referenced in all documents, their role in responding to cases of peer-on-peer abuse is not clear – this is with reference to those who abuse peers as well as those who are abused by them

Next Steps

In order to achieve greater linkage across this site's strategies and protocols related to peer-on-peer abuse this briefing document recommends the following:

1. All protocols identified opportunities for cross-references to ascertain whether in addition to the presenting issue, say harmful sexual behaviour, another, such as gang-association, requires consideration and the relevant partnership engagement. This could be developed through the production of a referral flow chart highlighting the different routes to multi-agency discussions and where they come together, with reference to children's social care procedures and the thresholds document
2. All protocols and strategies to recognise the potential vulnerabilities and victimisation of young people who abuse their peers, and how this may differentiate them from 'adult perpetrators'
3. The domestic abuse policy requires a distinct section on 16 and 17 year olds. Trying to condense the response to them in the pre-existing policy is hard to follow and does not link teenage relationship abuse with other peer-on-peer abuse issues – a LSCB procedure similar to that for harmful sexual behaviour or gang-association is required
4. Any future procedures, protocols or strategies that are produced in this site could be sense-checked to ascertain:
 - a. Does it recognise that young people who abuse a partner or peers require a safeguarding response by the virtue of their being a young person?
 - b. Are young people who abuse their partners or peers differentiated from adults who abuse children or partners?
 - c. Does it appropriately link with other relevant procedures and identify where referral pathways and multi-agency arrangements may need to come together to address complex cases?
 - d. Does it provide consistent messages regarding children's social care involvement in line with the thresholds document and children's social care procedures, while also being in line with all other procedures of relevance to peer-on-peer abuse?
 - e. Does it suggest approaches to intervening with the environmental factors associated to peer-on-peer abuse as well as managing risk experienced by individual young people?

APPENDIX Q: TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR LONDON SAFEGUARDING ADOLESCENTS STEERING GROUP

London Safeguarding Adolescents Steering Group

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Aims

The London Safeguarding Adolescents Steering Group seeks to:

- 1.1. Develop holistic, consistent and shared principles for safeguarding adolescents across London
- 1.2. Identify ways in which learning from the MsUnderstood programme specifically, and contextual approaches to safeguarding more generally, can be embedded within Pan-London policy development

2. Objectives

- 2.1. Support the development of policy regarding the needs and welfare of adolescents
- 2.2. Provide impetus and strategic leadership to all member organisations in regards to their responsibilities to safeguard adolescents
- 2.3. Identify and develop opportunities for holistic responses to issues affecting the welfare of adolescents in London – including opportunities to coordinate across issue-specific strategic groups and activities
- 2.4. Consider whether additional text is required in Pan-London child protection procedures for safeguarding adolescents, and if so oversee their development
- 2.5. Provide oversight to identified Pan-London research and initiatives designed to improve the safeguarding of adolescents in London – initially via the work plan for the MsUnderstood implementation plan
- 2.6. Promote that the voices of the individual child and children collectively are heard in the development of policy affecting adolescents
- 2.7. Disseminate learning on safeguarding adolescents and contextual safeguarding through member organisations and identify opportunities for embedding and sustaining such learning
- 2.8. Influence and inform the development of policy, practice and legislation relating to the safeguarding of children and the promotion of their welfare

3. Accountability

- 3.1. The London Safeguarding Adolescents Steering Group is accountable to its member organisations
- 3.2. The group also provides an additional point of oversight for the implementation of the University of Bedfordshire's contextual safeguarding programme in London and the MsUnderstood learning and implementation process. Over time it may act as a point of oversight for other Pan-London programmes of work intended to improve the strategic response to safeguarding adolescents and they will be listed here as identified

4. Chairing

- 4.1. Members will adopt a position on chair on a rotational basis demonstrating collective ownership of the group's objectives and deliverables

RESTRICTED: Agreed by Pan-London Safeguarding Adolescents Steering Group July 2016

5. Membership

5.1. The London Safeguarding Adolescents Steering Group members will have either a strategic role and/or an advisory role in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children within their organisation and on some occasions represent Pan-London associations and other such bodies. The member committees/associations/organisations will be:

- The London AD Network
- London Safeguarding Children Board
- Metropolitan Police
- London Councils
- Mayor's Office of Policing and Crime
- NHS England (London)
- Crown Prosecution Service
- London Association of Youth Offending Team Managers
- London Association of Heads of Community Safety
- London Probation Service
- Youth Justice Board (London)
- Transport for London
- London Youth

6. Functioning

- 6.1. The London Safeguarding Adolescents Steering Group will meet three times per year with interim communication being made over email where necessary
- 6.2. All disclosable documentation i.e. minutes and steering group papers will be made accessible upon request
- 6.3. The steering group will work towards an agreed workplan for the first two years informed by the funded resource available at the University of Bedfordshire. As further work is developed this workplan can be developed and reviewed in detail on an annual basis

7. Staffing

- 7.1. The London Safeguarding Adolescents Steering Group will be supported by a senior research fellow and research assistant from the University of Bedfordshire who are each resourced to support the group one day per week until March 2018

8. Finance

- 8.1. As outlined above current resourcing is provided by the University of Bedfordshire under funding provided by Trust for London, the Samworth Foundation and the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation
- 8.2. Meeting room space is provided by the London Safeguarding Children Board
- 8.3. As the workplan for the group is developed all member organisations are invited to make financial contributions to further fund any specific projects and initiatives that they may identify as required

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9. Affiliated networks

- 9.1. Relevant professional networks and associations will be invited to provide feedback to the London Safeguarding Adolescents Steering Group on issues of concern and good practice
- 9.2. The work of the steering group will also be fed into Pan-London bodies whose work involves the safeguarding of adolescent's such as the London AD Network, the London Safeguarding Children Board and the Mayor's Violence Against Women and Girls Board.

Organisation/Association/Committee	Representative
London AD Network	Anne Turner Paul Angeli
London Safeguarding Children Board	Alison Renouf
Metropolitan Police	Tim Champion Ivan Balhatchet
London Councils	Rangan Momen Jenny Gulliford
Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime	Lynne Abrams
NHS England (London)	Lucy Botting
Crown Prosecution Service	Baljit Ubhey
London Association of Heads of Community Safety	Geeta Subramaniam
London Probation Service	Delphine Duff
Transport for London	Tim Herbert
Youth Justice Board (London)	Paula Williams
London Youth	Christine Bass

