

Contextual Safeguarding Local Area Interest Network

Regional Support Groups: Terms of Reference

Contextual Safeguarding is a conceptual, strategic and operational framework that is being used to develop safeguarding responses to extra-familial contexts and relationships in which young people experience, or at risk of, significant harm. The Global Centre for Contextual Safeguarding (previously the Contextual Safeguarding Research Programme) at Durham University have been developing Contextual Safeguarding, in partnership with practitioners across the country, since 2013.¹ We have supported formal tests of the approach in 10 local authority pilot sites across England and Wales, while providing strategic advice to over 90 areas who have joined a Contextual Safeguarding Local Area Interest Network (LAIN) across England, Wales and Scotland.

All areas in Contextual Safeguarding LAIN have a nominated strategic single point of contact (SPOC). Three types of groups have been established to facilitate peer support and learning amongst strategic SPOCs in the LAIN. These are:

- **Regional Strategic Groups:** All SPOCs in the LAIN have been organised into regional clusters. These meet on a quarterly basis to: facilitate peer learning at a regional level; identify opportunities for joint-working and commissioning; and enable sites who are at earlier stage of adopting a Contextual Safeguarding approach to learn from others. There meetings are convened by a nominated chair for each regional group.
- **Regional Champion Groups:** Each regional SPOC can nominate up to 5 practice champions who are practitioners and/or practice leaders committed to promoting Contextual Safeguarding approaches in their organisation. These champions meet into their own regional clusters on a bimonthly or quarterly basis to support and inspire one another, share learning and reflect on the challenges that come with innovating in their professional setting. The champions regional groups are convened by a nominated chair for each regional group.
- **A UK Advisory Board:** A UK-wide Advisory Board meets 2 times a year chaired by Dez Holmes (Research in Practice). A representative from each regional group attends this meeting alongside government departments, regulators, practice

¹ Prior to September 2021, the Contextual Safeguarding Research Programme was based at The University of Bedfordshire

associations and voluntary sector organisations involved in the delivery of Contextual Safeguarding approaches. Chairs of the regional strategic groups attend that meeting to provide regional updates and feedback key national issues into their regional groups. This meeting is convened and serviced by Durham University.

This document sets out the Terms of Reference for the Regional Strategic and Champion Groups.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Group Aims

The Contextual Safeguarding LAIN regional clusters meet as a group, and support each other virtually, to identify opportunities, developments, challenges and risks of implementing a Contextual Safeguarding approach which can be shared at a regional level.

2. Group Objectives

- 2.1. Provide regional sector leadership for areas invested in developing a Contextual Safeguarding approach
- 2.2. Actively work together to address regional challenges or gaps in knowledge, thereby reducing demand on the Contextual Safeguarding Programme team and building sector expertise
- 2.3. Share and discuss resources, approaches and structures that could be tested collectively to advance Contextual Safeguarding practices
- 2.4. Work collectively to inform regional policy and commissioning decisions that are relevant to Contextual Safeguarding
- 2.5. Discuss any practice development issues that have been raised by local champions and identify ways to address these collectively
- 2.6. Promote the voices of children and families when reflecting on potential next steps in implementing Contextual Safeguarding
- 2.7. Identify thematic issues that can be raised, through the regional chair, to the meeting of the UK Advisory Board
- 2.8. Identify case study examples that can be utilised by the sector and/or incorporated into training and presentation materials in the region, and/or shared more widely via the Global Centre for Contextual Safeguarding (GCCS)

3. Accountability of Members

- 3.1. LAIN strategic SPOCs are accountable to their member organisations

- 3.2. LAIN strategic SPOCs who attend regional meetings represent their area/organisation. **The ‘local authority’ rather than the person is a member of the group. By becoming a member of a regional group (and the wider interest network), local authorities (and their leaders) commit to:**
- Attend regional meetings and, when unable to attend, designate someone to attend on their behalf
 - (Where appropriate) lead sub group discussions on specific interest themes that might emerge over the course of the group’s work
 - Support/encourage their staff to join the CS Network
 - Identify practitioners who could actively champion the approach to build sector capacity in localities
 - Notify the GCCS team when they are no longer able to be a strategic SPOC
 - Test/develop Contextual Safeguarding approaches and report learning at UK Advisory Board meetings
 - Notify the GCCS team if, for whatever reason, themselves as SPOCS and/or their area/organisation are no longer able to commit to the LAIN
- 3.3. **Nominated LAIN practice champions commit to:**
- Attend regional meetings and designate and, when unable to attend, designate someone to attend on their behalf
 - Champion Contextual Safeguarding in their organisation
 - Notify the GCCS team if they are no longer able to be champions
- 3.4. LAIN strategic SPOCs will uphold confidentiality as agreed within the GCCS team unless prior agreement has been given to share outside of the group.
- 3.5. Should you have complaints about the GCCS team please contact Professor Simon Hackett – Director of Research in the Sociology Department at Durham University – at simon.hackett@durham.ac.uk

4. LAIN Regional Group Chairing

- 4.1. Each regional group is chaired (or co-chaired) by a nominated member(s)
- 4.2. Attendance, key discussion points and actions from meetings should be recorded (bullet format is fine) and made available to the GCCS team upon request.

5. Membership

- 5.1. Strategic SPOCs are invited to join a regional strategic group because they are a strategic SPOC for their local authority in the Contextual Safeguarding LAIN
- 5.2. Champions are invited to join a regional champions group because they have been nominated by the strategic SPOC for their local authority
- 5.3. Only local authorities who are part of the LAIN will be invited by the Durham Contextual Safeguarding Programme team to join a regional group
- 5.4. **In addition to regional groups, members have access to:**
 - Free introduction to Contextual Safeguarding training – full day (online) one to twice a year for new strategic reps and champions
 - Regular updates from the GCCS team
 - Priority bookings onto GCCS events
 - Opportunities to participate in/inform various research projects within the GCCS team

6. Functioning

- 6.1. LAIN Regional groups meet virtually quarterly or bimonthly, dependent on need
- 6.2. **Core agenda items for regional strategic groups will include:** a) brief updates from member local authorities of any key activity since the last meeting; b) core challenges in implementation; c) regional policy or commissioning matters; d) any matters to raise with the GCCS team/UK Advisory Board. The group may also identify thematic issues they wish to discuss, or may be contacted by GCCS team to consider an emergent national practice or policy theme
- 6.3. **Agenda items for regional champions group** can be decided by the group, and can include: a) brief area updates of any key activity since the last meeting; b) key trends/themes from practice; c) core challenges in implementation; d) discussing a particular Contextual Safeguarding resources; e) matters to raise with the LAIN strategic group and/or the GCCS team
- 6.4. All disclosable documentation i.e., recorded actions from the meetings will be made accessible upon request by the GCCS team

7. Staffing

- 7.1. Membership of LAIN regional groups is coordinated by the GCCS team – key contact from the GCCS team is delphine.peace@durham.ac.uk
- 7.2. Meetings of each regional group are coordinated by the group chair (with support from the GCCS team)