

Business survey guide

Businesses have oversight of the spaces where young people spend time. They can provide valuable insight into local issues and help identify partners who can support safeguarding interventions. Businesses can also act as informal guardians for young people.

Things to keep in mind when using this tool

- Clearly define the area you will survey e.g. a small cluster of businesses near an incident or a larger area like a shopping street. Tools like maps or Google Street View can help plan which businesses to visit.
- Identify quieter periods to visit businesses.
- Explain who you are and the purpose of the survey, what you will do with the information and that their answers will be anonymous. Explain what safeguarding is in simple language (i.e. keeping young people safe in public spaces).
- Keep the tone supportive. Remind businesses that every sector has a responsibility to keep young people safe and that you want to help them respond when young people need help.
- Offer different options for completing the survey. Practitioners often find that a conversational approach works well, sometimes recording reflections afterwards rather than taking notes during the conversation. Some people might prefer to complete the survey in paper or digital format so be flexible.

- Keep the focus on young people's safety and welfare to keep discussions relevant.
- Provide information about how they can help keep young people safe: e.g. how they can report safeguarding concerns (while always being clear in these cases to call the police if there is an emergency), sharing the contact numbers for local youth services where they can direct young people, or how they can become community guardians.

A deputy manager in a branch of a supermarket gave an example of a 15-year-old boy running into the shop with three stab wounds. She said local young people knew her by name and trusted that she'd act to keep them safe.

Example from business

One fried chicken shop takeaway owner explained how he had negotiated with the local secondary school to allow students to enter his shop at lunchtime. This was based on the understanding that he would liaise with the staff member responsible for lunchtime duty, whose phone number he was given. Previously students had been banned as a dispersal measure. The shop owner reported positive relations with local young people and said that on the rare occasions when tensions arise, he gives extra free chicken wings which costs him little but keeps his younger customers happy.

Example from business

Suggested survey questions

These questions can be adapted depending on your survey format and the neighbourhood area you are focusing on.

- Date:
- Practitioner administering the survey (if in person):
- Business name (if applicable):
- Type of business (if applicable):
- Person engaged and role (if known):
- Location (details of the location – with detail regarding the area, adjacent buildings etc.)
- Are many of your customers young people?
- What is your experience of your younger customers?
- Have you ever been in a situation where you have seen young people in danger/looking like they might need help in your shop/business/in the local area? What happened? What did you do?
- How safe do you think young people are in the local area?
- Do you have any concerns about young people’s safety in the local area?
- Did you notice any trends – e.g. incident happening to the same young people/times of days?
- What might be some solutions to these concerns?
- Do you know about activities or services for young people in the local area?
- Would you be prepared to learn more about how you can help to keep young customers safe?

This document is an updated version of the resource that was developed in collaboration with Simone Nyarko and Michela Notarianni with the Hackney Contextual Safeguarding Team, initially published in November 2018.

Find out more about neighbourhood assessments on www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk under our ‘Context Assessments and Responses’ toolkit.