

Contextual safeguarding and exploitation conference process

2019/20



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THE CONTEXT

Contextual safeguarding and exploitation (referred to within Achieving for Children (AfC) as CS&E) is harm which occurs outside of the family context in spaces and places often identified within community settings and from someone who is not a family member. This harm is known as extra-familial harm. In contrast, intra-familial harm is the harm which impacts a child inside the home by a parent or carer.

Achieving for Children is committed to developing a conference approach to safeguarding that supports practitioners to recognise and respond to the harm children experience outside of the home. This process sits within the wider Achieving for Children targeted support for [contextual safeguarding and exploitation](#). (intranet)

Aim of the process

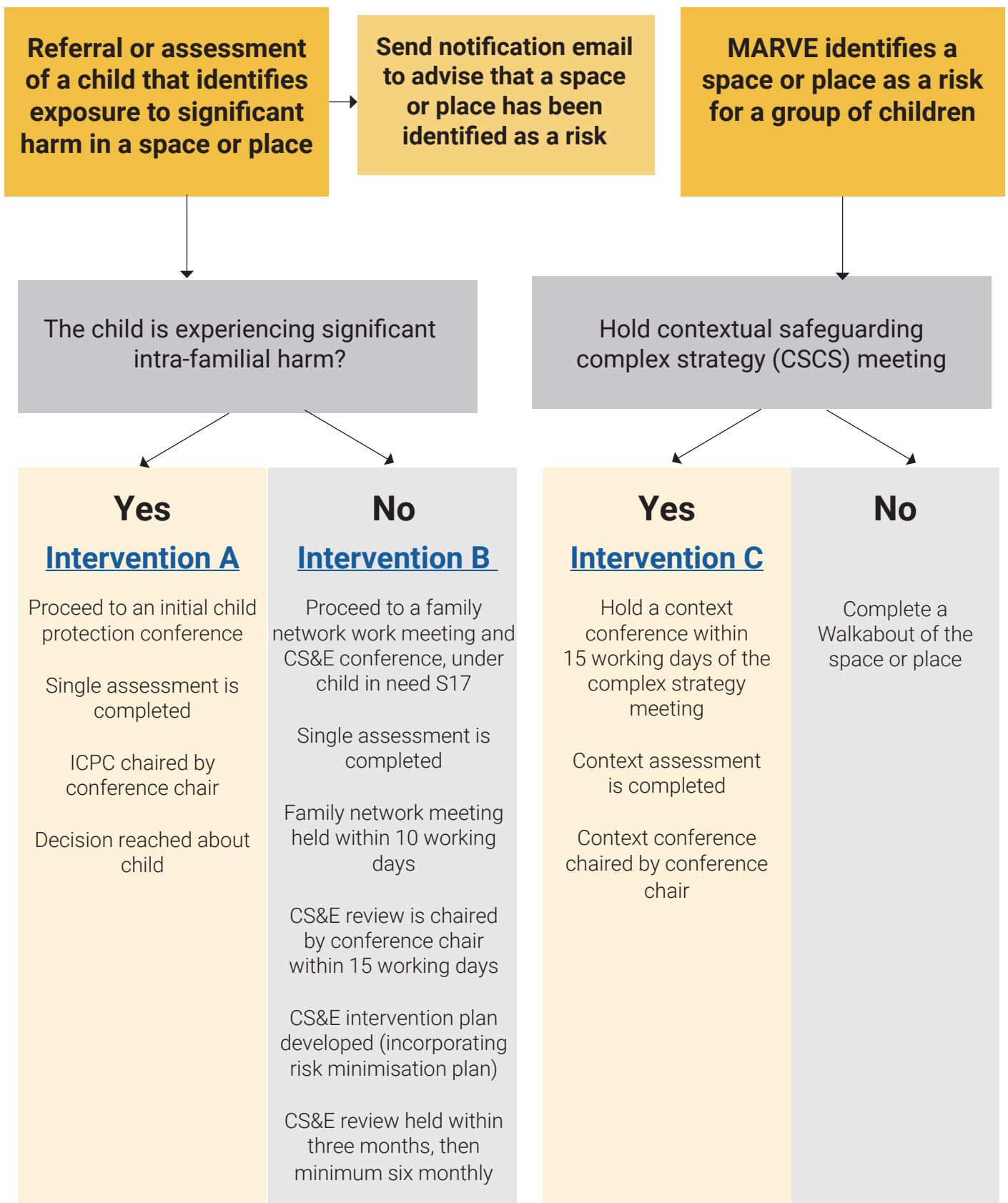
The aim is to provide a framework to respond to extra-familial harm that meets the threshold for Level 4 significant harm with a response that is best suited to addressing the risk.

Support for children and families will take place across two interventions

- Intervention A builds explicit reference to context in child protection conferences. This is appropriate when there are intra-familial significant harm threshold risks alongside spaces and places risks.
- Intervention B addresses extra-familial harm (where there is no significant intra-familial harm) by supporting the child and family to engage in a process which is more focused on teenagers and spaces and places risks. There will be contextual safeguarding and exploitation reviews and family and community network meetings to support the child and family.

To address risks identified from a space or place.

- Intervention C is a context conference to address the risks in the space or place. This will be held when the multi-agency risk and vulnerability exploitation (MARVE) panel identifies a space or place as a risk for a group of children and a contextual safeguarding complex strategy meeting decides that the context threshold is met.



If significant harm threshold is not met at the Intervention A ICPC for intra-familial risks, but is met for space and places risk, the meeting should transfer to the Intervention B process.

Intervention A: Building explicit reference to context in child protection conferences

This is appropriate when a child has met the threshold for significant harm due to intra-familial factors, but the child is also at risk of suffering harm through contextual safeguarding and exploitation. It may be appropriate when factors within the family setting are contributing to the levels of contextual safeguarding and exploitation risk that the child is facing.

It is important that the child and family recognise that where possible Achieving for Children will act alongside partners to address contextual safeguarding and exploitation factors impacting on the child and the capacity of parents to be protective, while also addressing the need for sustained change in order to safeguard their child.

The child protection conference

Preparing for the child protection conference

Social workers and managers will consider contextual factors within the single assessment.

- Tools and resources are available for assessing contextual safeguarding and exploitation risk: all about me, [considering CS&E within a single assessment](#), peer assessment, neighbourhood assessment, [context triangles](#).
- Extra-familial harm factors, such as location or peer group that have previously or currently been raised within contact records, discussed at the multi-agency risk and vulnerability exploitation panel or strategy meeting.
- Peer supervision to support the social worker to consider the intra-familial harm which increases push and pull factors related to extra-familial harm: online activity, peer groups, unsupervised travel, community knowledge, and about how these factors interplay within any familial features.
- Capturing the voice of the child and their parents or carers, verbatim if possible, including an account of how they see the world, their own life and what they believe would make them feel or be safer.
- Analysis which identifies how pre-existing vulnerabilities and risk factors combine within a context to cause harm, and an intervention plan which is clearly targeted at the context in which the harm takes place.

During the child protection conference

The structure of the conference remains the same.

- Pre-conference conversations with professionals and family will identify opportunities for the conference chair to consider broader extra-familial harm factors during the conference.
- The conference chair will circulate the [Achieving for Children language guidance](#) to conference attendees before the meeting and will bring relevant sections to attendees attention at the beginning of the conference.
- 'What are we worried about' - the conference chair asks parents to describe the context in which they are trying to parent their child. The positive and challenging aspects of that contextual safeguarding and exploitation and how they consider these may be informing or impacting on their decision making and their ability to be protective.
- The conference chair explores the risks to any siblings, including patterns of repeating risk.
- Contextual factors identified during the assessment process by the child or parents should be recorded as past harm or complicating factors.
- If the child has completed a safety map, with their consent this should be presented and discussed in the conference. It should be included in the plan agreed within the conference.
- Decision will be reached about whether the threshold for significant harm is met and the child is made subject to a child protection plan.

Following the child protection conference

When a child protection conference chair identifies concerns about a child in relation to extra-familial harm the conference chair will directly add a summary paragraph of the concerns to the contextual safeguarding tracker. This is a live document held by the contextual safeguarding lead to capture contextual safeguarding and exploitation concerns for children who have child protection plans and child looked after care plans. The tracker will be reviewed monthly by the contextual safeguarding lead alongside the contextual lead conference chair and contextual lead independent review officer. Case reviews triggered through this process will be added to the child's file under case notes.

Intervention B: exploring solely contextual safeguarding and exploitation concerns

This is appropriate when the Level 4 threshold risks to the child are solely related to extra familial harm and offers the provision of two services running parallel to the multi-agency risk and vulnerability exploitation panel:

- The contextual safeguarding and exploitation review: this meeting is a formal planning meeting for the child, similar to a child in need review but chaired by a conference chair.
- Family and community network meetings: this process supports the child, family and their support community to work together to develop plans to actively protect the child.

The contextual safeguarding and exploitation review

The contextual safeguarding and exploitation review is conducted under Section 17 of The Children Act 1989 and is equivalent to a child in need review meeting. The focus of the meeting is the support and planning around the child and their family who are in a situation where the child is experiencing significant extra familial harm.

The contextual safeguarding and exploitation review is chaired by a child protection conference chair. The meeting is held within the same timescales and with the same expectations as a child protection conference and the single assessment is presented by the child's social worker.

The primary differences in a contextual safeguarding and exploitation review compared to a child protection conference are:

- there is no decision making on the threshold of significant harm ie no decision that the outcome is a child protection plan or category
- the attendees should include a higher proportion of family members and members of the family and community network - the child should attend
- there is greater flexibility around professional attendance, for example police attendance may be more appropriate by the child sexual exploitation or adolescent risk team, or the police community support officer (as opposed to the child abuse investigation team which attends child protection conferences)
- the venue of the contextual safeguarding and exploitation review can be somewhere that the family is more comfortable, for example a school or an Achieving for Children building, although due to the number of attendees this cannot be the family home

Preparing for the contextual safeguarding and exploitation review

The review must take place within 15 working days of the strategy discussion that decided the child met the threshold for this service. The social worker will provide the invitation list to the conference service a maximum of five working days after this decision and the conference service will arrange the contextual safeguarding and exploitation review, including sending invitations.

Social workers and managers will consider extra-familial harm factors within the single assessment.

- Tools and resources are available for assessing contextual safeguarding and exploitation risk: all about me, [considering CS&E within a single assessment](#), peer assessment, neighbourhood assessment, [context triangles](#).
- Contextual safeguarding and exploitation factors, such as location or peer group that have previously or currently been raised within contact records and/or discussed at the multi-agency risk and vulnerability exploitation panel or strategy meeting.
- Capturing the voice of the child and their parents or carers, verbatim if possible, including an account of how they see the world, their own life and what they believe would make them feel or be safer.
- A safety map and a risk minimisation plan which is clearly targeted at the context in which the harm takes place.
- Attendance of wider family members to support the plan.
- Attendance of professionals linked to the context.

During the contextual safeguarding and exploitation review

The structure of the contextual safeguarding and exploitation review remains similar to that of a child protection conference. Please see Appendix A for the agenda.

- The conference chair will circulate the [AfC Language Guidance](#) to conference attendees prior to the meeting and will bring relevant sections to attendees attention at the beginning of the review.
- The conference chair electronically captures the key discussion points of the meeting within the outcomes template that is presented on a screen by typing during the meeting into the template (see Appendix C) this acts as a live visual reference during the meeting. This document includes the intervention plan and is circulated by the conference service within one working day of the review.
- The review will be audio recorded and a copy of this audio recording will be safely stored by Achieving for Children. The audio recording will not be circulated to meeting attendees, but a copy can be requested by the parents.
- The plan will always include the child being visited by the social worker a minimum of every 10 working days.

Referrals to social care

Concerns may be identified within the contextual safeguarding and exploitation review that the child is experiencing significant harm due to intra-familial risk, for example push or pull factors related to extra-familial harm through online activity, peer groups, unsupervised travel, community knowledge. There may also be concerns about how these factors interplay within any familial features. In these instances, the social worker will follow the Section 47 investigation process.

Follow-up and review

Depending on the intervention plan and issues raised it may be relevant to hold a follow-up contextual safeguarding and exploitation review meeting after a period of time to review the plan and actions. It is recommended such plans are reviewed every three months and the conference chair has overall capacity to make this decision.

Family and community network meetings

The single factor most strongly connected with positive outcomes for children is having a meaningful lifelong connection to their family and community network. Every child and parent has a network who can be found if we try.

It is critical that family and community network meetings are provided alongside the contextual safeguarding and review meeting process. The social worker will arrange a family and community network meeting within 20 working days of the strategy meeting. The aim is to help the child, family and their network to develop their own plan of support and safety.

Guidance around family and community network meetings

- The social worker will set up the family and community network meetings.
- The child, all those with parental responsibility and carers will be invited at the earliest stage to involve their wider networks to help them put a plan together that will keep the child safer and promote their wellbeing.
- The social worker will help identify members of the network that could be involved in planning and support and will contact those people to see if they would be interested in attending a meeting to help the child and family.
- The first meeting should happen at the earliest point possible, while respecting network members caring or work responsibilities, and no later than 20 working days from the strategy meeting.
- Timings, venue, refreshments will be child and family friendly.
- At the first meeting, ground rules suggested by the members will be established. The first meeting should be used to see if anyone from the network has been missed out who could helpfully be included. There will be discussions why the network is there and the support they can offer to the child and family.
- The (safety) plan is written up and shared with all those attending and any professionals involved with the family.
- All family and community network plans must be regularly reviewed to check on progress.
- If a person is considered to be unsafe by the network but the child wants to see them or for them to be included in the network, the risks and safety will be explored within the network and the network will regularly review the situation.

Intervention C: Addressing the risk in the space or place

The context conference

This is appropriate when the multi-agency risk and vulnerability exploitation panel identifies a space or place as a risk for a group of children and a contextual safeguarding complex strategy meeting decides that the context threshold is met. The meeting is solely focused on addressing the risk of a specific space or place and must not name or consider individual children.

Preparing for the context conference

The context conference must take place within 15 working days of the safeguarding complex strategy meeting that decided the context threshold was met. The identified Achieving for Children lead for the context (context lead) will provide the invitation list to the conference service a maximum of five working days after this decision and the conference service will arrange the context conference, including sending invitations.

The context lead will complete the context assessment (appendix D). The context assessment includes information identified by the multi-agency risk and vulnerability exploitation panel, the contextual safeguarding complex strategy meeting and a walkabout undertaken by the contextual safeguarding lead and partners. The assessment may include walkabout photographs of the location for example drug paraphernalia, areas linked to worry, disused buildings, graffiti tags and park gates. The context lead will prioritise which issues will be discussed at the conference and will communicate these to both the conference chair and conference attendees a minimum of two working days prior to the meeting. The assessment will make reference to the [intervention catalogue](#) provided by the contextual safeguarding network, which can help professionals to create safety within the space or place.

The context conference should ideally be held in or near the space or place it is considering. When this is not possible the context conference will be held virtually using Google Meet.

Structure and attendance

The context conference will last no more than 90 minutes and time should be spent discussing matters of priority within the assessment and developing a context intervention plan. A meeting agenda is available in appendix B.

Context conferences are focused on safeguarding the welfare of children within a community location and the use of a child protection conference chair supports in maintaining this ethos. They follow the same structure as a child protection conference, but roles and representation within the meeting will vary between contexts. For example, if the focus of the context conference is a school, then the school itself would be the focus of the conference and the school's leadership team would take the role of the parents as the individuals with overall responsibility for that context. In other contexts the division of roles may be less evident, for example, it may be a private business and a collection of council departments with the ability to influence the nature of a public space. The table below demonstrates this.

	Child Protection conference or contextual safeguarding and exploitation review	Context conference
Chair	Conference chairperson	Conference chairperson
Presenting the child or case	Lead social worker	Context lead
Parent	Parent or carer of the child	Place manager (eg, headteacher, business owner, council)
Focus of the conference	Impact of the family environment and parenting on the individual children	The context (space or place) and the impact this has on the exploitation or safety of a collection of children (personal details not discussed)
Chronology or historical information	Family history and information	Context (space or place) history and relevant context and exploitation factors

When deciding who to invite, it is important to consider who has capacity to implement change in the context and who is best placed to represent community opinions of those that may be affected by the interventions. The following list outlines a range of practitioners or agencies that could be represented.

- Children's Social Care (but not any individual children's social workers)
- Local council representatives
- Community Safety
- Environmental health
- Licensing
- Transportation
- Education and local schools
- Representation from parents forum (or similar)
- Representation from young people or school council (where relevant)
- Police (safer schools officer or community police)
- Youth Justice Service
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHs)
- Local youth provision
- Voluntary and community organisations
- Health – school nurse
- Health – sexual health
- Housing
- Local businesses

A context intervention plan (an example is available in appendix F) will be agreed at the context conference. It will be the responsibility of individual agencies to follow up and provide progress updates at subsequent review meetings.

The conference chair electronically captures the key discussion points of the meeting within the outcomes template that is presented on a screen by typing during the meeting into the template (see appendix E) this acts as a live visual reference during the meeting. This document, which includes the intervention plan, is circulated by the conference service within one working day of the conference. The meeting will also be audio recorded and a copy of this audio recording will be safely stored by Achieving for Children. The audio recording will not be circulated to meeting attendees.

All attendees are reminded that individual child and family details are not to be discussed in context conferences. Statutory partners are asked to apply the same confidentiality and information storage procedures as they would for a child protection conference or multi-agency risk and vulnerability exploitation panel. This information sharing agreement should be observed by all and is particularly important for non-traditional safeguarding partners such as local businesses.

Referrals to social care

While the purpose of the meeting is to discuss factors within space or places, the process of the assessment might highlight safeguarding concerns relating to individual children. In this instance, a referral should be made immediately to the appropriate children's services. All professionals share this responsibility.

Follow-up and review

The context conference may agree that a core group of attendees should meet at an agreed frequency to review the progress of the intervention plan. The context conference may also decide to return within three months, and then six monthly to review the plan until the extra-familial harm concerns are no longer evidenced as significant. The conference chair has overall capacity to make this decision.

Appendix A: Contextual safeguarding and exploitation review agenda

1. Introductions and apologies

- Audio recording statement
- Electronic boards will be circulated as the written record of review
- Signs of Safety model explanation, what is the purpose of the review?
- Equal opportunities and confidentiality statement
- Reports and confirmation of family details

2. Reason for contextual safeguarding and exploitation review

- Danger statement to be read by the social worker

3. What is working well

- From young person, parents and carers
- From professionals
- Social worker to include wishes and feelings and any direct work around the referral reason

4. What are we worried about

- From young person, parents and carers
- From professionals
- Social worker to include wishes and feelings and any direct work around the referral reason
- Past harm
- Complicating factors

5. What needs to happen next

- From young person, parents and carers
- From professionals

6. Chair's summary of strengths and worries

The chair will summarise what is working well, and what they and professionals are worried about impacting on the young person having safe and positive experiences now and for the rest of their childhood.

Do parents, carers and professionals understand and agree with the danger statement based on all the information shared?

7. Safety goal

- Safety goal discussed and agreed with the family and professionals

8. Scaling question - chairperson

9. Family and professional's scaling answer

10. Date, time and venue of next meeting

Audio recording statement

This meeting is being audio recorded using a commercial recording service. The recording will be held securely on the child's Achieving for Children social care records and not reproduced for the attendees of this meeting. The audio recording of this meeting may be subject to a confidential audit to ensure standards are being met and a summary of the conversation may be typed at the request of the court or the Complaints Service. The written summary of the review and the plan we develop will be completed on the screen during the meeting and shared with participants within one working day of the meeting.

Equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory statement

This review will treat everyone equally, with respect and no discrimination because of race, culture, ethnic or national origins, religious or political beliefs, class, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, marital status or responsibility for dependents. The chair, or other participants through the chair, will challenge any discrimination made by, or against, any participant. Violent and threatening behaviour will not be tolerated and persons will be asked to leave the meeting.

Confidentiality

Please note that information discussed at this meeting is strictly confidential and must only be discussed with other individuals who have a 'need to know' in order to carry out their professional duties. In considering this, the welfare and protection of children is foremost and must always take priority. If in any doubt the conference chair should be consulted. However, this information, including any confidential section, will always be disclosed if requested by a court who will decide on any further disclosure.

Appendix B: Context conference agenda

1. Introductions and apologies

- Audio recording conference statement
- Electronic boards will be circulated as the written record of conference
- Signs of Safety model explanation/what is the purpose of the conference?
- Equal opportunities and confidentiality statement
- Reports and confirmation of context details
- AfC language guidance to be considered or used during the conference.

2. Reason for context conference

- Danger statement to be read by the social worker

3. What are we worried about

- What triggered the referral
- Past harm
- Complicating factors

4. What is working well

- Contextual strengths
- Current professional involvement within the context and impact

5. What needs to happen next

- Agreed plan of priority intervention and actions to increase protection and safety in the context

6. Chair's summary of strengths and worries

The chair will summarise what is working well, and what they and professionals are worried about in regards to this context and the impact on children.

7. Safety goals

- Safety goal discussed and agreed

8. Date, time and venue of next meeting

Audio recording statement

This meeting is being audio recorded using a commercial recording service. The recording will be held securely on the child/ren's Achieving for Children social care records and not reproduced for the attendees of this meeting. The audio recording of this conference may be subject to a confidential audit to ensure standards are being met and a summary of the conversation may be typed at the request of the Court or the Complaints Service. The written summary of the conference and the Plan we develop will be completed on the screen during the conference and shared with conference participants alongside the formal decision letter within one working day of the meeting.

Equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory statement

This conference will treat everyone equally, with respect and no discrimination because of race, culture, ethnic or national origins, religious or political beliefs, class, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, marital status or responsibility for dependents. The Chair, or other conference members through the Chair, will challenge any discrimination made by, or against, any conference participant. Violent and threatening behaviour will not be tolerated and persons will be asked to leave the meeting.

Confidentiality

Please note that information discussed at this meeting is strictly confidential and must only be discussed with other individuals who have a 'need to know' in order to carry out their professional duties. In considering this, the welfare and protection of children is foremost and must always take priority. If in any doubt the Conference Chair should be consulted. However, this information, including any confidential section, will always be disclosed if requested by a court who will decide on any further disclosure.

Appendix C: Contextual safeguarding and exploitation review outcomes form

Contextual safeguarding and exploitation review

Took place on

Basic details	
Name of young person	
Chair	
Attendees	

The plan	
Danger statement	




What is going well?	What are we worried about?	What needs to happen next?
Existing strengths	Past harm	Next steps
Existing safety	Complicating factors	

Safety goal	
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Safety action: What needs to happen? Outcome	Who will do this? Responsibility	When does it need to be done? Timeframe
'Child' will be visited at home by the social worker a minimum of every 10 working days, including announced and unannounced visits.	Social worker	Every 10 working days from 'date of review'

Bottom line	
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Contingency plan	
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Scaling question	<h2 style="margin: 0;">Scale</h2> <p style="margin: 0;">Using this scale, how confident are you that we have achieved the safety goals for your child and why?</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="text-align: center; margin-right: 10px;"> <p style="color: green; font-weight: bold;">Safety goal</p>  </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-right: 10px;">  </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-left: 10px;"> <p style="color: orange; font-weight: bold;">Danger statement</p>  </div> </div>
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Scaling views	
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Proposed date, time and location of next review	
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Appendix D: Context assessment template

Context assessment

Reason for 'walkabout' at this location	
Findings, analysis of 'space or place' from walkabout	<p>What information was learned from the walkabout?</p> <p>What? What is the specific concern in relation to the location, describe and be specific? What type of behaviour does this relate to ie specific crime or anti-social behaviour?</p> <p>Where? Where is the location? Be specific, ie the name of the park, the school, the shop, the car park; this should not cover large areas of multiple roads.</p> <p>Who? Who is responsible for the location? Is this a business or private owner, headteacher or chair of governors, the housing association or local authority?</p> <p>When? How often? How long have these concerns been present? Have the concerns been the same or escalated in severity? How are these concerns evidenced, ie police reports, community reports, school reports.</p> <p>How many? How many children in the community are impacted by the extra-familial harm concerns (this may not be an exact number, but is it a group or groups of children? How is this evidenced ie police reports, community reports, SPA contacts, MARVE panel information, CS complex strategy information?</p> <p>Observations When at the location, what is seen or observed, what can be photographed, which provides further information in relation to the worry? What areas can be addressed, ie locking of a gate, or disposing of drug paraphernalia?</p> <p>Discuss What conversations have already been in place to address the worries? What conversations were had during the 'walkabout'? Recommendations Based on all the information gathered, what are the proposed changes to the location to create safety within the 'space or place'.</p>

Danger statement	Guidance: This (space or place) is a concern because and if nothing changes, then (worst case scenario of how the location impacts safety for young people)

What is going well (in relation to the location)?	What are we worried about (in relation to the location)?	What needs to happen next (in relation to the location)?
Existing strengths (What interventions have been implemented and sustained positive change? Which professionals are involved and supporting positive change?)	Past harm (How have children been harmed? How long has this been happening?)	Next step (What are the needed changes?)
Existing safety What has previously happened at the location which supported the safety of children, ie a resident phoned Police when children entered a derelict building	Complicating factors What are the challenges professionals may have in attempting to implement and support sustained change that benefits community safety? What interventions have been implemented but not been successful or sustained?	

Safety goal	How will we know the location 'space or place' is safe? What is required to evidence sustained change which benefits community safety?

Recommended action plan

What needs to happen within the location to create community safety? Outcome	Who needs to be identified to implement change in the location?	What are the proposed timescales for implementation?

Professional completing the context assessment and agreed authorisation

Lead completing assessment		Date	
Authorising manager		Date	

Context conference review (recommended six months after initial)

Date of first context conference	
Date of review context conference	

Appendix E: Context conference outcomes form

Initial or review context conference

Took place on

Basic details		
Address and details of context		
Conference chair		
Attendees		
The plan		
Danger statement		
What is going well?	What are we worried about?	What needs to happen next?
Existing strengths	Past harm	Next steps
Existing safety	Complicating factors	
Safety goal		

What needs to happen? Outcome	Who will do this? Responsibility	When does it need to be done? Timeframe

Date, time and location of next context conference	
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Appendix F: Context conference - outcomes form example

Example in relation to harmful sexual behaviour displayed in a school environment, adapted from the Contextual Safeguarding Network website to include signs of safety

What is going well?	What are we worried about?	What needs to happen next?
Existing strengths	Past harm	Next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 7s have strong relationships with adults Students feel safe when at school and enjoy after school activities Targeted work started in school to tackle sexual harassment has commenced Low homophobic bullying reported by students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Normalisation of harmful sexual behaviour: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> instances of sexual harassment in schools by male pupils low reporting of bullying, but high levels reported sexual touching (comments by students in survey) concerns of abuse through social media Students report feeling unsafe in local area (school journeys) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> concerns about local park fear in relation to 'gang' activity feel unsafe between 3 and 6pm Key community partners not present at the meeting Cohort of girls vulnerable to CSE within the student body – appear to have been groomed by adult males online Feeling that external agencies not listening to concerns being raised School not informed of interventions that have taken place in the past 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bystander interventions with staff and students Further work with young people to map safe and unsafe areas outside school Work with police and community safety to respond to areas identified as unsafe Review of school policies, behaviour logs and procedures in relation to harmful sexual behaviour Feedback to students following student survey CSE assessment and trauma informed work with specific cohort identified (to be followed up in separate plan for the group)

Existing strengths	Complicating factors	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School staff unsure how to challenge sexually abusive behaviour • School feels messages by parents and the wider community counter the school's ethos of gender equality • Attendees unclear as to why young people report feeling unsafe when surveyed • Congregation of young people - how should staff respond? • What makes young people feel safe in some areas? • How to engage community agencies and partners? • Age of those perpetrating CSE is unclear? Is it adults or peers? • How have the students met those who pose a risk? Is it online or through other students? • How can the school best link to other agencies? 	



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