

<b>Children and Young People Select Committee</b>
<b>Contextual Safeguarding and Youth Relationships</b>
<b>Scrutiny Review</b>
<b>Outline Scope</b>

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<b>Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?</b> Making the Borough a place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm Develop and embed a new contextual safeguarding hub with our partners in Hartlepool to protect children from exploitation Links to Safer Stockton priorities	
<b>What are the main issues and overall aim of this review?</b> As children move from early childhood into adolescence, they spend increasing amounts of time socialising outside the home or 'online'. The majority make this transition safely and have safe and protective schools, community settings and friendship groups. However, some children and young people can come across individuals / groups who are willing to exploit them due to their age and other vulnerabilities. A child may not recognise they are being exploited; they may think they have a free and open choice as they are subjected to a combination of 'push, pull and control' factors that they themselves are not aware of. Push factors are things that can push a child away from their home and towards the perpetrator (including adverse childhood experiences such as neglect and family conflict). Pull factors are grooming techniques used to lure the child and gain their child's attention and admiration or desire for acceptance by those with more power over them such as money and status, and control factors include threats of some kind including violence. We recognise that children who are being exploited need a particular type of response from children's services, one that is holistic and child-focused to address those push/pull factors and protect them from harm. This is coupled with action alongside community safety and police to target perpetrators and disrupt their activities.	

**Contextual Safeguarding** is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families.

Contextual safeguarding recognises the impact that extra-familial settings can have on the ability of parents and carers to be protective and the weight of peer influence on the decisions that young people make. Contextual safeguarding:

- Extends the notion of 'capacity to safeguard' to sectors that operate beyond families
- Provides a framework in which referrals can be made for contextual interventions that, when delivered effectively, can complement work with individuals and families

The review will examine our response and approach to the issues of contextual safeguarding, child exploitation and the issue of youth violence.

There are increasing concerns about threats to young people from organised crime groups, and in the context of national trends about youth violence as well as the continuing focus on child sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation. Young people being sexually exploited remains a national and local issue. Exploitation by organised criminal activity is a more recent threat. In addition, there are concerns over youth violence including the carrying of knives. The review mirrors a national focus on the increasing threat to young people from factors outside the home.

The Council are developing an approach with Hartlepool and Cleveland Police to respond in the form of a MACE (Multi agency child exploitation) hub.

This review will examine the issues and factors which are leading to a focus in this area, evaluate our response and help to steer the work of the MACE hub.

Within this context, the review will also examine **violent and coercive behaviour in youth relationships**.

As most young people have smartphones and can be in constant contact with a person they are in a relationship with, there is an increase of young people engaged in toxic and controlling relationships which they believe is normal behaviour. These intense early relationships in young adulthood can lead to unhealthy adult relationships and domestic abuse.

A key outcome would be to educate young people on healthy relationships (including consensual sexual relationships) and support national campaign empowering girls to stop abuse.

**The Committee will undertake the following key lines of enquiry:**

- What adverse childhood experienced (ACE) make children less trusting of adults and vulnerable to unhealthy relationships and exploitative situations?
- What ACE create attachment/ personality disorders affecting relationships in later life? How can these issues be addressed?
- Review current approaches; are they coherent? Do they respond to the Child/YP's needs?
- What is the legal and policy framework for contextual safeguarding approaches?
- How are young people at risk identified? What is the profile for children at risk?
- In what contexts might children and young people experience harm? What are the risks?
- What key partners are involved in a contextual safeguarding system?
- To what extent do children's services and key agencies/ partners have a reach into the places where extra-familial harm occurs?
- What partnerships are in place with sectors/ individuals responsible for the nature of extra-familial contexts?
- How effectively are partners sharing information and how well do partner agencies work together?

- How do we prevent, assess and intervene with the social conditions of abuse?
- What approaches have been proven to have a positive impact?
- Is context acknowledged explicitly in all work with children and families? How are we embedding contextual safeguarding with the children’s social care system?
- Are extra-familial contexts incorporated into child protection frameworks?
- What education is provided to students in relation to wellbeing, healthy relationships and safeguarding?
- Do children know where to go for help and support?
- Are there any gaps in relationship work in schools and other settings?
- How are the outcomes of success measured in relation to contextual as well as individual change?

**Who will the Committee be trying to influence as part of its work?**

Cabinet, key partners.

**Expected duration of review and key milestones:**

Eight months:

- Scope and Project Plan agreed – 8 June 2022
- Evidence gathering – July – November 2022
- Draft Recommendations – 7 December 2022
- Final Report – 17 January 2023
- Submission to Cabinet – 23 February 2023

**What information do we need?**

**Existing information** (background information, existing reports, legislation, central government documents, etc.):

- <https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/contextual-safeguarding/> Publications
- The legal and policy framework for Contextual Safeguarding approaches
- Hackney Council – Whole systems application – Contextual Safeguarding Implementation Toolkit

**New information:**

- Wide range of case studies
- Different approaches to tackling the problem adopted elsewhere

**Who can provide us with further relevant evidence?** (Cabinet Member, officer, service user, general public, expert witness, etc.)

- Contextual Safeguarding Team  
Children’s Social Care
- Education and Wellbeing Service
- Hartlepool and Stockton Safeguarding  
Children Partnership

**What specific areas do we want them to cover when they give evidence?**

- What is Contextual Safeguarding  
Background Presentation – What is Contextual Safeguarding? Causes of vulnerability
- Work in Schools
- Multi-agency approach  
Role of HSSCP  
Partnership working

Cleveland Police and other key partners, including Safer Stockton Partnership and Youth Justice	Wider strategic approach to tackle issues within Cleveland and surrounding areas
<b>How will this information be gathered? (e.g. financial baselining and analysis, benchmarking, site visits, face-to-face questioning, telephone survey, survey)</b>	
Committee meetings, interviews.	
<b>How will key partners and the public be involved in the review?</b>	
As above.	
<b>How will the review help the Council meet the Public Sector Equality Duty?</b>	
<p>The Equality Act 2010 protects everyone from discrimination on grounds of nine Protected Characteristics, including Disability.</p> <p>The Council is under a duty to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.</li><li>• Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.</li><li>• Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.</li></ul> <p>The review will contribute towards meeting the Council's requirements under this Duty, particularly in relation to the outcomes for more vulnerable children.</p>	
<b>How will the review contribute towards the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, or the implementation of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy?</b>	
Supports the vision to ensure children and young people are protected from harm and supported to be the best they can be in life.	
<b>Provide an initial view as to how this review could lead to efficiencies, improvements and/or transformation:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Oversight of the issue</li><li>• Review of our response</li><li>• Work with stakeholders to help educate young people on healthy relationships</li><li>• Extending relationship work in schools and other settings to plug any gaps</li><li>• More focus on emotional health in schools and an expansion of early support</li><li>• Potential programmes to address trauma/ attachment disorders, including building empathy</li><li>• Targeted programmes to disrupt unhealthy relationships and re-engage children and young people in healthy relationships</li><li>• Accessing violence reduction funding</li><li>• Strengthening of MACE</li></ul>	

<b>Project Plan</b>			
<b>Key Task</b>	<b>Details/Activities</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<b>Scoping of Review</b>	Information gathering	May 2022	Scrutiny Officer Link Officer
<b>Tri-Partite Meeting</b>	Meeting to discuss aims and objectives of review	23 May 2022	Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member, Director, Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
<b>Agree Scope and Project Plan</b>	Scope and Project Plan agreed by Committee	8 June 2022	Select Committee
<b>Publicity of Review</b>	N/A	N/A	
<b>Obtaining Evidence</b>	Background and Context Definitions/ What makes a child vulnerable?  Our response now/ PSE in schools – relationships / projects / other preventative work  Contextual safeguarding and MACE  What are we doing to respond to the information? /What else could we be doing? / What are others doing?	27 July 2022  14 September 2022  12 October 2022  16 November 2022	Select Committee
<b>Members decide recommendations and findings</b>	Review summary of findings and formulate draft recommendations	7 December 2022	Select Committee (Informal Session)
<b>Circulate Draft Report to Stakeholders</b>	Circulation of Report	December 2022/ January 2023	Scrutiny Officer
<b>Tri-Partite Meeting</b>	Meeting to discuss findings of review and draft recommendations	TBA	Select Committee Chair and Vice-Chair, Cabinet Member, Director, Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer
<b>Final Agreement of Report by Select Committee</b>	Approval of final report by CYP Select Committee	11 January 2023	Select Committee, Cabinet Member, Director
<b>Consideration of Report by Executive Scrutiny</b>	Consideration of report	17 January 2023	Executive Scrutiny Committee
<b>Report to Cabinet/Approving Body</b>	Presentation of final report with recommendations for approval to Cabinet	23 February 2023	Cabinet