



VOCypf CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING FORUM

19TH NOVEMBER 2019

SUMMARY REPORT

Introduction

“Contextual Safeguarding, expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people are vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts.”

(Firmin, 2017, Contextual Safeguarding Network, University of Bedford)

This event provided an opportunity to learn more about this approach to understanding and responding to young people’s experience of risk and harm in a variety of settings beyond the family home, considering how we can work together as local communities to identify areas of good practice, concerns and actions to further safeguard young people, moving beyond the traditional thinking of safeguarding being focused on the family and the home environment.

Overview of the Day

A total of 79 participants from Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire attended the multi agency forum – 54 from voluntary and community organisations, 20 statutory organisations, 4 private/business and 3 others. A full summary of all evaluation forms is available and will be distributed to participants. Below we provide examples of feedback for each session.

1. **The Networking Lunch** – Participants had an opportunity to network, this is always considered a really beneficial aspect of the VOCypf forums.

“Always great to meet other people – so many inspirational groups and conversations. Loved the food!”

2. **Contextual Safeguarding Network Briefing** – A briefing document providing an overview of the conceptual framework was sent out to participants in advance of the event.

“It was really helpful to have some information in advance of the session”

3. **What is Contextual Safeguarding and how is it being addressed locally?**

Liz Clarke, Safeguarding & Quality Assurance Manager of Bedford Borough Council provided a detailed introduction to the concept of contextual safeguarding, looking at legislation, the work of the Contextual Safeguarding Network and exploring the contexts of vulnerability and the interplay between them and the impact of extra-familial risk on children and young people.

“Brilliant, very informative” “Clear knowledge with real local information” “so very relevant”

4. The impact of acute childhood experiences (ACES) and the importance of working together to safeguard as a whole community

Kimberley Lamb, Head of the Violence and Exploitation Reduction Unit, Bedfordshire Police gave a very powerful and insightful presentation on

“Very powerful”

“Really brought home the reality”

“Extremely inspirational and put the information into context”

“Testimony relates directly to safeguarding”

5. The Jigsaw

Wendie Harvey – CEO at FACES and Michele Flynn Operations Manager at Bedford Open Door facilitated an interactive session looking at the various contexts of vulnerability and considering what is working well, what needs to be addressed and what actions can be taken forward.

“Great opportunity to discuss diverse areas of safeguarding- a starting point to build on”

“Encourages action not just talk”

“Allowed consideration of the true contextual nature of safeguarding”

6. Embedding the Voice of Young people

Vanessa Simon of Youth Voices at MacDonalDs gave a presentation about the engagement sessions she has been running at the High Street MacdonalDs in Bedford.

“Very inspiring, shows how one person who is motivated can make a huge difference”

“Simple, clear and really enlightening. What a fantastic idea!”

7. Other Potential areas for discussion

- Role of men as role models
- Young carers
- Have a follow up to see what changes have been made
- The potential is vast – so many topics interlink – discussion needs to continue
- Link to Central Beds too
- Further discussion on practical ways to safeguard children with contextual safeguarding
- Maybe focused sessions next time for each group of people eg vol / statutory / business etc to direct and encourage action focused work

“Absolute pleasure to support the conference and an opportunity to make those networks and connections which such an array of voluntary organisations. I appreciate being able to be involved and Children’s services being able to contribute to such an important part of developing the widest response to contextual safeguarding from all of us working with children in Bedford Borough.”

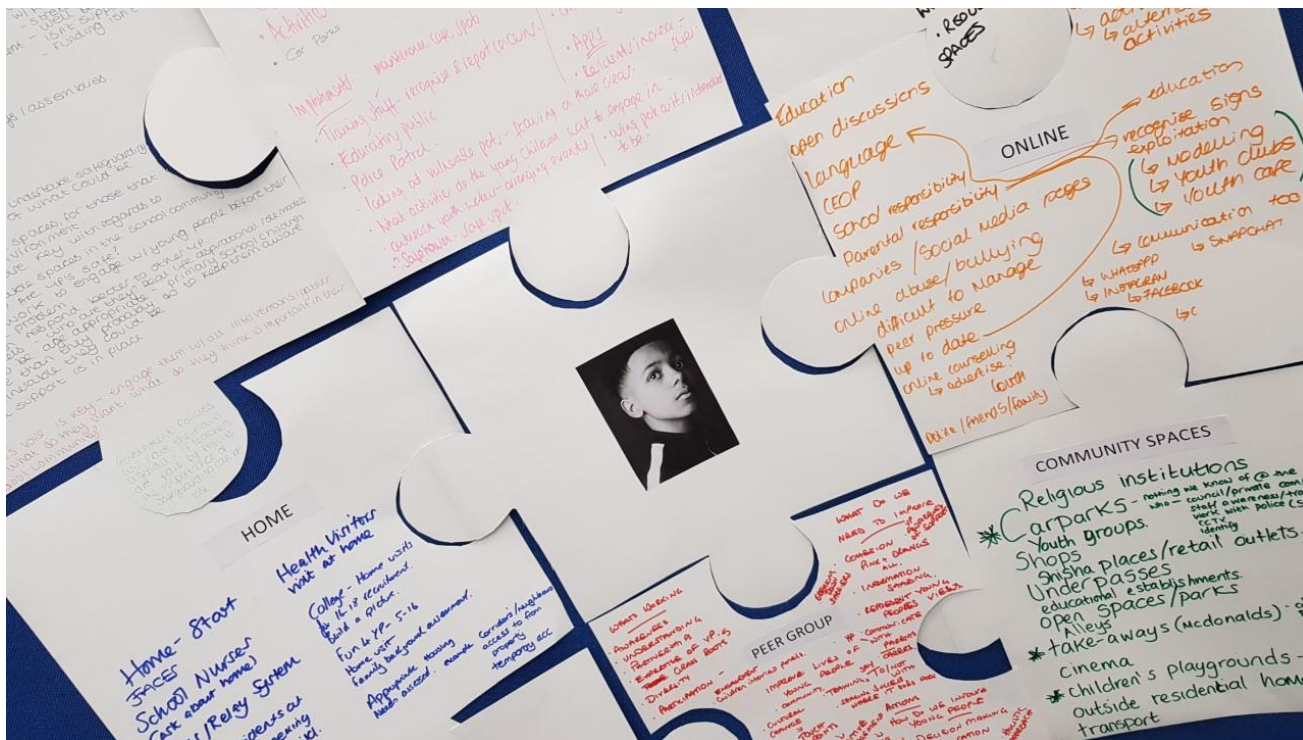
Liz Clarke, Manager for Safeguarding and Quality Assurance

“The event was truly inspiring and I took a lot away from it, especially all the voluntary and charitable organisations that we in the police are not always aware of or the assistance they can offer.” Sally Taylor, Honour Based Abuse Officer, Bedfordshire Police

“Hope some of the excellent suggestions get actioned and pushed forward”

“ A really great, engaging and full afternoon. A lot of good work was applauded and affirmed”

THE JIGSAW – RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS



A full summary report of each element is available in a separate report. Presentations of the findings will be made at multi-agency strategic meetings across Bedfordshire.

RECOMMENDATIONS / ACTIONS

<p>SCHOOLS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all members of staff undertake safeguarding training so they are aware of what could be a concern • Enable young people safe spaces for those who can't cope in school environment • People on the ground are key with regards to safeguarding • Be aware of vulnerable spaces in the school community – are they monitored? Are young people safe/ • Detached youth work to engage with young people before their behaviour becomes a problem • Young people often respond better to other young people • Positive role models – who are they? Real aspirational role models • Support needs to be age appropriate – primary school children need to know more than they probably do to keep them aware of risks / how vulnerable they could be • Post 16 – what support is in place? • Young people's voice is key – engage them / all interventions/ gather feedback – what do they want, what do they think is important in their school community • Government policies have their own agenda – if teachers are paid by results the importance of safeguarding can be lost • More sustainable funding for projects that are successful eg for external agencies / vol sector delivering assemblies and plays in school around safeguarding issues eg knife crime etc • Improve relationships with parents for academy / upper schools – more trust to know what is going on in families and how they can get help (child or parent) • Support the emotional wellbeing of the staff involved in safeguarding / build resilience • Counselling, mindfulness and wellbeing support in schools – mapping of what is being provided and where the gaps are
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Community Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to engage with the private companies and council teams who are responsible for car parks and do staff awareness / training – work with the police / CCTV etc. • Work with Community Safety Partnerships to focus on open spaces / parks / take aways – practical steps like improved lighting in dark areas etc • Involve local businesses to make them aware of their role and what they can do with information – maybe through Bedford Bid and other local initiatives in community areas • Consult young people through youth clubs / groups about where they see the areas of risk are in their local community and what they might suggest as solutions • Put up posters for drug users in common hot spots with information about services • Consider replicating the Midland Road Community enhancement model in other local areas • Ensure safeguarding is considered when setting budgets for community developments • Link with religious institutions to ensure they are aware of their role in relation to contextual safeguarding • Review alley / passageways in local areas to improve lighting and safety
Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify what the reporting mechanisms are if personnel are concerned about a young person • Have clear information for young people of what to do if unsafe / threatened etc • Training for staff involved in transporting young people eg school escorts in taxis and taxi drivers • Intel required on adults who may pose a risk of CSE/CLA who are transporting young people • Safer recruitment for those who provide passenger assistance for young people • Have a clear process for transport staff to alert if they see vulnerable / unaccompanied children on public transport • Help/panic buttons on trains / buses etc – do young people know they can use them? Posters? • Not ejecting children from school buses and leaving them vulnerable • Encouraging reporting if incidents happen on a journey – clarity of who to report to • Engage with planners of new builds to look at safeguarding as a factor eg where are the bus stops • Increase public transport particularly in rural areas • Provide free public transport for under 18's <p>Link up with the transport providers / town centre staff / BID / planning departments for new build areas / licensing departments / community policing / schools</p>
Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train park staff to recognise and report concerns eg maintenance, ground keepers, café staff • Create a code word sentence • Have clear pathways for public to report concerns for action • Increase police patrols in park areas in a way that does not alienate young people • More outreach youth workers organising events for young people in parks and open spaces • Involve sports groups and ensure the staff have training on contextual safeguarding • Consult young people about the parks in their local areas – what is good, what needs to improve and what activities would they like to engage in • Look at the most vulnerable areas and prioritise actions in these first • Involve youth clubs / groups – be area specific
Town Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve young people in talking about their concerns about the town centres (not just Bedford) • Have a focus group with young people – if they go to town why? If not why? What would they change? • Reduce the dark spaces / better lighting in vulnerable spaces • Use empty spaces for positive activities eg ping pong recently in empty shop in Bedford town centre • Public transport needs to be more affordable – people hang around in town • Identify areas where children do not feel safe – ask them • Continue work on homeless reduction • Ensure community police are aware of young people who are vulnerable

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of street rangers to make people feel safe
Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure police seek the voice of the child when investigating incidents at home • Could college do home visits for 16-18 recruitment – build a picture • Review the impact of housing needs when placing vulnerable families / children at risk – look at neighbours’ access to and from properties / impact of temporary accommodation – ensure housing needs fully assessed • Look at models of effective services that are in the family home and link to safeguarding provision e.g. Home-Start, FACES, YMCA Fun4YP • DANS/Relay System • Training for school nurses to ask about home to inform the context of what is going on for the child
Peer Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are good examples of expertise in grass roots organisations – engage them / fund them • Introduce more young people into interview panels and decision-making forums • Ensure appropriate mentoring support to represent young people’s views • Look at cultural change – where are the touch points and positive engagements • Provide better communication between sectors to improve joint working • Remember diversity and cultural issues and connect with young people to understand this from their perspectives • Challenge perceptions of young people in the community – good role models • Develop peer support / mentoring • It takes a village Think community
Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide education and training – some good work being done in schools – engage parents • Enable parents to recognise the signs of exploitation – more information for parents on where to seek advice • Understand the impact and influence of peer pressure – training / information / advice • Look at what is available for young people in terms of online support and provide information • Promote alternatives to being online – active play / alternative activities that are free and accessible • Have information about recognising the signs of exploitation in youth clubs and youth cafes • Provide information to young people about what to do if they are being bullied on line or are worried about contacts they have • Ensure professionals stay up to date with trends on social media and the language young people use etc • Raise more awareness in the community about the CEOP

NEXT STEPS

The VOCyfp representatives on key strategic groups across Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire will highlight the actions and recommendations resulting from the event and seek partnership sign up to progressing actions with relevant authorities and personnel.

Statutory partner representatives present also agreed to present the findings of the day at relevant forums / meetings and to look at forward actions that relate to their areas of delivery / expertise.

A review of actions will be undertaken at the next VOCyfp Executive Committee meeting in January 2020 and work will be done with multi agency partners to determine actions that specifically engage young people in various settings to embed their experience, views and opinions.

A second forum event will be planned for March 2020 to take place in Central Bedfordshire.

Michele Flynn, Chair of VOCyfp – November 2019