**Group/Incident Mapping Guidance**

**Background**

A Harm outside the Home approach to safeguarding has been developed in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The Harm outside the Home framework that has been developed is an approach to safeguarding that supports practitioners to recognise and respond to the harm that young people experience outside of the home. This group/incident mapping toolkit has been developed to provide guidance to practitioners when to undertake peer mapping exercises, (to request a mapping meeting please email [exploitation.team@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:exploitation.team@towerhamlets.gov.uk), the team will chair and provide an analyst to complete the map with you using mapping software) how this process can be used to implement and manage safeguarding interventions more effectively and to understand the risks and harm that may be being pertained to a group of children.

Young people can encounter both risks and safety within their peer networks and social circles, as well as in locations outside of their home. Through carrying out mapping exercises, practitioners can identify and understand the nature and extent of these. Mapping achieves this by:

Providing a detailed picture of the roles and relationships between individuals, including the amount of influence and control individuals have within a network.

• Giving an understanding of the nature, scale and seriousness of the vulnerabilities posed by/to identified groups, individuals, and locations.

• Supporting the identification of effective safeguarding interventions and other suitable multi-agency opportunities (e.g. disruption, environmental change).

• Focusing awareness on information gaps, and how to inform these by information gathering.

• Providing a foundation for the ongoing management of the group/location within a multi-agency partnership context.

**Group Mapping**

When starting a mapping exercise, consideration should be given to its purpose. Although a map showing connections between young people might appear useful, the end product might be limited in terms of helping practitioners understand and manage the vulnerabilities and issues identified.

**Pre-Mapping Work**

Mapping is a multi-stage process – before holding an initial mapping session, it is beneficial to identify what you believe the key issues and vulnerabilities are, based on all available information.

Questions to consider at this stage might be:

* Have you identified a list of persons linked to the issue/ group/location of concern?
* Are there any environmental contexts (e.g. school/neighbourhood locations) highlighted by the information?
* Have key contacts in relation to these young people and contexts (e.g. practitioners, youth workers, school safeguarding leads, police officers, housing wardens) been identified?
* Are there any contexts/young people identified who are already subject to context safeguarding/group mapping?
* Have key questions been identified in relation to each young person/context/vulnerability as to how they relate to the network being mapped?

**Information to consider**

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| **Current concerns - vulnerabilities** | Missing episodes – believed to be going to Bournemouth with drugs/links to grooming for county lines.  Substance misuse – cannabis  Currently NEET |
| **Current linked contexts** | 123 Lower Tower Hamlets Lane (adult male address where male A stays during missing episodes)    Bow house where Male A was arrested for Possession with intent to supply  Positive context – attends youth group |
| **Linked people/ group** | Unknown adult male (123 Lower Hamlets Lane)  Male B – positive relationship from previous school  Male C – found in Bournemouth  Female A – girlfriend (believe positive)  Female B – Vulnerable YP in Stepney |
| **Key contacts** | Police Contact – CE-BCU - LI  Youth Club staff member  Substance misuse worker  Police contact - Police Contact – Exploitation Police Team |
| **Key questions** | Who is the adult living at 123 Lower Hamlets Lane?  Who else is linked to 123 Lower Hamlets Lane?  What is the address in Stepney and have any other arrests been made?  What is the relationship with female in Stepney?  Is the relationship with Male B and Female A still positive? |

**Mapping Sessions**

The mapping meetings should not replace Strategy Meetings or other child protection planning meetings but should inform and direct the safeguarding and planning processes in a more contextual way.

When holding a mapping meeting, it is important to remain focused on the original objectives of the process. A lot of information will be shared and obtained, particularly when discussing larger groups or thematic issues, and it is therefore important that the structure of the meetings enables reflection on which information should be included in the map. Focusing on the information relating to the issue being mapped will prevent tangents into unrelated areas of vulnerability (which may warrant a separate mapping exercise) and ensure interventions don’t become too broad and ineffective as a result.

The mapping process should be undertaken over a number of sessions, with the initial one(s) focusing on internal information sharing and mapping (e.g. between Children’s Services practitioners). This will give relevant partner agencies the time needed to collate relevant information on the children/young people and the locations being mapped which can then be brought together at a follow up session or planning meeting. This method will also assist in keeping the network map up to date, through regular revisiting of information gaps, actions and interventions during the period of work.

Once mapping has been completed, considerations should be made towards the identified risks or strengths of the group. If clear links are identified between young people following mapping, and the risks are significant, then further assessment should be undertaken.

**Mapping process**

**Mapping Session 1 – Internal**

Internal Teams – Early Help, Social Care

Identify and map information to shape group/context map

Review current map and update

Identify information gaps

Identify key partners to inform gaps

**Mapping Session 2- including external**

Include external partner identified from session 1 eg police, school staff

Identify and map information to shape group/context map.

Review current map and update.

Identify information gaps.

Identify key partners to inform gaps and enable interventions.

**Review Mapping Session**

Review existing actions.

Review current map and update.

Identify information gaps/safeguarding interventions.

Identify key actions to inform gaps and enable interventions.

Close group work when work has concluded.

The initial mapping session should take place within **two weeks** of the identification of a context issue/risk (e.g. a Police report concerning a group-based incident, or a school raising concern about the culture of a classroom/ group at school), with the first mapping meeting involving external agencies taking place within **two weeks** of the initial meeting.

It is important that those invited to the mapping sessions have enough time to research and collate information on the subjects/contexts being mapped. Sending a summary or list of subjects through secure email at least one week before the planned session should provide enough time for this research to take place.

Once a mapping meeting has been held, minutes and any other documentation produced (e.g. a physical/digital network map) should be uploaded on the Mosaic file of all key subjects within **two weeks** of the meeting. The title of these uploaded documents should clearly state the key context risks of the network (e.g. *Mapping Minutes Network – County Line to Brighton; Mapping Minutes Network – Image Sharing Primary School*).

**Review mapping meetings**

Review meetings should take place following a significant incident taking place or an important piece of information being shared, or otherwise when an intervention has concluded. At the end of each mapping session, clear actions should be identified for obtaining further information (where this is needed) and the implementation of safeguarding interventions, and the timescales for these should help the setting of a date for the review meeting. Dependent upon the level of update to the network map, the review can take place with multi-agency partners within an existing review meeting.

When a review meeting is held, updates should be sought for all outstanding actions, and each mapped subject and context should be reassessed. The latter is important in ensuring that resources and interventions are being applied to the right parts of the mapped network, and that those who are no longer part of it are removed (as well as new subjects being added). Review meetings should continue to be held until there is agreement that the risks and vulnerabilities linked to the subjects/contexts have reduced.

**Group mapping practical steps**

This document outlines the practical steps for mapping a group. The process of mapping will vary between groups/ incidents; the following provides guidance of key practical steps that can be used.

**Pre-meeting process**

Prior to holding a meeting/discussion with practitioners to map out relationships the following considerations should be made:

***Group mapping with a young person***

Wherever possible, a group mapping exercise should first be carried out with each of the individual young people in the group that has been referred. The aim is to find out their view of their group and the group dynamics; this information will inform the professionals meeting or, if it is done at a later stage, can be used to test out the information provided by professionals. The worker with the best relationship with the young person should do this.

***Pre-meeting gathering of information (Completed by the Exploitation Service)***

Gather the information that is already available on each young person from case management systems, if they are open to services. Find out which professionals/services are working with them. If they are not open to services, are there other key stakeholders who know them or have worked with them, e.g. Voluntary and Community Sector organisations? Consider, during the direct conversation with the young person, if they have mentioned any other friends/peers who should be included?

**Group mapping meeting**

For the actual mapping exercise, it would be advisable to prepare with flipchart paper, coloured pens/markers and post-it notepads (in case you need to stick these on top of names of locations or overlay information). **The analyst from the exploitation service will also attend the mapping and will do all the maps electronically but it is advisable to have flipchart etc because it allows for a visual during the meeting.**

Conduct a group mapping meeting with the key professionals and stakeholders linked to the group to ensure a systematic approach to gathering information. Where there are information gaps, task people with finding out more information with a clear deadline in mind.

When mapping remember to test out the strength of relationships; whether information is evidenced or if it is just anecdotal; how many times have the young people been seen together, where have they been sighted and by whom? When was this information captured – is it a recent or historic incident? Where does the information come from? Is it a reliable source of information? Who are followers/leaders in the group? Are there protective features about the group or are they solely negative/risky?

Record the information – you can create a map however you want as long as it is legible, presentable and can somehow be recorded/captured on the information management system. Taking a photo of a clearly drawn map is fine. See Figure 3 below for an example.

Once you have gathered all your information, redraw the map removing any excess details and writing them up as a separate narrative. This helps to keep the map clear while not losing important details.

Ensure that the map is dated and that you build an appropriate review timeframe into the meeting process – e.g. every 3 months but also when there has been a significant development or incident which impacts on the group/relationship(s).

**Group map exercise for direct work with young person**

**You will need:** A4 or A3 paper and pen or coloured pens

**Step 1:** Ask the young person to draw a circle at the centre of the page that represents them.

**Step 2:** Ask the young person to draw their friends or other young people they socialise with (their peers) on the paper around their circle. They should place them closer to, or further away from, their original circle depending on how close or distant their relationship is. See the example below:

Used to be good friends with A & his brother B. Knew them from school but they moved out of the area

Know C from football,

mostly see him at

practice & matches

Known best friend since primary school. Used to live on same estate. Mums know each other

See my cousins at

the weekend

Best friend

Me

Cousin

A

Cousin B

Friend C

Friend A

Friend B

**Step 3:** Use the map to explore the group dynamics with the young person. Ask questions about their friendships; find out more about the dynamics of their relationship, including any positive or negative influences. Examples of questions include:

* Who are you closest to?
* Who do you spend most time with?
* Who would you say is a positive influence on you?
* Are you a positive influence on someone?
* Out of all your friends, who would you trust to help you if you were in trouble?
* Out of this group, are there any friends that your parent/carer/teacher would say has a negative influence on you?
* Do you think you have influence over anyone?
* Are you friends’ parents/carers happy for you to spend time together?
* Do your parents/carers know your friends or their parents/carers?
* Have you ever got into trouble (at school, with the police, at youth club, etc.) with any of your friends?

***As well as being an information gathering tool, this exercise can form an intervention tool with an individual, by including an additional step 4:***

**Step 4:** With the young person, think through strategies that will support them to build on the strengths in their peer group and to reduce the harm. For example, if the exercise has demonstrated that loyalty to a particular friend or group is causing young people to get into trouble with the police or teachers, are there ways that the young person can maintain that loyalty and friendship without engaging in negative activities? E.g. putting an agreement into place with their education establishment or their youth club for them to leave at a different time from their peers.