**Keeping Me Safe Plan**

**Safeguarding**

**Young People in**

**Vulnerable Circumstances**



**6th November 2023**

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##

## Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide multi-agency guidance for those working with young people considered to be at risk of harm, either through their own actions or the actions of others. It has been developed to underpin existing professional inter-agency working and to enhance the support already available to vulnerable young people, with an increased emphasis upon relationship building, persistence and engagement, in line with Dudley’s Restorative Practice Framework. This guidance applies to agencies working directly or indirectly with children, young people and families.

## Background

Dudley Safeguarding Procedures are clear that an Initial Child Protection Conference should be convened when it is believed that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm that is attributable to parental care, or lack of. In these circumstances, a Child Protection Conference would be the forum for discussing these concerns. It therefore follows that a Child Protection Plan would be the best way then to address those concerns, with its emphasis on the responsibility of the parents/carers to promote the child’s welfare plan. However, professionals working with young people are increasingly encountering those who are at risk of harm within their communities (e.g. serious youth violence, exploitation, drug and alcohol use), and this risk is not always attributed directly to the care they are receiving from their parents or carers, although there are instances of a lack of proactive response from parents or even collusion with the risk occurring outside of the home. In these circumstances, there may be a high degree of concern by agencies, family members and the young person’s friends about the welfare of the young person. The Keeping Me Safe Planning framework has been developed to acknowledge, share, manage and review these concerns in partnership with the parent/carer, the young person, and the professional network. The Keeping Me Safe Plan is an integrated, multi-agency plan with measurable outcomes that reduce the risk to the young person, with timescales and reviewing processes in place.

It will be the responsibility of the relevant service area and team to oversee, plan for and deliver the Keeping Me Safe Plan. Support and guidance can be sought from the Child Exploitation Team on a case-by-case basis. The allocated Social Worker will be responsible for the co-ordination of services. This will allow for integration and consistency across the safeguarding partnership and utilises the networking and peer-mapping opportunities in relation to exploitation themes and issues.

1. **Different Routes to Keeping Me Safe Plan**

There are 4 potential routes to Keeping Me Safe Plan:

1. Where there are complex needs and the child is deemed to be a Child in Need under Section 17 Children Act 1989; the Keeping Me Safe Plan will be followed in place of Child in Need Plan, where the Keeping Me Safe Plan will be the alternative.
2. Following a Strategy Meeting and enquiries under Section 47 Children Act 1989, where concerns of significant harm are substantiated and the child is judged to be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, **but the primary harm is outside the family home.** For example, if a young person’s parents/carers are taking appropriate steps to care for their child but that child continues to experience extra-familial threats in their community, peer group or school, then the Keeping Me Safe Planning process should be adopted~~.~~
3. Following Youth Justice Service intervention, for example, as a step down from a Referral Order, a Youth Rehabilitation Order or a custodial sentence.
4. A child or family would benefit from co-ordinated support from more than one organisation or agency through the provision of Early Help services leading to a Keeping Me Safe Plan.

The Keeping Me Safe Plan can be used alongside a Child Protection Plan or Child in Need Plan, if younger siblings in the family are the subjects of these plans. However, theKeeping Me Safe Plan meetings should be separated from the Child Protection and/or Child in Need meetings.

## Framework

The Keeping Me Safe Plan framework has been developed and adapted from best-practice evidence and evaluated models, in particular the Contextual Safeguarding Network Approach Core Principles. Models used by other Local Authorities, particularly, Devon, Salford and Norfolk have also been considered when developing this framework.

Using evidence drawn from effective international and local practice, the Research in Practice evidence scope [**‘*That Difficult Age’***](https://www.researchinpractice.org.uk/children/publications/2014/november/that-difficult-age-developing-a-more-effective-response-to-risks-in-adolescence-evidence-scope-2014/) sets out a set of principles upon which to build a distinctive and adolescent-centred approach and improve responses to adolescent risk:

* Work with adolescent development - for example, identity formation, friendship attachments, risk-taking;
* Work with young people as assets and resources (strengths-based);
* Promote supportive relationships between young people and their family and peers (where possible);
* Prioritise supportive relationships between young people and key practitioners within the system response;
* Take a holistic approach to young people and the risks they face;
* Ensure services are accessible and available;
* Equip and support the workforce, through high quality learning opportunities and regular supportive supervision.

This guidance does not seek to replace existing policies or procedures, but aims to assist professionals in reducing the risk of harm to the young person by:

* Identifying vulnerability at the earliest possible stage;
* Responding to the needs of the young person in positive dialogue wherever possible directly with the young person;
* Taking a planned and co-ordinated risk management and harm reduction approach to promote the young person’s welfare with full account of the vulnerabilities relevant to their age and understanding.
1. **Situations that may lead to a young person being vulnerable**

The following situations may make the young person vulnerable to harm:

* Young people who are at risk of being sexually exploited or are involved in the exploitation of other young people;
* Missing from home;
* Missing from education;
* Misusing substances and/or alcohol;
* Involved in or at risk of becoming involved in gangs, organised crime or systematic criminal activity;
* Young people who are on the edge of care or at risk of being homeless;
* Young people who may be drawn into extremist activities and who may be considered under the Prevent agenda;
* Young people who are leaving secure accommodation or custody.
1. **The Keeping Me Safe Plan Process and Flow Chart**

Following referral of the young person into the Integrated Front Door, threshold will be determined from multi-agency discussions. The duty Adolescent Safeguarding Team Manager is consulted on threshold and make the decision about team allocation.

Where exploitation is the primary need, the young person will be allocated within the Child Exploitation Team for further assessment. Alongside the identified assessment, (CYPA, S.47 enquires), a Contextual Safeguarding Screening Tool should be completed (found within the forms section on LCS).

Once the tool has been completed, it will be screened by multi-agency exploitation leads to determine the young person’s risk of exploitation. If the young person is deemed at medium or high risk of exploitation, a MACE meeting will be convened.

The Social Worker should consult with their supervising Team Manager upon completion of the Contextual Safeguarding Screening Tool, and prior to the Child and Young Person’s Assessment being completed. The purpose of this consultation is to

decide whether the young person would benefit from a Keeping Me Safe Plan and whether this is the appropriate process to follow. The Social Worker should also consult with the child or young person when completing the Screening Tool and the Child and Young Person Assessment.

Following the Child and Young Person Assessment, if the Social Worker and Team Manager are satisfied that the concerns identified would be managed at a level of intervention equivalent to Child in Need - Section 17 Children Act 1989, then the Keeping Me Safe Plan will be initiated.

In circumstances where the Social Worker and the Team Manager are satisfied that the risks identified located outside of the home and decide the Keeping Me Safe Plan is a more effective approach to addressing the risks, the Initial Meeting will be convened with the multiagency partners, and the Keeping Me Safe Plan will be implemented. The supervising team manager will chair the Initial Meeting.

Where the young person lives with siblings or other children, consideration should always be given to the individual needs assessment and plans of those children, and child-led decisions made about the most appropriate level of service. In all cases, relevant information about connected children should be considered during assessment, planning and decision-making.

**Please see the flow chart below.**

If concerns could be managed at a level of intervention equivalent to **Child in Need**; Social Worker will recommend Keeping Me Safe Plan. Team Manager to approve if appropriate.

If the contextual risks identified are such that multi-agency inputs are required to safeguarding the child, the Keeping Me Safe Planning Meeting should be held.

1. **T****he Role of the Social Worker**

The Social Worker is the Key Professional in terms of implementing the Keeping Me Safe Plan. The Keeping Me Safe Plan is a multi-agency plan, in which the Social Worker is responsible for co-ordinating services and the service response. The Social Worker is responsible for visiting the young person a minimum of every 4 weeks, the frequency of the visits will be determined by the identifiable risks and recorded on the child’s file on LCS. Any additional visits, including those visits made by multi-agency partners, should be shared with the allocated Social Worker, who will update the young person’s record.

The young person may identify an advocate or key professional in which they are keen to work with. This professional must work closely with the Social Worker to support the implementation of the Keeping Me Safe Plan.

1. **Keeping Me Safe Plan Planning Meetings, Keeping Me Safe Plan Progress Checks:**

**Keeping Me Safe Plan Planning Meeting**

Keeping Me Safe Plan Initial Contextual Safeguarding Meetings are to be held;

* Within **10 working days** of the Child and Young Person’s Assessment being completed, if the Keeping Me Safe Plan is in place at a level of intervention equivalent to Child in Need;
* Within **15 working days** of the Section 47 Enquiry being completed, if the Keeping Me Safe Plan is in place where there are concerns which give rise to Significant Harm (Child Protection).

Keeping Me Safe Plan Initial Contextual Safeguarding Meetings will be chaired by the Supervising Team Manager. For those young people within the Youth Justice Service and Early Help, the Keeping Me Safe Plan Initial Meetings will be chaired by the Service Leads in those areas, with consultation and information-sharing from the Dudley Child Exploitation Team.

The template for the Initial Meeting is available in **Appendix 1.** The allocated Social Worker is responsible for uploading the completed document onto the young person’s file.

**Keeping Me Safe Plan Progress Checks**

The allocated Social Worker, or in some instances the young person with support from the Social Worker, will be responsible for chairing the Keeping Me Safe Plan Progress Check. The Progress Checks are an opportunity for the young person, family, and professionals involved to check the progress of the Keeping Me Safe Plan between reviews.

The frequency of these progress checks will be dependent upon the identifiable risk, and the allocated Social Worker will record the meeting on the relevant template in Appendix 1. The allocated Social Worker will be responsible for uploading the completed document onto the young person’s file.

**Keeping Me Safe Plan Reviews**

**The first Keeping Me Safe Plan Review will be held 3 months from the Keeping Me Safe Plan Initial Meeting and will be chaired by the Supervising Team Manager.** The Team Manager may decide that any subsequent reviews can be chaired by the Social Worker dependent upon the identifiable risk.

Following 6 months of implementation, the supervising team manager should make a request via the Safeguarding and Review inbox for the responsible Service Manager to assign a Child Protection Conference Chair to take part in a Solution Circle approach to the review of the Keeping Me Safe Plan. All the relevant partners, including the child and family will take part in the review and assess together the progress and effectiveness of the plan.

For those young people within the Youth Justice Service or Early Help, Keeping Me Safe Plan Reviews will be chaired by the Service Leads in these areas, with consultation and information- sharing from the Child Exploitation Team, if required.

The template for the Keeping Me Safe Plan Review is available in Appendix 1. The allocated Social Worker will be responsible for uploading the completed document onto the young person’s file.

**Please see the flow chart over-page:**

**Keeping Me Safe Plan Process**

**Appendix 1**

**Meeting Format and Proposed Agenda for Keeping Me Safe Plan Planning Meetings, Progress Checks, and Keeping Me Safe Plan Reviews**

It is proposed that the Initial Keeping Me Safe Plan Planning Meetings, Progress Checks, and Keeping Me Safe Plan Reviews follow an outline agenda:

 **1**. **Introductions**

The meeting is confidential - as is the record of the discussion which should not be shared with anyone not invited to the meeting without permission.

 **2. The meeting will consider**

* What concerns do we have?
* What is going well, what strengths are there and how can these help to improve safety?
* What do we need to see change and what disruption activity is required?
* What will the plan be, who will be responsible for each part of the plan and when will they do things?

**3. Information-sharing**

At the initial Keeping Me Safe Plan Meeting*,* the Social Worker provides the background information that has led to the Child and Young Person Assessment and the current situation.

At Keeping Me Safe Plan Reviews and Keeping Me Safe Plan Progress Check Meetings, theSocial Worker outlines the key events since the last meeting and updates on the progress of the plan. The meeting participants give their view of what they are worried about / what is going well, starting with the young person.

**4. The Plan**

All attendees should leave the meeting with a clear, SMART My Safety Plan*.* For guidance on SMART planning please see the [**CPP SMART Planning Guidance**](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms1/media/7515/smart-planning-guidance.pdf). The meeting should agree the improved outcomes (the safety destination) for the child which the plan needs to aim for and how this will be brought about, by whom and by when. The format for this will be based upon the plan of a page template for children aged 13 plus **(see Appendix 3)**.

**5. Contingency Planning**

The meeting should clarify what an increase in risk may look like and contingency plans may be outlined if the ‘bottom lines’ are transgressed, and professionals feel the child or young person is at increased risk. On these occasions, the Supervising Team Manager of the allocated Social Worker will notify the responsible Service Manager in the relevant Service Area to consider the young people, their circumstances and what further safety measures may be required.

**6. Decision - Making** **and Reviews**

The meeting will need to consider whether the child is continuing to be at risk of contextual safeguarding concerns, and in doing so the views of the child or young person, and parents, should be ascertained along with those of professionals.

If a Keeping Me Safe plan is agreed or continuing, the date and time of the Review Meeting will be agreed (in line with the minimum Early Help, Child in Need requirements), and the Chair should confirm members who will contribute to the Keeping Me Safe Plan Progress Check and date of the first Progress Check.

Following the Keeping Me Safe Plan meeting, any contextual issues or thematic concerns (links across multiple referrals) should be shared with the Dudley Child Exploitation Team and feedback provided to the multi-agency exploitation forum (currently Child Exploitation Partnership Group) so attention can be given to victim, offender and location.

**Exploitation Risks, Indicators and Vulnerability**

**Keeping Me Safe Plan**

**Appendix 2
Contextual Safeguarding and Keeping Me Safe Plan Flowchart**

**Integrated Front Door**

**Request for help and support received**

During assessment when the Keeping Me Safe Plan is identified as an alternative, discussion with the Child Exploitation Team Manager should identity one of the following routes.

 **1. Alternative to Child In Need**

1. **Alternative to Child Protection**
2. **Following Youth Justice Service intervention**
3. **Part of Early Help intervention**

**Referral assessed - threshold applied**

If route 2 is identified the Team Manager should initiate the initial Keeping Me Safe Planning Meeting

**HIGH risk of Exploitation**

**MEDIUM risk of Exploitation**

**At Risk of**

**Exploitation**

**REFERRAL TO EARLY HELP**

1. **Provide work to educate about risk, consent & abuse.**
2. **Share intelligence with police as appropriate.**
3. **Contextual Safeguarding risks to be addressed as part of Early Help Safety plan.**

**Young person to be allocated within the Child Exploitation Team if the primary issues are contextual safeguarding.**

**Contextual Safeguarding Screening Tool to be completed as part of Child and Young Person’s Assessment. MACE to be arranged (Medium and High Risk)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Keeping Me Safe Plan: At Risk of Exploitation | A child or family would benefit from co-ordinated support from more than one organisation or agency through the provision of Early Help services |
| Keeping Me Safe Plan: Medium Risk of Exploitation | Where there are more complex needs and the child is deemed to be a Child in Need under Section 17 Children Act, 1989Following Youth Justice Service intervention for example, as a result of a Referral Order, a Youth Rehabilitation Order or a custodial sentence |
| Keeping Me Safe Plan: High Risk of Exploitation | Following a Strategy meeting and enquiries under Section 47 Children Act 1989, when concerns of significant harm are substantiated **but the primary harm is outside the family home**As part of a Youth Justice Service intervention for example, as a result of a Referral Order, a Youth Rehabilitation Order or a custodial sentence |

**Initial Keeping Me Safe Planning Meeting**

**Keeping Me Safe Plan Progress Checks**

**Keeping Me Safe Plan Review**

**Appendix 3**

**Keeping Me Safe Plan**

**Name:**

**Date**:

On a scale of 0-5, 0 being the least confident and 5 being the most confident, how confident are you that you are safe when in your community?

Score:

What needs to change/happen for me? Who is best placed to help me with these changes?

What I am good at? What activities am I doing? Or what activities would I like to do?

* Thinking about diversionary activities, to support the disruption of exploitation and increase safety.

What am I worried about? What behaviour/thoughts and feelings, tell me, I might be in danger? What are the warning signs I might be at risk?

* Getting the young person to think about risk and the behaviours associated with these risks.

Why do I think the people working with me are worried about me? Who out of those people can I call upon for help/support?

* Thinking about who is supportive for the young person, who are they likely to call upon for support and how this working relationship will be encouraged maintained.

My reasons to live and make some changes…

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What are we worried about?** | **What needs to change/happen?***What diversionary activities can be offered?**What disruption techniques will be used?* | **Who will help you make this change?** | **How will we know we are making progress?** | **Target date for completion?** |
| \*ExampleJohn, you are not going to school following your permanent exclusion. John, you are not receiving an education, but you are also spending more time in the community, where you have been arrested recently for carrying a weapon.  | \*Example John, we need to find you a school so you are gaining an education and whilst you are at school, we know you are safe.  | \*ExampleJoe Brown- Social Worker Sarah Hunt- Education Outcomes  | \*Example John, you will be in school for 30 hours per week.  | \*Example By the autumn term, 1st September 2023.  |
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**Keeping Me Safe Plan**

Name:

Date:

On a scale of 0-5, 0 being the least confident and 5 being the most confident, how confident are you that you are safe when in your community?

Rating:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Worries**  | What am I worried about? What behaviour/thoughts and feelings, tell me, I might be in danger? What are the warning signs I might be at risk? |
| **Activities**  | What I am good at? What activities am I doing? Or what activities would I like to do? |
| **Who can I call on?** | Why do I think the people working with me are worried about me? Who out of those people can I call upon for help/support?  |
| **Change & Support** | What needs to change/happen for me? Who is best placed to help me with these changes?  |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **What are we worried about?** | **What needs to change/happen?***What diversionary activities can be offered?**What disruption techniques will be used?* | **Who will help you make this change?** | **How will we know we are making progress?** | **Target date for completion?** |
| \*ExampleJohn, you are not going to school following your permanent exclusion. John, you are not receiving an education, but you are also spending more time in the community, where you have been arrested recently for carrying a weapon.  | \*Example John, we need to find you a school so you are gaining an education and whilst you are at school, we know you are safe.  | \*ExampleJoe Brown- Social Worker Sarah Hunt- Education Outcomes  | \*Example John, you will be in school for 30 hours per week.  | \*Example By the autumn term, 1st September 2023.  |
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