Children's social care contextual safeguarding guidance

Introduction

Northumberland children's social care is committed to developing a safeguarding approach that supports practitioners to recognise and respond to worries and danger in contexts outside of a child or young person's family, whilst promoting safeguarding being everybody's responsibility.

Harm which occurs **outside of the family** context, in spaces and places often identified within community settings and from people who are not a family member, is known as **extra familial harm**.

Examples include:

- Criminal exploitation, including county lines drug distribution and 'cuckooing' properties
- Trafficking and modern day slavery
- Child sexual exploitation, or other extra familial sexual abuse
- Serious youth violence / Knife crime
- Anti social behaviour by and affecting peers
- Gang affiliation
- Radicalisation and violent extremism
- **Peer on peer abuse (outside of the family) including harmful sexual behaviours and domestic abuse among adolescent couples**

The current child protection system does not effectively respond to these types of harm. Considering harm as extra familial, encourages insight into the risk being contextual. This supports a shift in our approach and interventions, which enables us to focus our attention on supporting parents and carers, creating disruption, and managing risk in the community.

By using a different approach, we can reduce the need for input via child protection or cared for procedures in favour of whole family support without unintended blame or shame towards parents or carers. Parents and carers know their children better than professionals, so we aim to provide parents and carers an opportunity to lead discussions around the concerns relating to their child(ren). This promotes the inclusion of parents as partners in the safeguarding process.

The term Northumberland will use to describe its response to harm outside of the family context, is **contextual safeguarding**.

Objectives

This guidance aims to provide a framework to contextual safeguarding, with a response that is best suited to addressing the worries and risks to children and young people at all levels of need.

It does not replace or amend the Northumberland Child and Adult Safeguarding Partnership (NCASP) Procedures: *Referral*, *Assessment*, *Child Protection Enquiries – Section 47 Children Act 1989*, the *thresholds of need document* or the *Working Together to Safeguard Children statutory guidance*.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with these other documents.

Northumberland children's social care will launch its new approach as a pilot. Initially, there will be a weekly multi-agency meeting to consider all contextual assessments and decision making.

These meetings will be represented by Children's Social Care, ICB, Police and Education. At the meeting, practitioners/managers will present the child/young person's assessment and recommendation. The group will record a rationale for their decision and provide feedback to the practitioner/manager.

It is hoped this arrangement will increase confidence across the service, to respond to and manage worries and danger in contexts outside of the home.

PART 1: SUPPORT AND PLANNING FOR A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON

This is when individual children/young people and their families are the primary focus of the assessment and support planning.

Practice framework

A contextual safeguarding approach should be taken with children/young people, referred to or already open to a children's social care practitioner at any level, when there are worries or danger identified in a context(s) outside of the child/young person's family.

The Signs of Safety assessment and planning framework (outlined in *Table A*) and the safety planning roadmap (see *appendix 1*) remain the overarching guide for contextual safeguarding practice.

TABLE A: THINKING ABOUT THE CHILD/YOUNG PERSON/PEER GROUP, THEIR FAMILY AND THE CONTEXTUAL FACTORS IN THIS SITUATION		
What are we worried about?	**What is working well?**	**What needs to happen?**
HARM what are the worrying behaviours that have caused/are causing harm- first, worst, last, severity and impact?	**EXISTING SAFETY** actions that people have taken that have kept the young person safe even when things have got difficult or dangerous.	**SAFETY GOALS** what the young person/ family/ professionals would want to see happening for them to feel confident that they/the young person was safe.
COMPLICATING FACTORS what is happening for or around the young person and their contexts that makes it harder to keep them safe?	**EXISTING STRENGTHS** people, things and actions that make life for the young person stronger and positive. Plans about how the young person can be kept safe when the danger is present.	**NEXT STEPS** all the things that people will do to move this situation forward.
FUTURE DANGER what are we worried could happen to the young person/family if nothing changes?		

Pathways

There are a range of possible responses from children's social care when there are worries about a child/young person in contexts outside of their home. This includes children/young people who are referred into the service or those that are already working with a social care practitioner (see appendix 2, map 1).

Practice expectations

Table B below highlights what practitioners and managers will consider.

TABLE B: ASSESSMENT, PLANNING AND REVIEW STRUCTURE		
Contexts	**Areas to explore**	**Identified next steps**
❑ The child/young person ❑ Home(s) ❑ Peer groups ❑ School/college ❑ Neighbourhood ❑ Online communities	❑ Missing episodes ❑ Gangs/organised crime ❑ Social Media ❑ Family/peer relationships including the safety network ❑ Physical, sexual, emotional and mental health ❑ Drug and alcohol ❑ Home life ❑ Education, including their hopes and aspirations ❑ Trafficking ❑ Financial independence ❑ Engagement with services ❑ Complicating factors	❑ **Disruption activity** (related to measures that can be used by the police and safeguarding partners against offenders of child exploitation e.g. CAWNs). ❑ **Contextual activity** (related to making safer spaces e.g. working with housing, licensing and community safety on physical deterrents). ❑ **Other activity** (related to case management). ❑ **Actions** (related to supporting the child/young person's aspirations and hopes for the future).

Assessment

Information gathered as part of an assessment (including the triage of a new referral, an EHA or C+F assessment) will be recorded in a SofS mapping or the standalone context assessment tool (see *appendix 3*).

This will:
- ❑ Include questions and responses about the child/young person's experiences within contexts outside the home to actively understand the harm that may be occurring, the interplay between contexts and their various weight of influence on a child/young person's safety. See *table B* for guidance.
- ❑ Reflect collaboration with the child/young person, their family, network members and professionals, to bring everybody together.
- ❑ Capture the child/young person's voice and their parents or carers. This will include an account of how they see the world, their own life and what they believe would make them/the child/young person feel or be safer.

When there are concerns about contextual safeguarding, the child/young person's assessment will inform decision making and planning. The most suitable level of support will be aligned; possible outcomes include:

- ❑ Universal service support.
- ❑ Co-ordinated support from more than one organisation or agency through the provision of Early Help services.
- ❑ When there are more complex needs, and the child/young person is deemed to be a Child in Need under section 17 of the Children Act (1989).
- ❑ Following a strategy discussion/meeting and enquiries under section 47, concerns of significant harm are not substantiated, but the child/young person needs require further planning under a Child in Need plan.

Planning

If the judgement recommends ongoing support and intervention from children's social care, the child/young person's plan will:

- ❑ Use the information gathered from within the assessment(s) to target and disrupt offenders and locations whilst planning for recovery and safety of the child and family.
- ❑ Clearly address the worries or danger and outline accountability for everybody. Contexts will be reflected in bottom lines where appropriate, tasks in the timeline, the detail of who is involved in the plan and the plan rules.
- ❑ Include a contingency if the plan does not successfully increase safety or if risks increase.

Review

The child's plan will be reviewed as part of multi-agency meetings. Depending on the level of involvement this could be a team around the family (TAF), care team meetings and child in need reviews, or family and community network meetings and contextual safeguarding meetings.

The prompts in *table B* will be used to consider what's working well, what we are worried about and what needs to happen.

The child/young person's plans and its progress will be subject to scrutiny within supervision between the practitioner and their manager. The updated supervision record template can be found in *appendix 4*.

Siblings

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

Escalation

Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that the child/young person is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm due to worries and danger in contexts outside of the home, there should be a strategy discussion/meeting if this has not already taken place, and the statutory procedures followed (see *appendix 3 - map 2*). The updated strategy template can be found in *appendix 5*.

Parents and carers should be invited to and involved in this discussion/meeting where appropriate, especially when the primary risk identified is outside of the home. The parent and carer strategy meeting guidance can be found in *appendix 6*.

Significant harm outcomes

An **initial child protection conference** should be convened when:
- ❑ there has been a strategy discussion/meeting and enquiries under section 47,
- ❑ concerns of significant harm are substantiated, and the child/young person is judged to be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and
- ❑ **the primary risk is <u>within</u> the child/young person and/or home contexts.**

This pathway is appropriate when there are risks **within the child/young person and/or home contexts that meet the significant harm threshold**. This is appropriate when factors within the home are contributing to the level of risks the child/young person is experiencing, associated with contexts outside of the home. The format of the child protection conference remains the same, but explicit reference to contexts outside of the home will be built within its discussions and the subsequent plan agreed.

A **contextual safeguarding meeting** should be convened when:
- ❑ there has been a strategy discussion/meeting and enquiries under section 47,
- ❑ concerns of significant harm are substantiated, and the child/young person is judged to be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and
- ❑ **the primary risk identified is within contexts <u>outside</u> the home.**

This pathway addresses risks in contexts **outside of the home** and where there are no significant risks within the home context. The meeting is conducted under Section 17 of The Children Act 1989 and is the equivalent to a Child in Need review meeting. It is chaired by a Reviewing Officer with experience of contextual safeguarding, including disruption planning and managing risk in the community.

The differences

The main differences between a contextual safeguarding meeting and a child protection conference are:
- ❑ In contextual safeguarding meetings the focus is on adolescence, support and planning around the child/young person and their family or carers who are in a situation where the child is/has experiencing/ed significant harm related to contexts outside of the home.
- ❑ In contextual safeguarding meetings the focus of discussions will reflect the assessment, planning and review structure outlined in _table B_.
- ❑ There is no decision making on the threshold of significant harm in contextual safeguarding meeting i.e. no decision that the outcome is a child protection plan or category.
- ❑ The attendees at contextual safeguarding meeting should include a higher proportion of family members, members of the family and community network, including the child/young person.
- ❑ There is greater flexibility around professional attendance at the contextual safeguarding, meeting. For example, police attendance may be more appropriately represented by the child sexual exploitation lead, or the police community support officer.

Cared for children

Cared for children's plans should provide information about how they will be safeguarded. If there are worries and/or danger in contexts **outside of their home** or new information suggests this, this should be reflected in their plan.

Contextual safeguarding meetings

Preparing for the meeting
- ❑ The social worker will provide the invitation list to the safeguarding unit a maximum of five working days after the decision to progress to the meeting.
- ❑ Invites will be sent as they are for child protection conferences.
- ❑ The social worker will prepare a C+F assessment to present at the meeting, that has considered all contexts.
- ❑ The social worker will identify family and network members, and professionals, to support a plan that addresses concerns raised about the context(s).
- ❑ The reviewing officer will meet with the child/young person before the conference to seek their views and explain the format of the meeting.

The meeting
- ❑ The meeting will be held within the same timescales as a child protection conference; **_within 15 working days_** of the strategy meeting.
- ❑ The structure of the meeting is like a child protection conference, but the focus of the discussion is different (see appendix 7).

- ❑ If the conclusion of the meeting is that the child/young person may be better supported via a child protection plan, a conference would need to be arranged.
- ❑ If an action is identified to make a referral about any identified contexts, this should be discussed, and it should be agreed which professional/s are responsible and when it will be completed.

Review of intervention

Family and community network meetings

- ❑ Following the initial contextual safeguarding meeting, the child/young person's plan will be developed and monitored within family and community network meetings.
- ❑ The child/young person, all those with parental responsibility and carers will be invited at the earliest stage to involve their wider networks to help them build a plan that will keep the child/young person safer and promote their wellbeing.
- ❑ The first meeting should happen at the earliest point possible, and *no later than 10 working days* from the meeting. It should be used to see if anyone from the network has been missed and who could be included. There will be discussions why the network is there and the support they can offer to the child/young person and their family.
- ❑ The (safety) plan will be written and shared with all those attending, and any professionals involved with the family.
- ❑ **The plan must be reviewed monthly to understand its progress.**

Review contextual safeguarding meeting

- ❑ Depending on the child/young person's plan and the issues raised it may be relevant to hold a follow-up meeting after a period to review the plan and its actions. However, it is recommended plans are reviewed every three months. The Reviewing Officer has overall capacity to make this decision.
- ❑ The review discussions will be focused on the progress of the child/young person's plan.
- ❑ The child/young person, parents/carers, professionals will provide an update/progress about each element of the plan as well as considering any new strengths or risks.
- ❑ A decision will be made if a further review meeting is required or is an alternative level of support is required. This will be determined by the evidence of the child/young person's plan being tested and or proven to increase safety.
- ❑ **Review meetings will take place at 3-month intervals.**

PART 2: SUPPORT AND PLANNING FOR GROUPS OR LOCATIONS OF CONCERN
This is when contexts outside of the child's home are the focus of the assessment and planning.

Professionals work to actively change the identified contexts which impact on children/young people and their families. This means that peer groups, schools, public spaces etc. can be subject to an assessment and support plans will be made collectively with a wider strategic focus rather than just focusing on an individual child/young person and their family's situation.

The Signs of Safety mapping process, that is undertaken collaboratively with families and their networks can be used to bring together young people, their networks, professionals, family, community, neighbourhoods and anyone else involved, to explore issues and potential solutions for any extra-familial context where young people are at risk of significant harm.

Location meeting[1]

Factors within spaces or places are discussed as part of information sharing between partnership agencies. The meeting can use the same Signs of Safety assessment framework to explore the concerns (see *appendix 8* for template).

The process of the assessment might highlight safeguarding concerns relating to individual children or young people. In this instance, a referral should be made immediately to the appropriate children's services. All professionals share this responsibility.

Complex strategy meeting[2]

When a space or place is identified as a risk for a group of children/young people a complex strategy meeting may be considered to decide the next steps. The meeting can use the same Signs of Safety assessment framework to explore the concerns (see *appendix 8* for template).

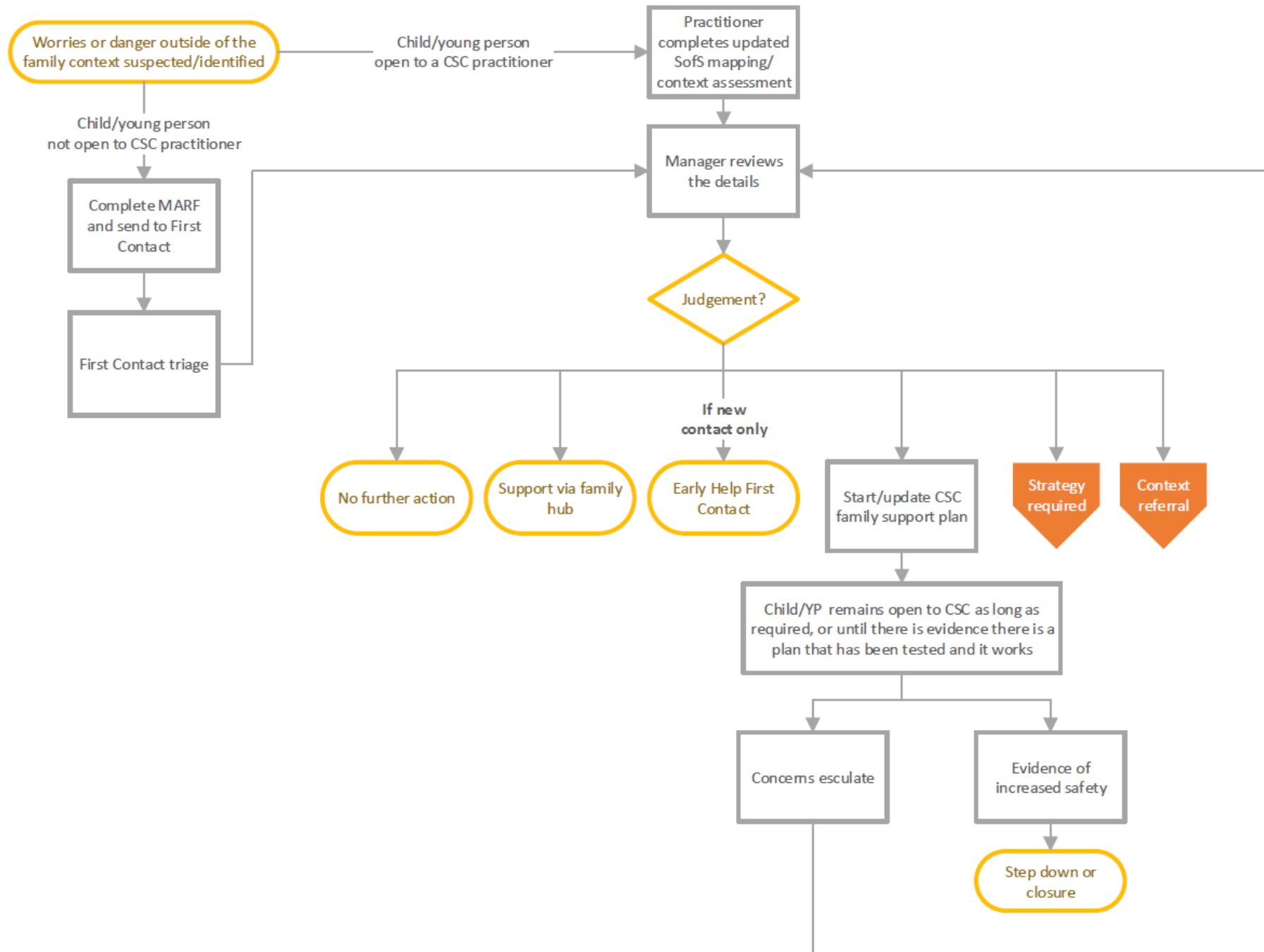[1] In Northumberland this is currently the VOL (Victim, Offender, Location) meeting structure.
[2] In Northumberland this is currently a complex abuse strategy meeting.
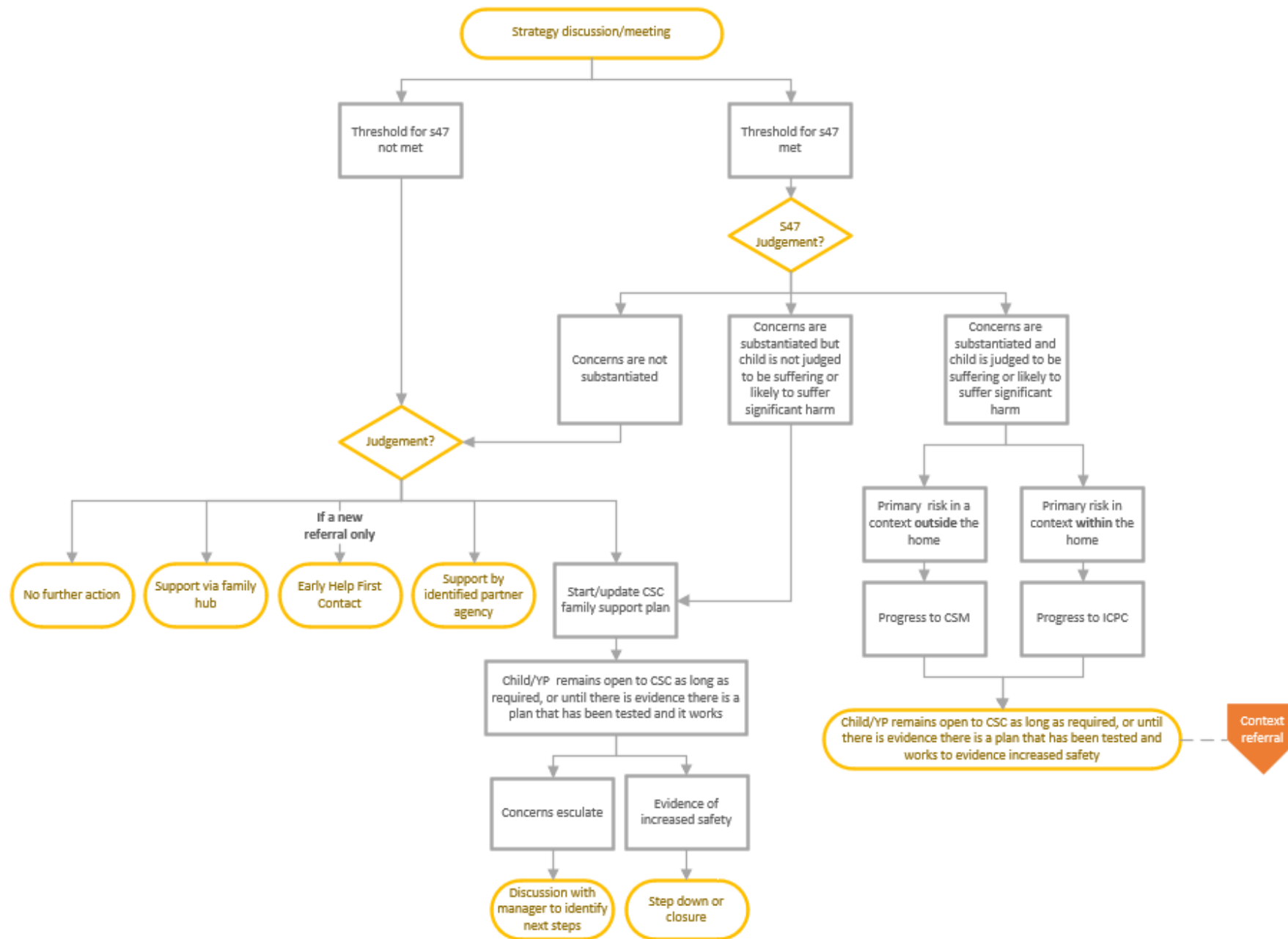
SAFETY PLANNING ROADMAY

WHAT	HOW (Steps)		TOOLS (Methods)

DANGER STATEMENTS

What children's services is worried will happen to the child if nothing changes (the problem that has to be solved)

Safety planning always involves engaging the family and their support network in a focussed action learning process enabling them to decide on, practice and refine the actions that will create lasting safety.

This is the **how** of safety planning; the trajectory that creates the final safety plan.

SAFETY GOALS

What children's services needs to see to know child is safe and they can close the case (not services)

Ongoing Processes

1. **Preparations with professionals**

2. **Develop paired Danger Statements & Safety Goals with matched Safety Scale**
   Simple language, understandable to family

3. **Identify everything constructive in direct parenting**

4. **Develop professional bottom-line requirements**

5. **Develop professional trajectory including timeline**

6. **Build vision of process for family**

7. **Build informed network with family**

8. **Create explanation for children (and everyone else)**

9. **Build Safety Plan with parents and network**
   Successive process where family demonstrate over time the can make children safe, regular review – honouring success and utilising struggles. All participants should rate safety at each meeting using safety scales.

   Need to dig into critical issues – dynamics, triggers, and stressful times that make abuse/neglect more likely. The family must either come up with or fully own all rules. 'Denial' issues must be dealt with throughout.

10. **Involve child**

11. **Monitoring by professionals and network**

12. **Create final child-centred Safety Plan**

Authority

Honouring

Vision

Questioning

Compassion

❑ **Harm Matrix**
❑ **Signs of Safety Mapping**
❑ **My Three Houses or equivalent**

❑ **Signs of Safety Trajectory & Timeline**

❑ **Family Safety Circles, Network-finding Matrix**

❑ **Words and Pictures**

❑ **Regular Review Meetings**
Family and network must be given the opportunity to fail so they can demonstrate success, usually through increasing process of contact. Professionals must be mindful of the risk and manage this together with the family.

❑ **Safety Journal, Safety Object**
Practice Rehearsals of Rules

❑ **Child-focused Safety Plan**

Process map 1: **Contextual concerns identified or suspected and CSCs responses**

Flow diagram:

- Worries or danger outside of the family context suspected/identified
  - → Child/young person open to a CSC practitioner → Practitioner completes updated SofS mapping/context assessment → Manager reviews the details
  - → Child/young person not open to CSC practitioner → Complete MARF and send to First Contact → First Contact triage → Manager reviews the details

- Manager reviews the details → Judgement?
  - No further action
  - Support via family hub
  - Early Help First Contact (If new contact only)
  - Start/update CSC family support plan
  - Strategy required
  - Context referral

- Start/update CSC family support plan → Child/YP remains open to CSC as long as required, or until there is evidence there is a plan that has been tested and it works
  - Concerns esculate
  - Evidence of increased safety → Step down or closure

Process map 2: **Contextual safeguarding strategy meeting and its outcomes**

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                          ┌─────────────────────────┐
                          │ Strategy discussion/meeting │
                          └─────────────────────────┘
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- Strategy discussion/meeting
  - Threshold for s47 not met
    - Judgement?
      - No further action
      - Support via family hub
      - Early Help First Contact
      - Support by identified partner agency

        If a new referral only
  - Threshold for s47 met
    - S47 Judgement?
      - Concerns are not substantiated → Judgement?
      - Concerns are substantiated but child is not judged to be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm → Start/update CSC family support plan
      - Concerns are substantiated and child is judged to be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm
        - Primary risk in a context **outside** the home → Progress to CSM
        - Primary risk in a context **within** the home → Progress to ICPC

Start/update CSC family support plan
- Child/YP remains open to CSC as long as required, or until there is evidence there is a plan that has been tested and it works
  - Concerns escalate → Discussion with manager to identify next steps
  - Evidence of increased safety → Step down or closure

Progress to CSM / Progress to ICPC
- Child/YP remains open to CSC as long as required, or until there is evidence there is a plan that has been tested and works to evidence increased safety - - - Context referral

Practitioner details	
Name	
Team	
Assessment date	
Child/Young person's details	
Name	
DOB	
Age	
Gender	
Address	
Ethnicity	
Primary language	
Current key agencies	
Poor attendance	☐ No ☐ Yes ☐ NEET ☐ Other (e.g., in employment)
Legal status	
Disabilities	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not known
Specific details:	
SEND/Learning needs	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not known
Specific details:	
Substance misuse	☐ Alcohol ☐ Drugs ☐ Both ☐ Neither ☐ Not known
Specific details:	
Missing episodes (Y/N)	
Specific details of the current concerns about this (Dates, times, locations, associates etc).	
Contextual safeguarding concerns	
Concerns (Y/N)	
Type of concern(s)	☐ Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) ☐ Intimate Partner Violence ☐ Child Criminal Exploitation (CE) ☐ Modern Slavery ☐ Serious Youth Violence ☐ Online Exploitation ☐ County Lines ☐ Racial Abuse ☐ Peer on Peer Abuse ☐ Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) ☐ Harmful Sexual Behaviour ☐ Other
Specific detail of the type of concern(s) you have identified.	
Peer group information	
Concerns in this area? (Y/N)	
Details about children, young people or adults involved.	
Detail about these people, including group dynamics, that is a worry.	
Specific details about what is working well in response to these worries.	
What needs to happen?	
Neighbourhood/community information	
Identify areas in Northumberland	
If other (in another county)	
Type of premises	☐ Residential Address ☐ Shop/Supermarket

	☐ Open Space (e.g., Park, Town Centre, Car Park) ☐ School/Education Establishment ☐ Hotel/AirBnB ☐ Military Camp ☐ Takeaway/Food Outlet ☐ Transport Network e.g., Taxi, Bus, Train inc Station ☐ Public House ☐ Other
Specific details of what is it about these locations that you are worried about.	
Details of what is working well in response to these concerns.	
What needs to happen?	
Online and social media information	
Concerns in this area? (Y/N)	
Evidence of technology and/or social media being used? (Y/N)	
If so, what types/apps are of concern?	☐ Facebook ☐ Grindr ☐ Twitter ☐ Tumblr ☐ Instagram ☐ Yubo ☐ Snapchat ☐ Reddit ☐ TikTok ☐ Discord ☐ YouTube ☐ Yellow ☐ WhatsApp ☐ Omegle ☐ Roblox ☐ Other ☐ Tinder
Do these cause concern?	☐ Gaming/Console ☐ Sexualised messages/pictures ☐ Multiple Phones ☐ Online Grooming ☐ Multiple Sim Cards ☐ Dark Web use ☐ Excessive calls or texts ☐ Hacking/Online criminality
Specific detail about these technologies, where known, that you are worried about.	
Details of what is working well in response to these concerns?	
What needs to happen?	
Views and analysis	
Child/young person's	
Parents/carers	
Professionals	
Recommended next steps	☐ No further action ☐ Early Help/Child in Need pathway ☐ EFH pathway ☐ CP pathway ☐ Additional actions required (i.e. intelligence submission, NRM, context meeting referral etc.)
	Details:
Managers review	
Comments	
Agreed next steps	
Name	
Date	

	What are we worried about?	What's working well and what safety is already in place?
Areas to consider		
Missing episodes		
Individuals' presentation		
Gangs/organised crime		
Social media		
Family/peer relationships		Safety network
Physical/sexual and mental health (include parents' resilience/need for support)		
Drugs and alcohol		
Home life		
Education		Hopes and aspirations
Trafficking		
Financial independence		
Engagement with services		
Complicating factors		

Views	
Child/young person	
Parent/carers	
Network	
Professionals	

Judgement	
On a scale of 0-10 where 10 is that everyone knows who is doing what to create safety for young people in the context that is the focus of the assessment/response and even though there may still be challenges, we can see that safety is being effectively sustained over time. 0 is that this situation remains so unsafe that young people are being hurt or harmed.	
Where would you rate this situation today?	
What brings you up at that number?	

Next steps	
Disruption activity	
Contextual activity	
Other actions	
Plan to support aspirations and hopes for the future	

Checklist	
Is there an Exploitation marker added to the Police system?	**Y/N**
Are all crimes/intelligence reported and do they include provenance (the source and reliability of the information)?	**Y/N**
Have we collected names, addresses, registration numbers of all known associates?	**Y/N**
Is disruption in place of the above associates where concern is identified (see disruption document below for examples)?	**Y/N**
Have we addressed sexual health?	**Y/N**
Have we considered referrals to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM)?	**Y/N**
For missing, is there a trigger plan in place with Police?	**Y/N**
Are the relevant services involved, Youth Justice Service, Sorted, Exploitation Team?	**Y/N**
Do parents have support in their own right?	**Y/N**
Has the case had a strategy meeting within the last 6 weeks and is contextual safeguarding in place?	**Y/N**

Purpose: This strategy meeting is being held as part of a pilot to consider concerns about a child, where the harm is outside of the family. PARENT/CARER(s) have lots of information about the CHILD/YOUNG PERSON which will support our ability to make better informed decisions and formulate a workable plan to keep them safe.

	What are we worried about?	What's working well and what safety is already in place?
Areas to consider		
Missing episodes		
Individuals' presentation		
Gangs/organised crime		
Social media		
Family/peer relationships		Safety network
Physical/sexual and mental health (include parents' resilience/need for support)		
Drugs and alcohol		
Home life		
Education		Hopes and aspirations
Trafficking		
Financial independence		
Engagement with services		
Complicating factors		

Views	
Child/young person	
Parent/carers	
Network	
Professionals	

Analysis	
Danger statement(s)	
Safety goal(s)	

Judgement	
On a scale of 0-10 where 10 is that everyone knows who is doing what to create safety for young people in the context that is the focus of the assessment/response and even though there may still be challenges, we can see that safety is being effectively sustained over time. 0 is that this situation remains so unsafe that young people are being hurt or harmed.	
Where would you rate this situation today?	
What brings you up at that number?	

Next steps	
Disruption activity	
Contextual activity	
Other activity	
Plan to support aspirations and hopes for the future	

What is extra familial harm?

This means that your child may be experiencing harm outside of your family or family home. That can mean an adult, group or friend is encouraging them to do things that might hurt them physically or emotionally. Your child might believe their relationships are okay, even if they are being harmed. Your child might be receiving gifts, money, or drugs in exchange for them engaging in criminal or sexual acts. Sometimes abusers use violence and intimidation to frighten or force a child making them feel as if they've no choice. They may lend them large sums of money they know can't be repaid or use financial abuse to control them.

In Northumberland the approach we use to respond to these worries is called **contextual safeguarding**. A *contextual safeguarding strategy meeting* is held where there is reason to believe your child might be at risk of harm outside of their family or home, that harm might be online, or whilst they're out in the community.

About the meeting:

When does it happen?

- The meetings need to be held within 48 hours of us being made aware of the worry.
- This is because as soon as we know about the risk to your child, we want to work with you to put plans in place to keep them safe and to support you.

Who attends?

- Different professionals involved with your child should be there.
- This will always include children's social care, someone representing your child's health and a member of the police.
- If your child is in education, there will be somebody from their school or college.
- If they are working with any specialist services, like mental health, they will also be invited.
- We invite all these people because they all hold different bits of information that will help us understand the big picture for your child.

What happens?

- Everybody that attends will share information. We will use this to decide how best to work together to support you to keep your child safe.
- You know your child best, so we want to support you to share your views too.

How can you prepare for the meeting?

- You will be contacted by your social worker before the meeting, they will explain their worries and ask you about yours.
- You will be offered the opportunity to speak to the person that will manage the meeting before it starts. They will explain how the meeting runs and answer any questions you might have.
- This is your opportunity to tell the chairperson anything you feel is important or anything you do not want to share in the meeting.

How will it run?

1. Introductions and apologies

The chairperson will check everyone is there for the right meeting and ask that people introduce themselves. A note will be taken of anyone who has been asked to attend but hasn't been able to come, that is done to make sure they can be included in any correspondence moving forward.

2. Purpose of the Meeting

The chairperson will give a brief description of the current worries for your child. This is to make sure all professionals know why the meeting has been called and what they are there to help with.

3. What is working well?

The chairperson will ask everyone, including you, to talk about the 'strengths and safety' for your child – that means what keeps them safe day to day. We know that, as their parent, you do lots of keeping them safe, but that when they leave your house, you don't always have control over their safety. Other things might keep them safe in those situations, like a sensible friend, an aunty in the area they hang around or an app you use to keep tabs on them are all helpful bits of information to share here.

4. What are our worries?

The chairperson will then ask you to talk about the worries which have led to the meeting, that means the worries you have for your child's safety. It can be helpful to write them down beforehand.

The chairperson might ask about worries you don't think apply to your child, they do this to rule in or out risk and to make sure nothing is missed. Remember, all the professionals have different bits of information, and some might know things that you don't yet.

Some of the things the chairperson will ask are:

- ❑ **Missing from home episodes:** This is whether your child is running away from home or being encouraged by others to stay out.
- ❑ **Your child's presentation:** this is whether you have noticed this has changed in any way, like they're more withdrawn than usual or appear angry.
- ❑ **Drugs or alcohol use:** this is whether you notice your child coming home under the influence of drugs or alcohol and how they might be affording to buy these things.

Don't feel like you need to get all the details in, you will have a chance to say more about your worries when the social worker visits you during the assessment.

5. Scaling and Decisions

All the professionals will be asked to scale the level of their worry on a scale of 0-10. You can choose to scale or not, the chair will ask you beforehand what your preference is.

0 would mean we are all really worried that your child will be seriously harmed if we don't act now to keep them safe. 10 would mean there are no worries or enough things to keep them safe that we don't need to worry. Every child is different and so are their circumstances so the 'scaling questions' will be tailored to their own circumstances. We do this to help us all understand the level of risk your child is facing. When we meet again, we hope that the number will go up, meaning there is more safety.

6. What needs to happen next?

This is where we come up with a plan with you. The plan will include clear actions to be completed and who will do what and when. The plan will also include timescales for people to complete these actions by. This is to make sure we all act swiftly to support you and your child.

It can be scary to parent a child who is being harmed or exploited outside of the family home. It is our job to help you keep them safe. We can suggest things that might work, and you can help us choose the best option for your child.

The Reviewing Officer will meet with the child/young person and parent/carers at least 30 before the start of the conference to ensure they are prepared.

1.	**Welcome and introduction**
2.	**Contextual summary[3]** ❑ What are we worried about ❑ What's working well
3.	**Updates from child/young person, parents, carers, network members and professionals[4].**
4.	**Agree danger statement(s) and safety goals(s)**
5.	**Scaling (child and parents will go first)**
6.	**Proposed plan to manage the risk**
7.	**Agree the child/young person's plan** ❑ Disruption activity ❑ Contextual activity ❑ General activity ❑ Actions to support the child/young person's aspirations and hopes for the future
8.	**Review arrangements** ❑ Date and representation of family and community network meeting ❑ Date of the next review (review contextual safeguarding conference or alternative forum)

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[3] The child/young person, home, peer groups, school/college, neighbourhood, online community.
[4] Police will share general information in front of parents, carers and network members, but will only share intelligence with professionals. Approximately 10 minutes is required for this.

Purpose: *This complex strategy meeting is being held to explore concerns raised about several children/young people and/or locations.*

Think about:
❑ The children/young people ❑ Home(s) ❑ Peer groups ❑ Schools/colleges ❑ Communities ❑ Social Media

What are we worried about?	What's working well?

On a scale of 0-10 where: **10** is that everyone knows who is doing what to create safety for young people in the context that is the focus of the assessment/ response and even though there may still be challenges, we can see that safety is being effectively sustained over time. **0** is that this situation remains so unsafe that young people are being hurt or harmed.		Where would you scale the situation today?	What brings you up at that number?	Next steps? Disruption activity Contextual activity General actions
	Child A			
	Child B			
	Child C			
	Child D			
	Child E			
	Child F			
	Location A			
	Location B			
	Location C			
	Location D			
	Location E			
	Location F			