

SAFER Meeting

Purpose:

The Safer Meeting brings together the network around the child to think about what needs to change for and around the child to increase safety. The format supports the assessment and planning for children who are vulnerable to, or impacted by, extra-familial harm including exploitation, trafficking and serious violence alongside other risks and vulnerabilities that require a coordinated, multiagency response. Children, their families and networks, should be integral to discussion with the aim of them having ownership and driving plans and agreements. The process should detail the goals of intervention, and document how and who will do what to achieve them.

When:

If a child is at risk of, or suffering, extra familial harm, the Safer Meeting framework can operate as a standalone meeting or be integrated into the agenda for a TAF, CIN, Core Group or Looked After meeting. For all children subject to the Extra-Familial Harm Pathway, the Safer Meeting should form the basis of multiagency discussion with the child and their family to agree change for and around the child.

Who:

All individuals who have a role in helping or protecting the child or victim(s) should actively work to identify what needs to be different to increase safety and disrupt harm. There may be individuals within a child's family or network who may be considered vulnerable or to pose a risk. Careful consideration must be given as to whether it is possible to work with the assessed risk, and if so, what mechanisms can be adopted to increase safety within relationships that may also be considered harmful. The list below of agencies is people that it would be good to get to the meeting or if they are not able to attend an update from them regarding the support they can provide.

- School (DSL)
- Health
- Inclusion
- Youth Offer
- Community Safety for the district and borough
- Police Youth Engagement Officer
- CEMU Police Officer
- Youth Justice worker

Principles:

- Ensure children and parents are welcome and can speak first
- Be clear about what are the actual needs, risks and harms
- Understand the child's needs and how they are met/not met in context(s)?
- Identify where is harm taking place and what can reduce the impact
- Agree what 'safer' looks like and how you will recognise success

- Commit to undertaking the work to achieve the identified aims, how and when

Grading and Management

The grading of risk and harm should be based on the nature, severity and frequency of harm and the impact. For children who are assessed as **Medium** or **High** this should result in an enhanced or intensive response as outlined within our **scaled approach**.

Agenda

The structure below is designed to offer questions that help steer and focus discussion to achieve a clear, collaborative Safer Plan.

1. Introductions and Purpose

- a. The Chair outlines the purpose of the Safer Meeting (as described above)
- b. Each individual states who they are, why they are here and what they hope to get from the meeting based on the purpose

2. Key professionals (teachers, social workers or others who are helping the child)?

3. What we know?

The focus of discussion is to hear from each person present their description of what is currently happening. Some key questions:

- a. What is happening? (**The Harm**)
- b. What is the impact? (**The Worry**)

4. Patterns

- a. Are there any patterns that help us better understand the nature of the harm or any specific activity or locations? (*for example, specific days, times or locations, indication of specific harm e.g., drug paraphernalia or missing episodes/self-harm after a negative peer or family interaction*)
- b. Is this directly linked to, or causal to safety or harm? (*for example, the child goes missing and is vulnerable to grooming after exclusion from school, argument with parents, acceptance/understanding from others*)

5. Network

- a. Who is in the child and family's network and what is their involvement? (*think about where is safe, where is not safe, where could be safe*)
- b. Is there anyone or anything else around the child or family that can support?

6. Travel and Places

Any known places/location/spaces you travel to or are likely to visit, hang out, any known addresses of friends/family.

Indicate if unsafe

- a. If the child is travelling or missing, what means of transport do they use, how has this been facilitated/paid for and what specific routes are used?
- b. Where is harm taking place? (*for example, in a specific address/place, within a specific relationship, or within a group dynamic*)

7. Are there any different views so far?

- a. How can we work through the difference?

Consider what needs are being met or remain unmet? (*for example, the need for belonging, care, acceptance, love, excitement, power, safety, achievement, capability, reward, connection, exchange*)

This is an important conversation to best understand what is taking place. If we can better understand what needs are being met, or not being met elsewhere, this will inform the plan required. For example:

- Is the missing episode to draw people closer as that is when people are worried and pay attention, or is it to create distance and space, or is it forced?
- Does the relationship(s) described provide care, love, belonging, positive sense of self, material gifts, excitement? Are these things missing elsewhere?
- Does the activity include shared beliefs, a sense of purpose, a feeling of power or being successful and capable? Are there opportunities elsewhere?
- Does the activity create a sense of safety for the child, the group, or family?
- Is there a pattern that we can help the child, family or network to recognise?

- b. What needs to change?

- i. What has worked before? (*for example, when relationships were good or when things weren't so stressful, what was helping?*) Can this be replicated/repaid/disrupted, and if so by whom and when?
- ii. What can be done by the child, parents/carers and the professional network to increase safety including the disruption of harm
- iii. Does the child's overall plan need to be updated?

8. SAFER PLAN:

What steps can be taken to increase safety, reduce the likelihood of going missing and/or coming to any or harming others? Considers the specific stressors/situations where risk/vulnerability increases (example new relationships, substance misuse, peer influence, adult network).

Expectations and Agreements should be recorded in order of priority:

'A' will do (ACTION) to achieve (AIM) which will be shown by (SUCCESS)

CHILD

Expectations and agreement of Young Person

- *I will...*
- *I can...*
- *I might...*
- *I need...*

What to do in an emergency?

- *I will, I can, I might, I need*
- *Safe word*

Young Person's Emergency Contacts

If located when missing – where should the child be taken?

Who has parental responsibility/can make decisions for the child?

PARENT/CARER

- Will ensure e.g., *when NAME returns home I will...by/at*
- Will make...by/at
- Will do...by/at

Expectations and actions of Agencies

Actions to increase safety (including Police Trigger Plan)

- Agency 1 will...by/at...
- Agency 2 will...by/at...
- Agency 3 will...by/at...
- Agency 4 will...by/at...

Actions to prevent or disrupt exploitative or harmful activity (including any live investigations, actions or applications – the input of the police, community safety, licensing,)

- Agency 1 will...by/at...
- Agency 2 will...by/at...
- Agency 3 will...by/at...
- Agency 4 will...by/at...

Other Considerations

A. Do we need a contingency plan?

- a. What steps can be taken if things don't go to plan?
- b. Who can help if one professional or network member is not available?

B. Are any onward actions required?

- a. Does information need to be passed to the Central Hub for consideration of context-based responses, e.g., a peer group, a place or space
- b. Is there indication of complex or complicated abuse? (Link to Procedures)

C. When will we review the Plan?

- a. When will this plan be reviewed? (*for example, at a set date or if a significant incident occurs*)
- b. What if something happens in the meantime?

AGREED BY.... DATE.... SHARED WITH....