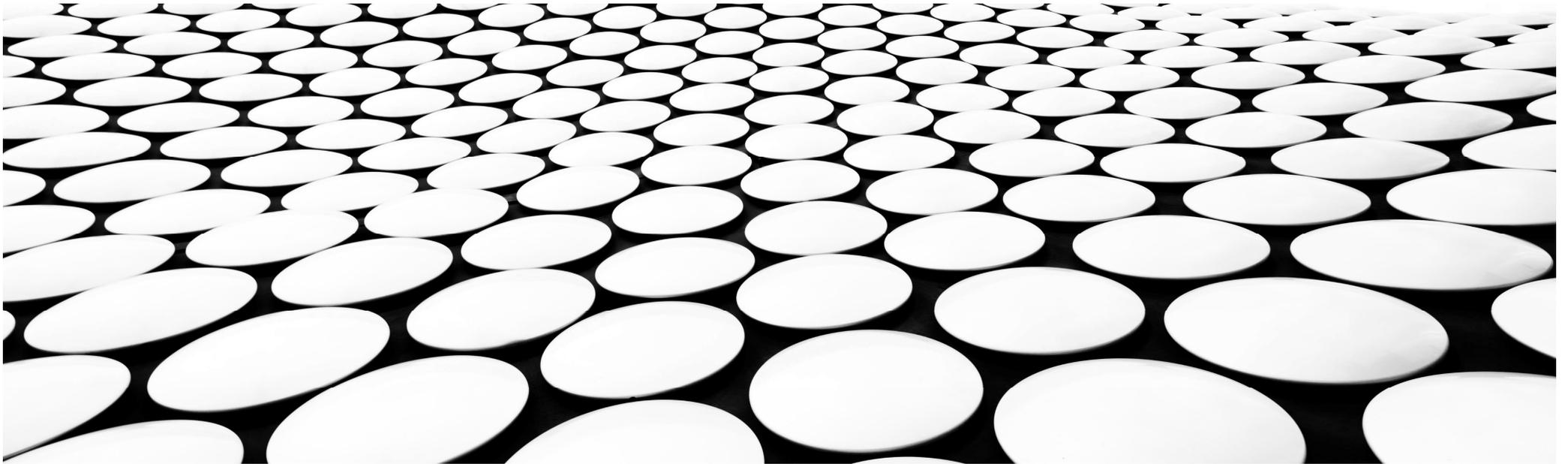

SAFEGUARDING VIA INCLUSIVE SCHOOL CULTURES

CARLENE FIRMIN, PROFESSOR OF SOCIAL WORK. DURHAM UNIVERSITY





Introducing Contextual Safeguarding:
the road to inclusion as a route to
safety



Implications for leaders: creating
systems that strive for inclusion



Implications and resources for those
in education settings

FINDING A MISMATCH

'if you're rude to them then they'll beat you up and I've seen how they beat up people, how everyone's scared of them....I said no for something very little I've been beaten up and bottled and I realised if I did say no what would happen...I was pressurised and scared, I knew deep down I didn't want it cos I was still young but I didn't have a choice.'

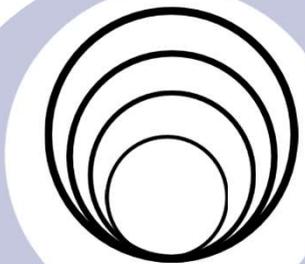
(Sara's (age 13) Witness Testimony, Case File 4, Review 2011-2014)

- Extra-familial issues presented a risk of significant harm to the welfare of children and young people
- Child protection systems, and social workers, had been called upon to respond
- Those systems sometimes assessed and intervened with young people affected by this harm, and attributable parenting (in)action, or ended support when parents were protective
- The peer groups, schools and public spaces where the harm occurred remained unsafe (despite successful prosecutions)
- **The response and the risk were misaligned**

'Social services and other professionals describe her as **'difficult to engage with', 'anti-police' someone who 'places her friends and gang associates as a higher importance than her family'**

(Professional notes, Case File 4, Review 2011-2014)

Contextual Safeguarding Framework Offered Response



Domain one: Target

Seeks to prevent, identify, assess and intervene with the social conditions of abuse



Domain two: Legislative framework

Incorporates extra-familial contexts into child protection frameworks



Domain three: Partnerships

Develops partnerships with individuals/agencies responsible for extra-familial contexts



Domain four: Outcomes

Monitors outcomes of success in relation to contextual, as well as individual, success

SOME EFFORTS TO REDUCE CONTEXTUAL RISKS HAVE IN THE PROCESS DISPLACED OR EXCLUDED YOUNG PEOPLE

Dispersal orders

Increased monitoring by people (police) or CCTV

Mapping and disruption of friendship groups

Exclusion from schools

Design changes (bus stop)

Unmet needs (switching off internet)

Extensive information sharing without consent



**VALUES OF
CONTEXTUAL
SAFEGUARDING
WERE INTRODUCED
TO PROMOTE
INCLUSION AND
ENSURE THE
APPROACH
CONTRIBUTED TO
EQUITY**

Collaborative

Rights-based

Ecological

Strengths-based

Rooted in young people's lived reality

Care

**AS A RESEARCH TEAM
WE HAVE BEEN ABLE
TO BUILD CASE
STUDIES THAT
REFLECT BOTH THE
FRAMEWORK AND THE
VALUES**

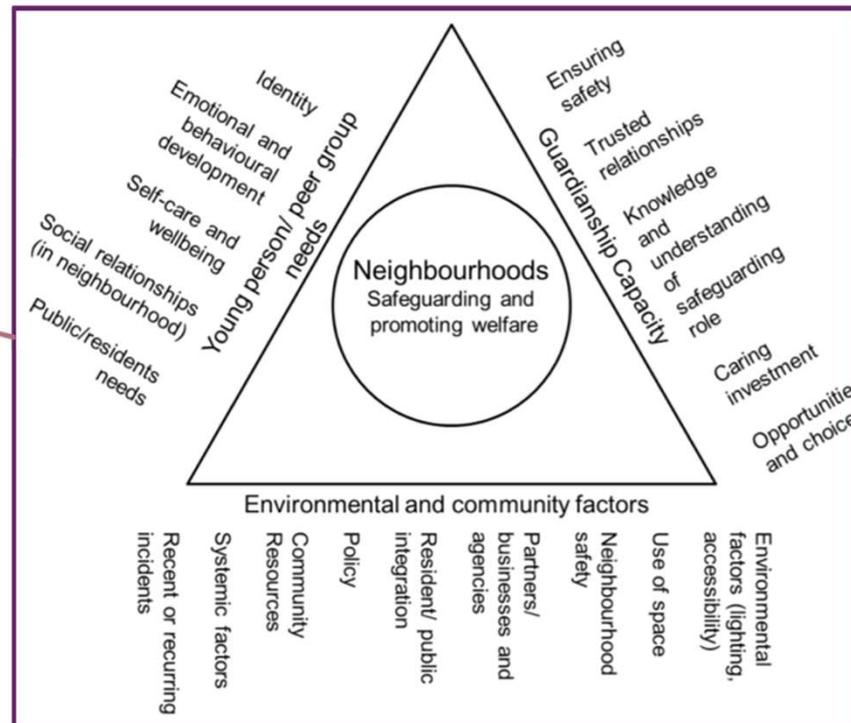


Keeping young people safe in a park

A large group of young people like to spend time in their local park. They often gather around a shelter, listening to music, especially when it rains. Detached youth workers noticed that older adults were spending time with the group – some young people in the group were as young as eight years old. They were worried that the young people were using and dealing drugs and that they were at risk of criminal exploitation. Some of the young people also said they were carrying weapons to protect themselves, and some fights had broken out. People living near the park and dog walkers started complaining about the young people – about noise and ‘anti-social behaviour’. The local councillor had got involved and suggested that they could remove the roof of the shelter to make the young people go somewhere else. The youth workers reported their worries about the safety of the young people to the local authority – what should they do?

Understanding the context

Engaging and speaking with young people about their feelings of safety and what they needed – somewhere to hang out



Identifying guardians: youth workers, social workers, residents who used the park, local politicians, police

The detached youth work team assessed the park. They realised that young people were at risk there, but the community were fearful of them and wanted them to be moved.

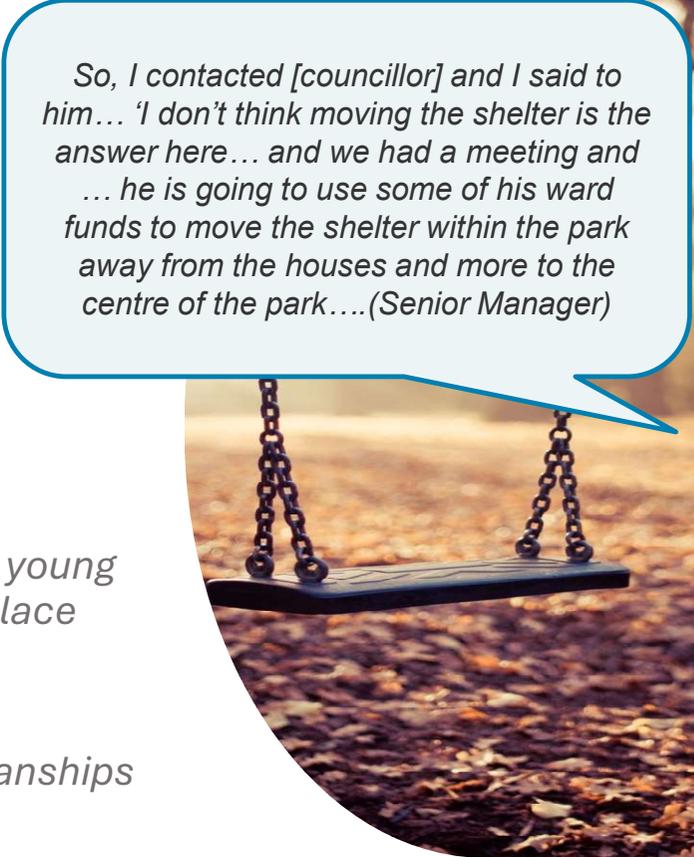
Resources are available for young people

Observation of the park

The response

They advocated for the rights of the young people to socialise and be safe there and increased guardians who could change the context:

- *Regular ‘pop up’ youth club sessions in the park with games and sports*
- *6 weeks programme to respond to the issues young people had raised*
- *Specialist support around substance misuse for a few young people*
- *Senior safeguarding leader attended a residents meeting to advocate for young people staying in the park. The meeting agreed to move the shelter to a place where it would disturb the residents less*
- *Community ‘fun day’ to build inter-generational relationships and guardianships*



So, I contacted [councillor] and I said to him... ‘I don’t think moving the shelter is the answer here... and we had a meeting and ... he is going to use some of his ward funds to move the shelter within the park away from the houses and more to the centre of the park....(Senior Manager)

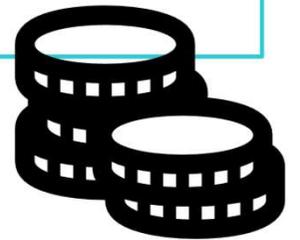
Result: Better co-existence, greater understanding of young people’s needs and increased safety, care and consideration

INCREASINGLY HAVE SEEN SITES USE CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING TO ADDRESS STRUCTURAL DRIVERS OF EXTRA-FAMILIAL HARM

- Assessing contexts associated to extra-familial harm has sharpened professional focus on structural drivers
- Some drivers are wider forms of discrimination and disadvantage: poverty, racism, sexism
- Some drivers are practices within services: school exclusions, sanction-based responses to vulnerability, lack of trust in policing
- These two forms of harm also intersect
- Some sites have started to expose, or try to address them, at a micro-level

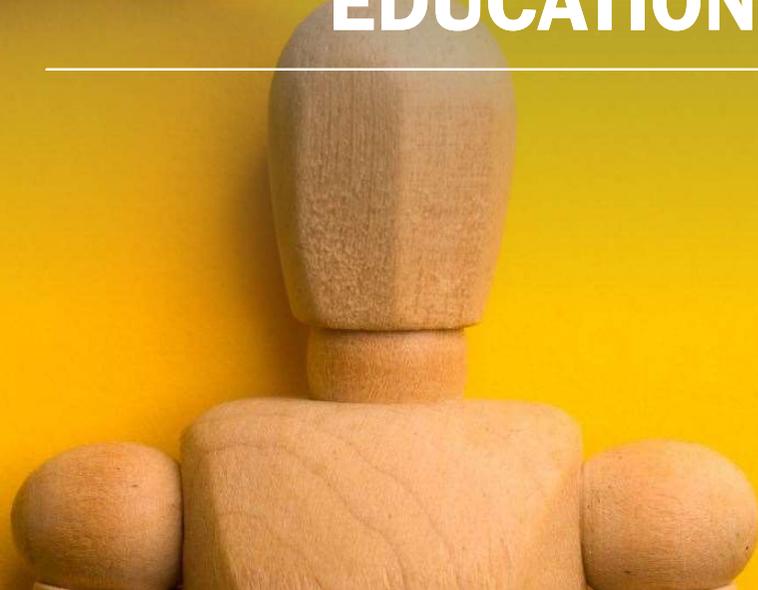
High street where young women were at risk of sexual and criminal exploitation

- Assessment identified opportunities to develop guardianship
- Worked alongside young people to agree safety plans for them and code-words to access support
- Reframed their relationship with the police via the mounted police service
- Led to increased council resourcing of alternative activities for young people in the location





**THIS WORK HAS ASKED KEY QUESTIONS OF
LEADERS IN A RANGE OF SECTORS INCLUDING
EDUCATION**



A RANGE OF TOPICS HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED

- Intersection of gender, ethnicity, neurodiversity and age
- Risks within schools – including peer-abuse and sexual harassment
- Impact of part-time and reduced timetables
- Children at risk of violence unable to attend due to safety concerns
- School identification of contextual patterns of need and harm
- Provision of safe spaces, safe adults and safe peer relationships
- School safety summits and school hotspot mapping activities
- Schools concerns regarding thresholds for accessing statutory support for students

01

Create a vision in partnership with those who will have to implement it

02

Have your perspectives and priorities challenged

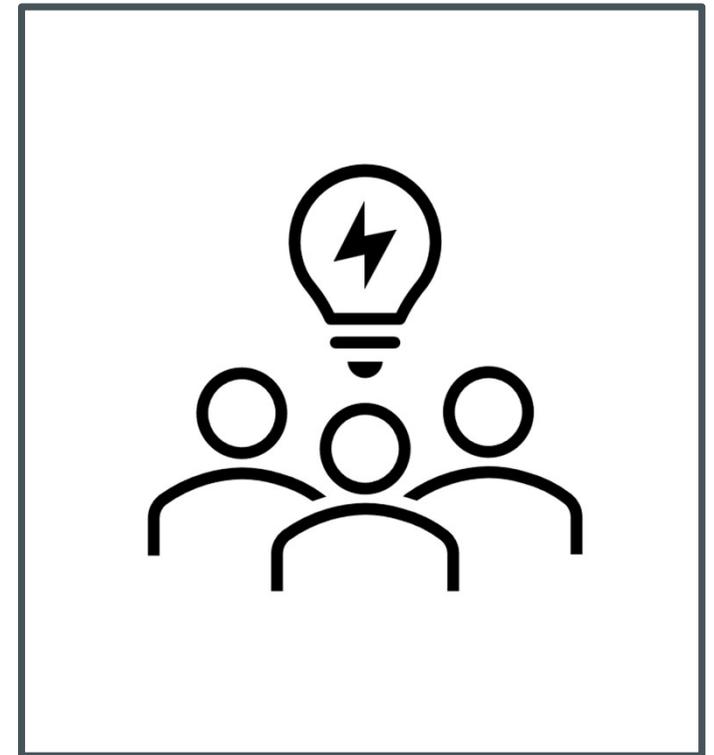
03

Prioritise cultural rather than structural change

TO IMPLEMENT A CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK IN A WAY THAT IS ALIGNED TO THE VALUES OF THE APPROACH

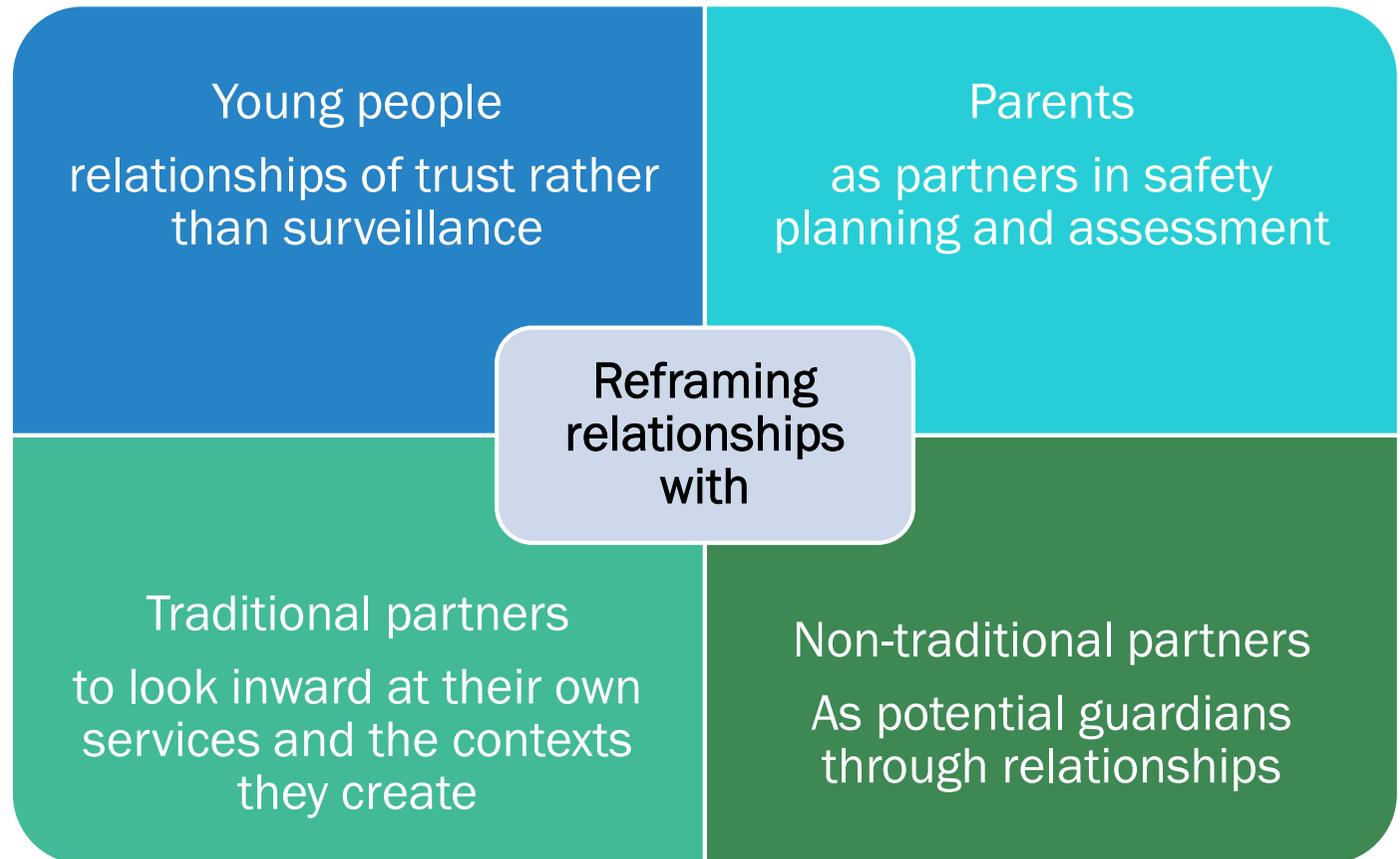
CREATING A VISION IN PARTNERSHIP

- Contextual Safeguarding approaches are system changing – so is creating equitable and inclusive settings
- For implementation to be meaningful all those involved need to fully comprehend the undertaking
- Practical examples of the impact the change will make is important; i.e. how you log safeguarding incidents
- Taking time to pull together discrete activities to map out the incremental changes being made



HAVING YOUR PERSPECTIVES AND PRIORITIES CHALLENGED

- Recognising that we may not hold the whole picture (school safety summit)
- Acknowledging our services may be a source of harm as well as protection
- Rebalancing power in relationships within and between stakeholders can shift how we identify what is most important



Abuse in relationships



Rating students

Pressure to share sexual images



Sexual images shared without consent

Pressure to perform sexual acts



Receiving unwanted sexual images



Unwanted touching



Never

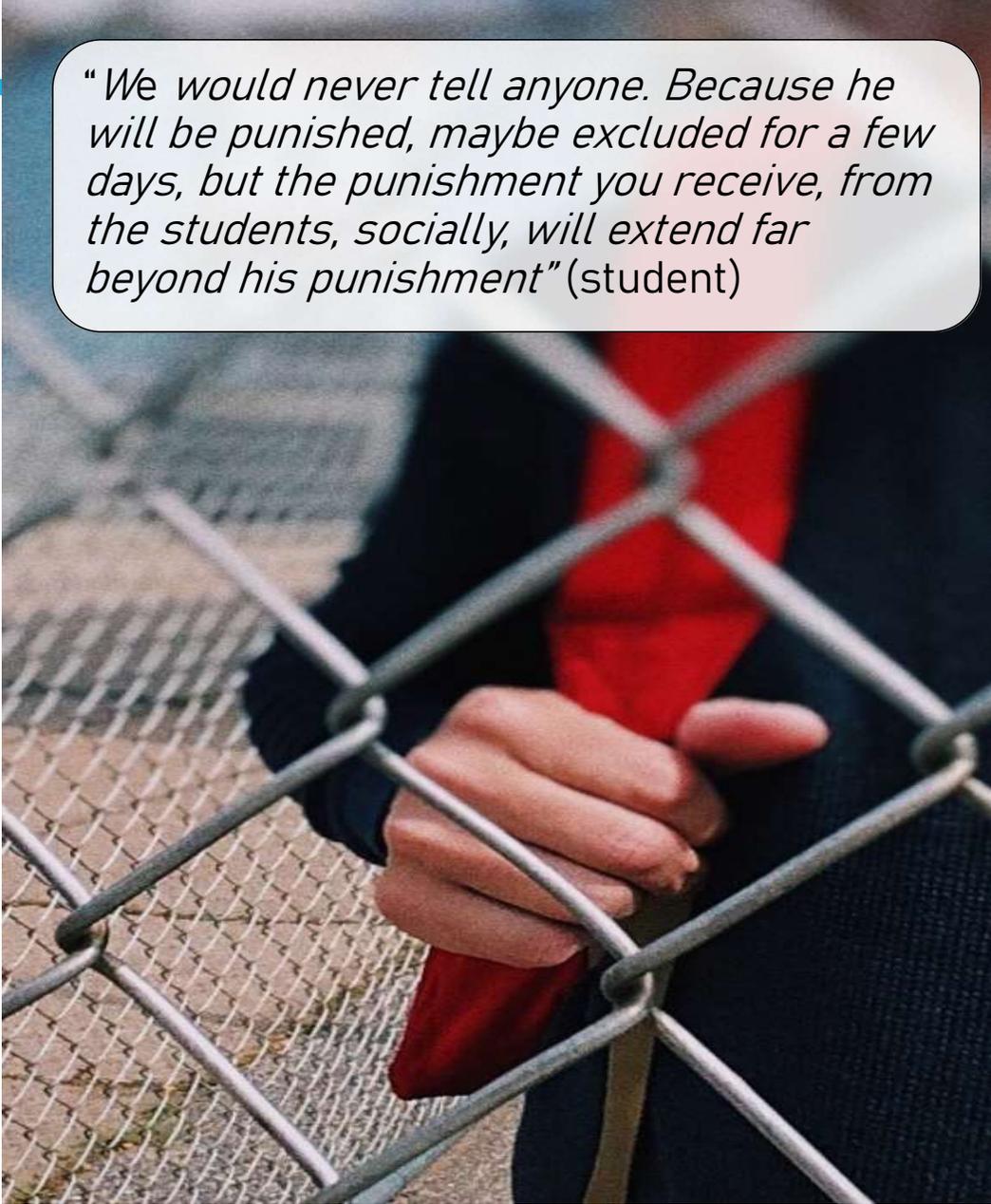
Would you know if sexual harm was happening to your child?

90% of parents

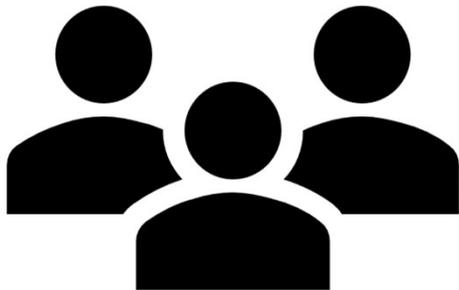
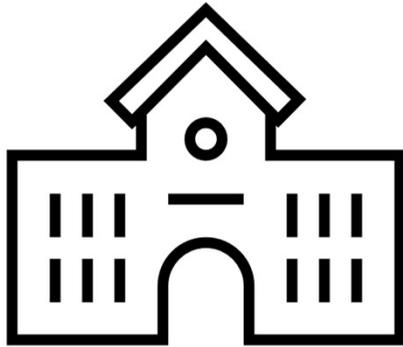
Zero Tolerance processes and inclusivity

Limited evidence that zero-tolerance creates safer schools

- Punitive and sanctions based
- Disproportionately impacts:
 - Students of colour
 - SEND
 - Those with social care involvement
- Ignores context of the behaviour
- Reduces the capacity of leaders to understand behaviours
- Decision making falls on victims not staff
- Limits restorative approaches



“We would never tell anyone. Because he will be punished, maybe excluded for a few days, but the punishment you receive, from the students, socially, will extend far beyond his punishment” (student)



EQUITY MUST BE AT THE HEART OF OUR SAFEGUARDING EFFORTS

Internal safety

- Young people need to feel included in a school community to feel safe there
- Safety is multi-dimensional
 - a) Not harmed by peers or adults
 - b) Able to approach peers or adults for support

External safety

- Schools need to mitigate the impacts of discrimination from external sources which pose a risk of harm
- Schools need to avoid reinforcing wider harmful narratives in how they organise education and wider support

ASSESSING SAFEGUARDING APPROACHES ACROSS FIVE PILLARS OF PRACTICE – WITH INCLUSION RUNNING THROUGH THEM



SYSTEMS AND
STRUCTURES



PREVENTION



IDENTIFICATION



RESPONSE



CULTURAL
CONTEXT

OVERALL AIM....

Creating

Creating an environment that is inclusive of young people and therefore hostile to abuse

Avoiding

Avoiding environments that are hostile to young people and therefore conducive with abuse

KEY MESSAGES

Inclusion is a fundamental to safety and safeguarding

Safe contexts are ones that are inclusive of young people

Inclusivity is a process – and not state of being. All actions matter

Leaders create the conditions in which inclusivity is possible

Internal and external drivers of discrimination can impact inclusion in schools

OTHER RESOURCES FOR SCHOOLS ON THE CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING WEBSITE

Behaviour Logs Review

This guidance forms part of the Beyond Referrals audit toolkit and should help schools audit their responses to extra-familial harm. This guidance outlines one method that can help a school complete their beyond referrals audit – reviewing behaviour logs.

BEYOND REFERRALS

REVIEWING BEHAVIOUR LOGS

Behaviour logs, or safeguarding logs, are databases produced and used by schools to capture young people's behaviour or safeguarding concerns. Different schools use different approaches, formats and platforms/software in order to do this. In some schools behaviour and safeguarding concerns are recorded in one place, in others, two separate systems are used. If two systems are used it is important to review both systems.

Reviewing behaviour logs provides an opportunity for schools to review what behaviours are being recorded and recognised, and to consider how these behaviours are being responded to. This process enables schools to identify any particular

information being recorded. Schools should then use this process to complete the audit and address the patterns or gaps identified.

The person that carries out the review should sit within the safeguarding team and have access to both systems. The review should include taking a selection of entries (behaviour and safeguarding) broadly but also selecting a number related specifically to EFH. It is important not to focus specifically only on incidents of EFH as some incidents may not be recorded as EFH (for example lateness, truancy or disruptive behaviour in class) but may be indicators of EFH.



Responding to HSB in Schools: Pillars of Practice for Multi-Agency Partnerships

KEY	
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead
HSB	Harmful Sexual Behaviours
MA	Multi-agency
KCSIE	Keeping Children Safe in Education

STRUCTURES AND SYSTEMS (7)

Theme	Description	GREEN	AMBER	RED
Referral pathway	Referral pathway within the partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A clear referral pathway exists within the MA partnership which schools can access to trigger a safeguarding response to referrals related to HSB in addition to any criminal justice response that may be required. This referral pathway is promoted to schools and used by them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A referral pathway exists within the MA partnership for schools to raise safeguarding concerns associated with HSB. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The process through which schools can refer safeguarding concerns related to HSB into the MA partnership is unclear.
Education representation	Education representation at MA meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education representatives from either the local authority or providers consistently attend strategic MA meetings where HSB is discussed. Education providers consistently attend operational MA meetings where HSB is discussed. A function exists in both cases to ensure representatives understand their remit at meetings and are able to determine their hearing to the wider education sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education providers or local authority educator representatives attend some MA (strategic and operational) meetings where HSB is discussed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MA meetings where HSB is discussed do not involve representatives from the education sector.
HSB strategy	HSB strategy and procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MA strategy and procedures for responding to and preventing HSB incidents are clearly documented in local safeguarding policies. These procedures are connected to or integrated with responses to other issues, such as gang association, child sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation/drugs trafficking, County Lines and violence against women and girls. The strategy and procedures are reviewed, using evidence, to enable continuous improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MA strategy and procedures for responding to HSB incidents are clearly documented in local policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The MA partnership has not published any strategies or procedures in which a response to HSB is a feature either within wider safeguarding or specific HSB documents.

STAY IN TOUCH

LINKEDIN: CARLENE FIRMIN

IG: @PROFCARLENEFIRMIN

CARLENE.E.FIRMIN@DURHAM.AC.UK

WWW.CONTEXTUALSAFEGUARDING.ORG.UK