



## Peer group assessment guidance

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# Peer group assessment guidance:

## The principles of peer group assessments

### Introduction

Contextual Safeguarding (CS) is an approach to safeguarding that supports practitioners to recognise and respond to the harm young people experience outside of the home.<sup>1</sup> Traditional child protection and safeguarding processes have predominately focussed on individual young people and their families. This *Peer Group Assessment guidance* has been developed by Hackney Children and Families Services and The University of Bedfordshire to support practitioners to consider and develop responses to assessing and working with peer relationships and peer groups.

### Background

Research suggests that young people experience abuse from peers, and are more likely to abuse others, alongside peers (Barter, 2009; Firmin, 2017a; Gardner and Steinverg, 2005; Warr, 2002). As such understanding the dynamics of peer groups is essential to developing safeguarding approaches that recognise and understand the contexts in which young people experience harm beyond the home. Current child-protection systems predominantly focus upon individual young people – from referral through to assessment, planning and intervention – and their family relationships. For example, social care assessments often feature a ‘genogram’ or family tree, detailing young people’s family relationships in order to assess safety, protective relationships, etc. Whereas, while peer relationships may be acknowledged within individual assessments, in practice there are limited opportunities to explore and assess the nature of peer relationships and groups themselves (Firmin, 2017b). Peer group assessments provide opportunities for practitioners to consider:

- The dynamics of peer groups – and the relationships between those who act as leaders and followers
- The nature of relationships within groups – the strength of association, loyalty and how the relationships came to be
- The role of the peer group in influencing different types of behaviour displayed by individuals within the group
- The relationship between the group under assessments and the contexts (schools, public spaces, family homes, online platforms, etc. in which they spend their time

Answering these types of questions provides a route to identifying effective interventions designed to work with peer groups rather than just individuals within it.

This peer group assessment guidance includes two documents:

- Document one: The principles of peer group assessments (principles document)
- Document two: Peer group assessment practice guidance and case study (practice guidance)

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<sup>1</sup> Visit [www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk](http://www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk) for more information.

This document outlines the *principles* of peer group assessments and is closely aligned to the advice and principles of carrying out a child and family assessment as detailed within [Working Together](#) (2018). The *practice guidance* details the process of carrying out a peer-group assessment as developed by Hackney Children and Families service, including example activities, practical considerations and a case study. Both documents – the *principles document* and *practice guidance* have been developed following reflections from practitioners from Hackney Children and Families service following the development of peer group assessments.

### *Identifying and defining peer groups*

Given the fluidity of young people's relationships, and the varying contexts in which they form friendships, it is important to consider the various ways that a peer group may be identified for the purposes of assessment. The first matter to note is that there is no singular definition of a peer group that could be applied in all cases. Rather there are a range of ways that peer groups form and are identified – and a number of these are valid for peer assessment.

As noted by Kinderman and Gest (2018) and Veenstra, Dijkstra, and Kreager (2018), peer groups form due to:

- a) Relational ties – either young people who select to spend time with one another as friends or young people who 'hang-out' together in particular contexts
- b) Assigned ties – either young people who are identified as a group by others (i.e. in school this group of boys are always together and associated to, etc.) or young people who by virtue of where they spend their time are together as a group (i.e. they all attend the pupil referral unit together)

All of these groupings are valid. They just need to be distinguished when planning an assessment or intervention. If you are working with a group who have been identified as such because they are all in education together and when they were there all bullied another student – but outside of school spend not time together – then the intervention with them will need to engage with the dynamics of the school. Whereas if you are working with a group of young people who choose to spend time together – and where this is not simply because they all happen to be in the same location together – then interventions will need to engage with these strong social ties that young people will likely want to protect.

It is important that workers remain reflective of who forms part of the group and are not limited by those included within a referral. It is important to ask stakeholders and young people who else may be included. To assist in this process, the assessing social worker may use tools such as peer group mapping. Guidance on peer group mapping can be found on the Contextual Safeguarding Network.

### *Legal considerations*

When setting about conducting a peer group assessment, and throughout the assessment process, the lead practitioner for the local authority must ensure that the exercise is legally compliant. Conducting a peer group assessment is likely to involve an interference with the Article 8(1) right of the Human Rights Act – the right to private and family life – of all/some of the young people within the peer group. A local authority can interfere with this right in line

with Article 8(2) of the Human Rights Act if mapping is conducted for the purposes of protecting a young persons' health, and/or to assist the local authority in protecting the rights and freedoms of others affected by that peer group. However, in addition to ensuring this objective is met the local authority needs to publish its policy on peer group assessment and mapping – clearly communicating to the public the conditions under which peer assessments may happen, and the agreements that would need to be in place for assessment information to be shared with wider stakeholders (such as health or education services) who will be engaged to support members of the peer group following the assessment. Further arrangements will also be required for the secure storage, retention and destruction of information held on peer group assessments, and agreements in place for the conditions under which parents must be notified (or not) when their children feature in a peer assessment exercise.

A full legal briefing on the purpose and parameters of peer group mapping will be published on the Contextual Safeguarding Network in 2019.

For the purposes of this document however, it is important to note that:

- a) The primary objective for peer group assessments must be the protection of the health of the young people involved and/or the protection of the rights or freedoms of others who may be impacted by that group. Should mapping assessments stray beyond initial safeguarding objectives then they risk being non-compliant with legislation and policy
- b) Throughout the assessment process the lead practitioner should consult with their supervisor and wider policy team as to when parents of those featured in a peer group assessment should be notified
- c) The information shared with stakeholders about the assessment findings must be confined to that which is required for the partnership to safeguard young people in the assessment in relation to the issues faced by the peer group. Information that is unrelated to this purpose cannot be shared.

### **The purpose of assessment**

The purpose of a peer group assessment is:

- To gather important information about the peer group – to determine who are considered members of the group for the purpose of assessment; the strength of associations between members and how they are known to each other, for example through an incident, a particular location or period of time.
- To analyse their needs and/or the nature and level of any risk and harm being suffered by the group – are there particular contexts in which these needs or risk coalesce. How have these needs/risks been experienced historically?
- To provide support to address those needs to improve the peer groups outcomes to make them safe.

Young people's peer groups and friendships are likely to change and develop over time. As such, assessments should be a dynamic process which recognise and respond to the changing nature of peer groups including the changing risks posed to the peer group and the dynamics of the group itself.

A key part of the assessment process is understanding the makeup of the peer group itself and which young people are to be assessed. While a referral or concern may be made about a particular group, it is important for practitioners to consider who should be included within the assessment, or those that do not need to be included. It is important to listen to young people's own perspectives on who forms their peer group and remain reflective in the reasons for why some young people may be referred over others. Peer group mapping can support this process (guidance on peer group mapping is available on the Contextual Safeguarding Network).

The local authority should have provision in place to deliver and support interventions to the peer group throughout the process of the assessment. If the assessment identifies needs or risks posed to individual members of the peer group (as opposed to the group as a whole) relating to a need or risk within the family then a referral should be made for an individual child and family assessment with recognition of the influence of the peer group within that. Guidance on carrying out a Contextualised Child and Family Assessment can be found on the Contextual Safeguarding Network.

While the primary purpose of the assessment is to identify risks and needs within the peer group, the assessment may identify needs or risks within a particular context itself – for example a school, or location such as a park. As such, the assessment and subsequent intervention plan should consider what further assessments may be required and which services are available to reduce risks posed within these locations.

A good assessment will require the co-operation and support of multi-agency partners throughout the assessment and intervention plan. While the assessing social worker will hold overall responsibility for the management and coordination of the assessment and plan, they will need to work with other partner agencies, guardians and place managers to deliver the plan. In instances where needs or risks are located within particular contexts it is important that the intervention plan works with those responsible for that location in the delivery of the plan.

### **The process of assessment**

High-quality peer group assessments:

- Are child centred;
- Are rooted in child development, adolescent development and research evidence on the nature of peer groups within the UK;
- Situate the behaviour, risks, vulnerabilities and strengths within the peer group itself and the contexts in which they spend time;
- Outline actions and outcomes that are focussed on reducing risks and needs within the peer group and the wider contexts.
- Involve young people and families;
- Engage partners and agencies already working with the peer group, either those working with members of the peer group individually or the whole peer group;
- Work with those that can influence the behaviour of the peer group in relevant contexts;
- Build upon strengths;
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- Develop and inform the design of intervention plans that attend to the needs and risks identified in different contexts as opposed to solely individual needs;
- Consider the risks, vulnerabilities and strengths within the group itself, and those of individuals;
- Are clear about the relationship and associations between the group without making assumptions about the nature of those relationships.

### Assessment framework

When assessing peer groups it is important to consider factors beyond those traditionally used in child and family assessment. Figure one below outlines the different elements that should be considered within a peer group assessment. These fall across three domains:

- Group functioning – the dynamics of the peer group itself, how they relate to each other and their presentation to others.
- Guardianship capacity – the capacity, willingness and ability of guardians to keep the group safe. These will vary depending on the context in which the peer group is formed. For example school staff or a local youth club.
- Environmental and family factors – which other factors affect the safety of the young people? These may relate to the local neighbourhood context, the policies in place to safeguard them, the support of their parents or systemic factors.

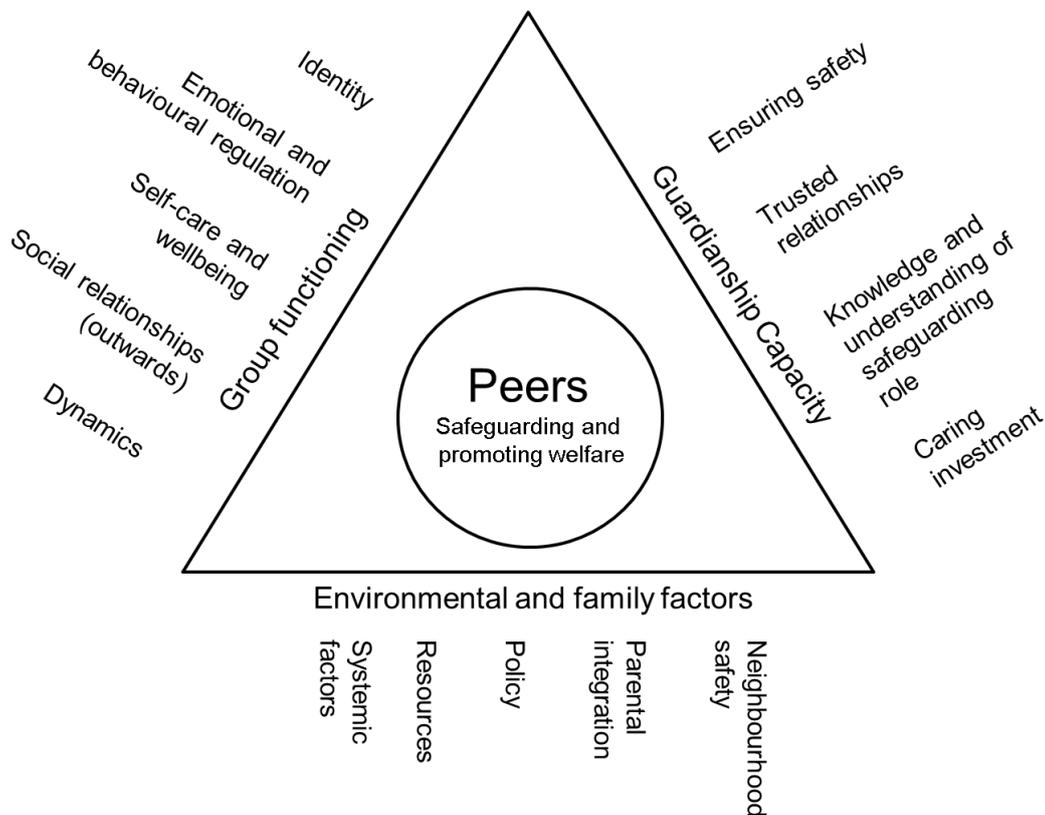


Figure one: Peer group assessment framework (Lloyd, Balci, Firmin and Owens, 2019)

### *Focusing on the needs and views of the young people*

Every assessment must be child centred and recognise the voice of the peer group and individual members within it, including their perspectives on whom should be included within the assessment and the reasons for assessment. The assessment should, where possible, consider and acknowledge the views of parents/carers.

The assessment should bring together information from a range of professionals and, where relevant, information formed as part of other statutory or non-statutory individual assessments and plans for children within the peer group, for example, teachers, health professionals, social workers and the police.

Where relevant, the assessment and plan should align with or complement work already ongoing with individual young people or the interventions within the contexts they spend time.

### *Analysis*

As with child and family assessments, the social worker should work with practice supervisors and relevant practitioners to identify the level of risk. Changes to the makeup of the peer group, associations with different young people or places should be considered and re-assessed if relevant in relation to the changing level of risk for the group.

### *Outcomes*

The assessment should focus on outcomes for the peer group and consider which services and support is needed for them.

While individual young people within the group may have their own assessments with defined outcomes, the purpose of the peer group assessment is to consider and develop positive outcomes for the group as a whole. While these should acknowledge the aims, and be complementary to, individual plans, these outcomes must consider risks and strengths of the group, rather than just individual members.

Outcomes should be developed with consideration of the young people's own thoughts and perspectives

### *Timeliness*

The speed in which assessments are conducted will be determined by the risk and needs of the group. This will be assessed during the referral process and initial conversations with key practitioners and referring bodies.

The nature, size and makeup of the peer group and how they are known to one another will affect the length of time it takes to carry-out the peer group assessment. As such, it is essential that care is given to organising and carrying out the assessment.

As with child and family assessments, risks posed to the group will change over time, as will the makeup of the peer group. It is therefore essential that the assessment is conducted in a timely manner in order to ensure that planned work and interventions attend to current risks as opposed to solely those highlighted within the referral. For example, while an initial referral may be made for a peer group involved in a particular incident, delays in

assessments may mean that those risks, and the young people involved or affected may change quickly, reducing the relevance of assessment and intervention or increasing the risk of doing so.

As peer group assessments primarily require social workers to assess the group together, it is essential that the assessment is timely to ensure the safety of those within the peer group. For example, it is important that the assessing social worker is aware of any changes to the peer group that might jeopardise the safety of any young people meeting together.

The duration of a peer group assessment should consider practical challenges and plan for any changes that may affect the ability of a worker to conduct a peer group assessment – for example school holidays.

While there are no statutory timelines in which to conduct peer group assessments, timeframe should be identified at the outset of an assessment depending on level of risk, needs and complexity.

### *The plan*

Following assessment and any relevant planning meetings, an intervention plan should be developed that considers and takes steps to ensure the safety of the peer group and minimises risks to them.

Depending on the level of risk identified, the plan may be overseen by a designated social worker or practitioner (for example an early help worker if the group are assessed as such – see the Hackney Wellbeing Framework for more details on thresholds).

The lead practitioner should:

- Oversee the plan and co-ordinate planned work from different agencies;
- Ensure the plan aligns with any other intended work on plans for young people within the peer group, or the contexts they are associated to;
- Develop the plan with consideration of the risks and needs of the group in relation to the contexts they are associated to and should have actions and interventions that align to where risks and strengths are identified – as opposed to solely focussing on individual interventions with individual young people;
- Include input from the young people, taking consideration of their needs and wishes;
- Review the plan and update accordingly over time. Individual local authorities may wish to consider developing timeframes for when peer group plans should be reviewed;
- Ensure all work is recorded on the peer group assessments or system (where possible) as well as within individual case notes.

Multi-agency partners and practitioners for individual young people within the peer group should:

- Meet with the lead practitioner to ensure they understand and are aware of any planned interventions and task responsibility for agreed tasks allocated to them;
- Ensure all work is recorded on the peer group assessments or system (where possible) as well as within individual case notes;

- Ensure the plan aligns with any planned intervention work taking place individually or within that context.

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# Peer group assessment guidance:

## Practice guidance and case study

### Background

As part of the process of embedding Contextual Safeguarding within Hackney Children and Families Services, the Hackney Contextual Safeguarding project team have begun developing processes and approaches to working with peer groups. Through this work they are developing systems to support practitioners to carry out peer group assessments – as opposed to individual child and family assessments used traditionally by social care. This *practice guidance* document outlines practical considerations when carrying out a peer assessment and a case study example. The guidance includes:

- Practical considerations
- The timeline process of the peer group assessment
- A case study example of peer group referral
- Example session plans

The session plans and other examples included within this document are provided as an example only. The approach used to conduct a peer group assessment will vary for different peer groups, concerns and the approaches used by individual local authorities. The principles document and practice guidance are being developed as part of an iterative approach to embedding Contextual Safeguarding. The examples are provided only in order to support individual local authorities develop their own approaches to peer group assessment and outline areas to consider.

### Peer assessment process

This guidance provides an overview of some of the key stages of peer assessment. These include planning, the assessment itself and analysis.



### Practical considerations

How peer group assessments are conducted will vary depending on the group itself, the nature of the referral and how the peer group has been defined. For example, it may be that the group are defined as a peer group because they are a group of friends, were involved in an incident together or by nature of attending the same school or area. It is important, before beginning the process of the assessments, to plan how you will conduct the assessment including consideration of the makeup and associations of the group.

## **Assessment template**

Appendix A includes an example assessment template that can be used throughout the assessment. While the majority of the evidence captured will be focussed on the peer context within the template – the process of assessment should consider other contexts, for example, the role of the school environment.

## **Peer group mapping**

Peer group mapping supports practitioners to identify members of the group, the nature of associations of the group and the parameters of what concerns the assessment will focus upon. Guidance on completing peer group mapping can be found on the Contextual Safeguarding Network. Peer group mapping may include engagement with stakeholders and reviews of case notes which should be included within the assessment.

## **Stakeholder meeting**

Before direct work with the peer group it is important to contact and speak with stakeholders who are involved with the peer group – these can include a range of people such as individual social workers, community and voluntary services, Youth Justice practitioners, youth workers, school staff or health, for example. Speaking with stakeholders provides an opportunity for practitioners working with the peer group to inform the assessment. This can be conducted individually or as part of a stakeholder roundtable. Stakeholder meetings provide an opportunity for the school and other stakeholders to discuss risks, vulnerabilities and strengths of the individuals and peer group. For example information relating to themes such as: the incident, on-going risks, underlying issues, group dynamics, issues related to individual young people if important, and any additional stakeholders to contact for further information on the group. It is important to engage stakeholders at the beginning of the assessment to ensure important information is captured. Stakeholders should help identify activators of harm which form the basis of direct work with the peer group. It is important to ask multiple stakeholders if they believe it is safe to bring the group together for the basis of assessment.

## **Parents**

It is important to include parents within the assessment process. It is likely parental consent should be sought before beginning the assessment. Parents' views about the peer group, their views on the harm and ideas about interventions should be sought throughout the intervention. It may be appropriate to do this individually, within a group or via another worker if the parents already have an established relationship with a practitioner.

## **Direct work with the peer group**

Engagement with stakeholders and reviews of relevant case files will inform the assessment, however where possible, it is important to work directly with the group themselves. Direct engagement with the group should be appropriately planned, including consideration of risks associated to bringing the group together. It is important to ask stakeholders and the young

people themselves if it would be appropriate to bring the group together. If it is not, then it may be necessary to complete direct work in smaller groups.

The purpose of the assessment is to consider the risk, vulnerability and safety factors facing the peer group and the dynamics of the group itself. The peer assessment framework (page 6) should form the basis of the assessment and provide a foundation for developing direct work with the group. While the structure of the assessment will vary depending on the nature of the concerns and the peer group it is important to allow sufficient time to consider different elements of the assessment triangle.

Table one below provides some example questions to consider when developing a peer assessment. These questions relate to the peer assessment framework. These should not be prescriptive but used as a guide to develop direct work and the assessment itself.

**Table one: Peer assessment questions**

<b>Group functioning</b>	<b>Identity</b>	<b>How they view themselves</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would you say you are a 'group'? Or something else?</li> <li>• How long have you been 'together'?</li> <li>• What things do you have in common?</li> <li>• Tell me about how you became friends and a group?</li> <li>• If your group was an animal, what sort of animal would it be?</li> <li>• What are some of the good things about your group?</li> </ul>
	<b>Emotional and behavioural regulation</b>	<b>The moods and emotional regulation of the group</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What happens when someone is upset in your group?</li> <li>• If you think about the sort of moods a person has (ask for responses)...what kind of moods are in your group – i.e. is it mostly joking and fun, or mostly serious talk, mostly worried talk?</li> </ul>
	<b>Self-care and wellbeing</b>	<b>How the group looks after itself</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How often do you see each other? How much and in what ways are you in contact with each other online?</li> <li>• Do you sometimes need a break from each other? What happens then?</li> <li>• What happens when you fall out?</li> <li>• If you could change something about your group, what would it be?</li> <li>• What would you say you are best at, as a group of friends? What are your best qualities?</li> </ul>
	<b>Social relationships (outwards)</b>	<b>How they are perceived by others</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do others [teachers/other groups/parents/shop keepers] see you? Behave towards you?</li> <li>• How do they treat you?</li> <li>• Are you part of other groups too? What is the relationship between this one and other groups you're in?</li> </ul>
	<b>Dynamics</b>	<b>The inter-personal dynamics in the group</b>  <i>Preamble – we know people play different roles in</i>

		<p>groups. What do we mean by 'roles'? What kinds of roles can you have? (Might need to give them some examples – leader, follower, joker, helper, etc.)</p> <p>One option – suggest taking one of the words i.e. leader and ask group to silently place themselves in line with the person who is most often the leader at this end and the person who is least often the leader at the other end. It's important to talk a lot about how groups need different sorts of people in them, so it's <b>not better or worse</b> to be the 'most' or 'least' in any word.</p> <p>Another option – ask them to record privately on a post it roles people can have or the role they have.</p> <p>Straight discussion questions if this seems better:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who tends to decide what you do together?</li> <li>• Would you say you have a 'leader'? What other 'roles' do you have?</li> <li>• Who is the most bossy person in your group?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Guardian capacity</b></p> <p><b>Identified guardians with responsibility for a context</b></p>	Ensuring safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are all the spaces where the group spends time safe?</li> <li>• Do guardians and those with responsibility for the context ensure safety?</li> <li>• If not, do they have the capacity to do so?</li> </ul>
	Caring investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there trusted adults around the group (other than parents)?</li> <li>• Is there parental oversight of group – i.e. to what extent do they have a relationship with group members, know them, are in contact with their parents, show an interest in the group's activity and well-being, etc.</li> </ul>
	Knowledge and understanding of SG role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are guardians aware of their responsibility for safeguarding in this context?</li> <li>• How are guardians responding to harm (i.e. online provider reporting monitoring illegal activity; parents reporting to police if missing; professionals making referrals)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Structural issues</b></p>	<p><b>Resources</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is available in the community for this group to access?</li> <li>• What do they access?</li> <li>• What are the barriers and enablers of accessing community resources?</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Neighbourhood safety</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where does the group spend time?</li> <li>• What times of day are they there? Who else is there?</li> <li>• What is the impact of the location on their</li> </ul>

		safety – consider physical environment (i.e. impact of the park),
	<b>Systemic factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is it like for you growing up in [area name] / [neighbourhood name]? What is the group's experience of discrimination? i.e. impact of harmful gender norms or racism.</li> <li>• Are there any relevant issues in the history of individuals in the group or in the groups' experience which are relevant to the current assessed harm (i.e. intimate partner violence at home, migration, being looked after, etc.)</li> </ul>
	<b>Policy framework</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the procedure framework (legislation, policy, guidance) relevant to the safeguarding of this group?</li> <li>• Is policy supportive of safety?</li> <li>• Are there gaps?</li> </ul>
	<b>Parental integration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the parents of the group know each other?</li> <li>• Are the parents integrated in the contexts the group spend time?</li> </ul>

Appendix B includes three example session plans that were used in Hackney. The structure of the assessment and sessions will depend on the issues identified and nature of the peer group.

### Timing

Planning the timing of the assessment and ensuring the assessment is completed in a timely manner is essential. The gatekeepers or stakeholders involved with the peer group are likely to impact access and when the assessment can start. It is important to plan at the start dates for any direct work and ensure this is communicated to stakeholders. This may be particularly important when planning work with schools as holidays and term time dates may affect access.

### Analysis

Following the assessment itself, it is the role of the assessing social worker to review the assessment and analyse the findings. Analysis should consider the interplay between the different factors highlighted and make a decision regarding the weighting of different contexts. This involves deciding which context has the greatest influence over the peer group – for example, through assessment it may be identified that the school culture endorses or mitigates issues within the group.

Once the assessment has been initially analysed the findings and recommendation should be discussed with the stakeholders. A planning meeting will allow stakeholders to come together to discuss the assessment and input their views, it should also be an opportunity to develop a plan, interventions and to allocate tasks to different practitioners or agencies.

## Individual assessment

The process of assessment might highlight concerns of issues relating to individual young people in the context of their family, rather than the group itself. In this case it may be appropriate to make an individual referral. If an individual child and family assessment is conducted it will be important that consideration is given to the influence of the peer group within this. Guidance on completing a child and family assessment with reference to contextual factors can be found on the Contextual Safeguarding Network.

### Case study: Peer group assessment

A school were made aware that indecent images of pupils from the school had been shared on a social media platform. The images involved both girls and boys – together and separately – and were identified by a teacher and the children themselves. The person that shared the image was not known, and the social media group where the images were shared was deleted soon after. Upon being alerted by another pupil the school contacted the Police, who following meetings with the children and parents, made a referral to Hackney’s front door screening team for Children and Families services.

Following initial enquiries it was decided that the individual young people did not meet a threshold for further involvement by social care. As none of the individual children were known to Children’s Social Care or Early Help there would normally be no further work planned. However, as there were concerns about the events leading to the distribution of the images and the peer group involved, the decision was taken to conduct a peer group assessment on a non-statutory basis.

Initially the assessing social worker contacted the school to make inquiries about the group and the parents of the children to ask for their consent to undertake the assessment. Following this they organised a stakeholder group including the school, youth workers, health practitioners and other relevant practitioners. They also spoke individually with parents to hear their views about the incident and the group itself.

Working alongside the local youth provision, three sessions were held with the young people. The sessions focussed on familiarising the group with the practitioners, the groups feelings of safety, group dynamics and issues relating to the incident.

The assessment identified areas that were impacting the group such as harmful attitudes around peer relationships, normalised attitudes to sexual harm and lack of mental health provision in school.

While the original referral outlined concerns around a specific incident which involved a peer group, the context of priority in this assessment was identified as the school. The assessment found that whilst harmful attitudes and behaviours were predominant amongst the young people in the peer group, harm was perpetuated and manifested amongst young people in the context of the school. As such It was found that the school culture – as opposed to the peer group in particular – reinforced harmful attitudes that may be held by the group. As such the interventions developed focus primarily on the school.

## **Interventions**

Guidance on interventions with peer groups can be found in the Hackney 'Assessment and intervention planning for young people at risk of extra-familial harm: A practice guide' due to be published in spring 2019 on the Contextual Safeguarding Network. A selection of interventions from this guidance include:

### **Interventions with peer groups**

- Bystander training
  - Conflict resolution/restorative justice
  - Formalised group work that targets peer group dynamics and tracks them for a change via:
    - a) Work with the leaders of a group
    - b) Work with some group members identified in need of support
    - c) Work with all of the group (dependent on assessment)
  - Detached youth work
  - Outreach youth work
  - Enforcement
  - IGU interventions on weapon carrying behaviours in groups
  - Support to bereaved groups of young people – for example working with trauma they have collectively experienced
  - Safer London HSB peer group pilot
- Engagement of families around a peer group via multi-family therapy

Appendix A: Contextual Assessment Framework Template

Assessment Number:	Summary of initial concerns that triggered referral:			
	<i>Vulnerability factors (pre-existing factors)</i>	<i>Risk factors (factors directly related to the issue/s in question)</i>	<i>Resilience factors / Strengths</i>	<i>Capacity to safeguard (capacity to safeguard is being undermined in this context and by whom/what)</i>
Peer group(s)				
School				

<b>Neighbourhood spaces (specify)</b>				
<b>Family / Home(s) characteristics</b>				
<b>Additional Information gathered during the assessment</b>				
<b>System challenges</b>				
<b>Identified interplay between these above factors</b>				
<b>Context-weighting decision</b>				
<b>Summary of contextual concerns that will be addressed through intervention and desired outcomes</b>				
<b>INTERVENTION PLAN</b>				

## Appendix B: Session plans

Example overview of the session plans used

1. Date		2. Time(s)	
Purpose of session	<b>Session 1 – Intro Session</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome and ice-breakers – allow the group to feel comfortable with each other.</li> <li>• Explain the aims of the assessment.</li> <li>• Develop a group ‘code of conduct’</li> </ul>		
8. Activity/session plan including young people’s involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome</li> <li>• Ice-breakers</li> <li>• Explain session</li> <li>• Group contract</li> <li>• Scale activity and activators of harm</li> <li>• Agree future session</li> </ul>		
	<p><u>Purpose</u> To understand the activators of harm and to set targets with the young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is their understanding of reasons for sexual images?</li> <li>• Why does this happen in their group, their school, across young people in general?</li> <li>• What things could adults do to support them both now (in the aftermath) and in the future?</li> <li>• What are the goals and what should positive change look like?</li> </ul> <p><u>Scale-activity</u> Approach-young people to stand across the room on a scale in answer to different questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your general happiness at school (thinking about school culture, bullying, etc.).</li> <li>• How confident you are about managing your emotions (including anger)</li> <li>• How much you feel school staff know about what goes on in school</li> <li>• How well you feel staff respond to incidents in school</li> <li>• How much you are involved with clubs or other local organisations</li> <li>• Your general happiness at home / knowing that there is an adult who cares about you</li> <li>• How happy you feel about having the right group of friends</li> <li>• How confident you are in solving any problems you have with friends</li> <li>• How safe you feel using social media to communicate with friends</li> <li>• How confident you feel about where you can seek help if there are problems on social media platforms (including</li> </ul>		

	<p>cyberbullying, image-sharing)</p> <p>Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flip chart</li> <li>• Marker pens</li> <li>• Stickers</li> <li>• Posit notes</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity</b></p>	<p><b>Session 2: Exploring HSB in different contexts / identifying harm and proposing solutions / identifying targets</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recap from last week and quick game</li> <li>• Group discussion facilitation on harmful sexual behaviour, specifically indecent image-sharing via social media platforms.</li> </ul> <p><u>Activity</u></p> <p>Print out the contextual safeguarding circles on A1 or A3 paper and as the group to use post-it notes to identify the following as a group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the spaces where you feel the harm happened and who was impacted (and how).</li> <li>• Add to this where you feel harm usually occurs thinking about young people in general.</li> <li>• Identify what an ideal response would look like.</li> <li>• Identify how best you would benefit as individuals, family, peer group, school and neighbourhood from this.</li> </ul> <p>Ensuring young people contribute to the identification of targets in this session. Take notes on the interactions of the group and answers.</p>
<p><b>Sessions</b></p>	<p><b>Session 3: Wrapping up exercise / loose structure</b></p> <p>Main priorities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) How to access support</li> <li>2) Exploring young peoples' ideas on possible interventions</li> </ol> <p>Activity: Tree of life and future goals</p>