TOWARDS A CONTEXTUAL RESPONSE TO PEER-ON-PEER ABUSE

EXTRACT #4

Carlene Firmin with George Curtis, Danielle Fritz, Paul Olaitan, Lia Latchford, Jenny Lloyd and Ikamara Larasi

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NOTE TO THE READER

This briefing comes directly from the chapter ‘Local Site Work: Approaches, Findings and Resources’ in the MSU report ‘Towards a Contextual Response to Peer-on-Peer Abuse: Research and Resources from MsUnderstood local site work 2013-2016’. To read the briefing in context, please refer to the report, which is available on both the MSU and Contextual Safeguarding Network websites.

Engagement of community, specialist and voluntary organisations

Working with youth clubs to develop peer group interventions was just one of many approaches taken by researchers to engage community, voluntary and specialist organisations in the response to peer-on-peer abuse.

Across the MSU sites voluntary and community organisations were directly involved in supporting young people affected by peer-on-peer abuse – albeit not specifically for that reason. Housing providers and caretakers, park wardens, sexual health clinics, youth service provision and transport providers were just some of the agencies/individuals delivering services to young people who had been abused by, and/or who were abusing, their peers.

In addition to these universal services a number of sites had commissioned specialist support for young people affected by particular manifestations of peer-on-peer abuse, including:

• Specialist CSE services – provided by both statutory and voluntary organisations
• Specialist harmful sexual behaviour services – provided by voluntary organisations, youth offending teams and forensic CAMHS services
• Domestic abuse provision – both early intervention for young people in abusive relationships and independent domestic violence advocate (IDVA) provision for those aged 16 and over
• Domestic abuse ‘perpetrator’ programmes – largely provided by voluntary organisations
• Serious youth violence organisations or those who specialised in gang-related violence – largely provided by voluntary organisations

The involvement of both universal and specialist organisations to support young people affected by peer-on-peer abuse was a consistent strength within MSU sites. During the delivery period it was critical for researchers to engage with this suite of existing services to ensure our input was sustained past the close of the programme. The research team undertook a number of activities to:

• Enhance the contribution made by these services
• Capture and enable strategic recognition of the role of these services in responding to peer-on-peer abuse
• Ensure the involvement of these services was built into a holistic responses to peer-on-peer abuse across local multi-agency operational arrangements

Identifying opportunities to work with these services ensured that the MSU delivery programme advanced and didn’t usurp or disrupt existing provision within our sites.

Peer-on-peer abuse - train-the-trainer programme

In one site there were a number of specialist organisations supporting young people affected by peer-on-peer abuse. The audit identified significant contributions being made by a forensic CAMHS service (supporting young people who display HSB), a voluntary sector CSE service and a youth worker based within a voluntary sector domestic abuse service – all of whom also provided training and practitioner consultancy on particular aspects of peer-on-peer abuse. In addition, the youth offending service, wider CAMHS provision, sexual health services, safeguarding children’s board, education welfare service and local pupil referral unit were also delivering messages, training content and case advice on peer-on-peer abuse within their own services, amongst their peers and to external agencies. Such a plethora of provision was both a strength and a risk to the site. The wealth of knowledge and commitment amongst these services was a strength to be maximised. However, having this many services providing training and...
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advice about peer-on-peer abuse risked a lack of consistency in the messages being given to agencies seeking advice or the evidence that was being used.

Researchers proposed that they work with representatives from all of these services to co-create a train-the-trainer programme on peer-on-peer abuse. Rather than create a new training programme the content was intended to provide an evidence-base against which participants could compare their current training provision and a set of resources that trainers could incorporate into their existing content.

Researchers ran a workshop with would-be training attendees to:

1. Identify training underway in (the site) where messages about peer-on-peer abuse could be incorporated
2. Agree the key messages /areas of knowledge to be communicated through training
3. Present case review findings and identify opportunities for their use in training programme
4. Identify needs of trainers and trainees
5. Agree train-the-trainer programme structure

The workshop identified that different services were drawing upon largely distinct areas of research to build their knowledge of peer-on-peer abuse. Despite this, services shared principles of practice and a commitment to support both young people who had been abused by, or were abusing, their peers. Workshop attendees also suggested that they, and practitioners across the site, required training content on:

• Contexts associated with peer-on-peer abuse – and in particular the research evidence to which they could refer when sharing this with colleagues
• The evidence base on young people who abuse their peers – including their backgrounds, drivers, and required assessment/intervention
• Approaches for developing and delivering contextual and individual interventions when peer-on-peer abuse had been identified and assessed

Attendees were also keen to use resources developed from the case file review undertaken in their site within any training content that was developed.

Researchers used this direction to develop a training programme of 3 x 0.5 days.

**DAY ONE:** focused on the contextual evidence base associated with peer-on-peer abuse, provided an overview of the theoretical foundations for contextual analysis and introduced the case review resources.

**DAY TWO:** focused on research into young people who abuse their peers and returned to the contextual evidence base with this cohort in mind. It also provided attendees with an opportunity to practice using the case review resources and considered the overlaps between teenage relationship abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, CSE and serious youth violence.

**DAY THREE:** gave attendees the opportunity to present how they intended to integrate the case review resources and learning thus far into their existing training content and case consultancy activity. Researchers recorded all of these examples and asked that attendees provide feedback on progress following the close of the programme. The training then ended with researchers sharing examples of ways in which other sites were developing interventions within existing services/mechanisms in response to peer-on-peer abuse – this included sharing the HSB meeting framework (Appendix L) and the contextual application of Asset Plus (Appendix G).
The training slides for all three sessions are available in Appendix N and will be delivered via webinars to the contextual safeguarding practitioners’ network. Taken together they provided a consistent message across the range of organisations delivering advice on peer-on-peer abuse within the site. Going through the process together enabled practitioners to discuss and debate how their services responded to peer-on-peer abuse and recognise the different skills, services and knowledge that they contributed to the local response. Since participating in the programme the group have continued to meet and identify ways in which they can incorporate training messages into their practice as well as advice they provide. For example, the youth offending service and CAMHS service used the evidence base and tools from the programme to facilitate the meeting about four vulnerable and associated high risk young people. Having multi-agency attendance at the training sessions provided an opportunity for attendees to explore their multi-agency responses and, as intended, ensured that the contribution of researchers was sustained beyond the life of the project.

**Detached youth work and public-space safety**

When we deliver presentations or training sessions on contextual safeguarding we are commonly asked about the role of the youth service in responding to risk in public spaces – and more specifically the contribution made by detached youth work provision. In some respects the question is an obvious one – detached youth work engages with young people beyond them being subject to a ‘referral’ (and as such can intervene earlier) and the provision is by definition offered in the spaces and places where young people socialise and spend their time (and as such can occur within contexts of concern). Despite this potential we know that funding for detached youth work provision is in decline and in some of the sites we supported it is no longer an available resource.

During audits, however, we identified detached youth workers in two sites who were proactively engaged in the response to peer-on-peer abuse. A concerted effort had been made to maintain and invest in the capacity of the detached team and to an extent their role in responding to peer-on-peer abuse was strategically recognised through this commissioning decision. We recommended that this potential strength be investigated during the delivery phase through a small exploratory study to investigate the contribution of detached youth work to the safety of young people in public spaces within the identified sites.

The study comprised of:

- Observations of detached provision in both sites
- Focus groups with detached youth workers
- Focus groups with young people engaged through detached provision
- Focus groups with multi-agency partnerships within each site
- A workshop with a wider set of youth workers – both service based and detached – to debate preliminary findings of data collected

All of the data was then coded and analysed in NVivo using a contextually informed coding framework. The coding framework sought to identify evidence of both the attempts/successes of detached youth workers in changing the social conditions in which peer-on-peer abuse occurred and the challenges they faced in achieving this outcome. The process was used to produce a briefing to inform the commissioning, and strategic recognition, of detached youth work as part of the response to peer-on-peer abuse which is available in Appendix O and online.

Within the participating sites this process served to highlight both the contribution that detached youth work was making and the challenges which were compromising the success of this sector.
Ultimately while detached youth work is, in some sense, a community based service which plays a role in shaping and serving neighbourhoods, networks and localities – it is largely commissioned and evaluated on individualised outcomes (i.e. whether an individual child is in employment, education or training for example). Through this process the very central pillar of detached provision is lost in the measurement of its value and so too are the partnerships which may contribute to this – such as shopkeepers, housing caretakers and park wardens. Instead partnerships have been formed with social work, policing and community safety – and outcomes measured along similar lines. This approach appears to be narrowing the scope that detached youth work has for changing, or at least contributing to a change in, the social conditions in which peer-on-peer abuse can be facilitated.

For areas that are building a response to peer-on-peer abuse – or seeking a more contextual approach to safeguarding in general – our work in this area suggests a need to:

- Explore the contribution of detached youth work within local partnerships – or lack of available provision – to inform local strategies and commissioning decisions for safeguarding adolescents
- Recognise the contribution that detached youth work could make to creating safety within young people’s peer groups and in the public spaces in which they socialise
- Measure the community and social outcomes of detached provision as well as any individualised impact
- Recognise that the impact that detached youth work can have on an individual’s outcome will also be affected by the contribution of a wider partnership (social care, policing, housing, education etc.). Therefore, if detached youth workers engage with a young person who then goes on to commit an offence it is critical to consider whether this outcome actually indicates a deficiency of the detached provision – or whether it was a challenge with another service in the partnership or an issue beyond the influence of detached provision that drove the offending behaviour

Going through a process such as this will ensure that wherever possible the ability of detached youth work to engage with the public and social dynamics of peer-on-peer abuse is being utilised.

Building awareness and partnerships amongst community sector provision

In addition to specialist services and youth service provision, audits identified a number of other agencies/individuals who were also encountering or providing services to young people – some of these young people were affected by peer-on-peer abuse. Engaging with these public-facing or community-located services such as these is critical given the often public nature of peer-on-peer abuse. Audits noted that peer-on-peer abuse was being identified on young people’s journeys to and from school, in transport hubs, shared living accommodation, in parks, fast food restaurants and abandoned flats or stairwells – i.e. places where they socialised with peers. As a result, services which engaged with young people in these spaces, or provided them spaces in which to socialise, were critical to the identification of, and response to, peer-on-peer abuse.

Researchers observed discussions within sites that had been triggered following calls from housing providers and caretakers, local private businesses and security guards, park wardens and members of the public who had concerns about the safety and welfare of young people. In one site in particular a member of the public had intervened to stop a girl being taken into a car against her will, and in the same site a housing caretaker had made a referral about a girl who was seen in an estate during the school day in the company of men who were involved in gang-
related violence. Such evidence of community concern was a strength we sought to harness through the delivery period, and in turn address some challenges identified in the same site about a lack of referrals (although identified concerns) regarding the safety of young people in semi-supported accommodation.

In this site there were numerous community, faith and voluntary sector groups who worked with young people in neighbourhood settings. These groups were often quite isolated from local authority services but had long standing relationships with young people and the communities in which they worked. In addition, these services had access to soft and often dynamic ‘contextual information’ on young people’s safety in public spaces that was rarely held by the local authority. Estate care-takers and park wardens in particular were also identified as holding contextual knowledge and having community relationships to support interventions.

Researchers proposed that the site view this activity as a development of existing work that had been undertaken with hotels and taxi firms to raise their awareness of CSE. Given that site work was targeted at peer-on-peer abuse (as opposed to adult-on-child models) the audit recommended targeting youth and community organisations that were engaging young people, in addition to housing provision used by young people. Support would be offered to these services in the form of research-informed training to raise the awareness of the public and professionals who used these services about:

- The nature and scale of peer-on-peer abuse
- Referral pathways within the local area

Researchers initiated the delivery process through a meeting with the community sub-group of the local safeguarding children board. Representatives from the voluntary, community and faith organisations and semi-independent housing providers (young people aged 16+) attended the meeting to co-create delivery content with the research team. Meeting attendees agreed a three-stage delivery process:

1. Developing training for the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) so that they were able to respond to referrals from community organisations about peer-on-peer abuse that may increase as a result of the planned activities
2. Providing support to a local semi-independent housing provider for young people 16+ to prevent and respond to peer-on-peer abuse within this particular setting
3. Supporting voluntary and community based organisation to identify, refer and (where appropriate) respond to peer-on-peer abuse, including housing estate officers

Researchers provided an introductory training session on the contextual nature of peer-on-peer abuse to staff within the MASH. The training content drew upon case study material and data about the local area to enhance professional appreciation of contextual data – and the extent to which this is required to build an accurate picture of the nature of peer-on-peer abuse. Once presented with a contextual evidence base, trainees engaged in group-activities to identify ways in which MASH activities could adopt the principles of contextual safeguarding.

This training session built the capacity of the MASH to recognise and receive contextual information and, by proxy, to value the information provided by services based within, or engaged with, those contexts. Training attendees commented that:

‘(We) Need to work jointly with people and organisations that work in the neighbourhood, not just focus on families’
As a result of the training session the MASH proposed reviewing their referral form to identify if there were ways to include a greater amount of contextual information within referrals and to encourage data on peer-groups, schools and neighbourhoods when referrals were being made.

Following the completion of MASH training an MSU researcher met with the senior management of a housing provider that accommodated 100 16–25 year olds within the site. On average 60% of residents were young men and 10% were under the age of 18 indicating potential vulnerabilities for 16 and 17 year olds and young women in general.

During the meeting the researcher and senior leadership team discussed:

- Their current approaches to safeguarding 16-17 year olds in their provision
- Any special measures that they may consider implementing when receiving a 16-17 year-old young woman (given the gender and age disparity in the service)
- The nature of abusive and violent incidents that had occurred between residents in the provision

Researchers used the information provided in this discussion to build a training workshop for frontline practitioners and managers within the provision. The workshop drew upon research into peer-on-peer abuse and contextual dynamics of risk to support attendees in addressing issues that had arisen following abusive incidents within the provision. In particular researchers focused on:

- Strengthening the service’s policies and procedures
- Identifying opportunities to develop additional, but informal, support for young people living in the hostel provision
- Environmental, design and cultural factors that could ensure the provision was a safer place for the young people who lived there

Workshop attendees commented that:

(It was) really useful to think about ways to develop our abilities to work with peer-on-peer abuse and reflect together as a team

I will encourage staff members to discuss and use their skills more to work with young people – re-focus our attention on being accountable for young people’s safety

Through this process attendees recognised the contribution that they made to the nature of the provision, and the impact that this had on facilitating or disrupting young people’s experiences of abuse.

Having raised the awareness of contextual factors amongst MASH services and begun engagement with community-based providers, researchers designed a workshop for a wider
number of voluntary and community-sector agencies. The session was designed and delivered as a partnership between the MASH and the MSU research team with the aim of:

- Informing community services about the research evidence regarding contextual dynamics of peer-on-peer abuse
- Providing information about referral routes and local responses in the site should they identify peer-on-peer abuse, individuals affected or hold information on contextual dynamics
- Triggering a discussion through which voluntary and community sector representatives, housing estate officers, and young people’s housing providers could identify how community approaches to peer-on-peer abuse could be developed.

Workshop attendees commented that it was useful to meet other community providers and to engage in solution-focused discussions with social care. Another stated: ‘we don’t work jointly and that is key to dealing with this’.

As a result of this process children’s social care met with 16+ housing providers to discuss and plan partnership working related to safeguarding adolescents in general and peer-on-peer abuse specifically. At close of the delivery programme they planned to continue working with housing providers, including involving residents’ associations, to further develop this approach. Housing also agreed to routinely attend LSCB CSE sub-group meetings in the site to ensure their work was strategically considered in the site’s response to peer-on-peer abuse.

While it fell out of the delivery period, the research team felt that further consideration was required regarding the development of the MASH referral and assessment process – to ensure that contextual factors were recorded, gathered and considered in the decision-making process.
**Definition – Serious Youth Violence**

Any offence of most serious violence or weapon enabled crime, where the victim is aged 1-19 i.e. murder, manslaughter, rape, wounding with intent and causing grievous bodily harm. "Youth violence" is defined in the same way, but also includes assault with injury offences.

**Definition – Harmful Sexual Behaviour**

Children and young people presenting with sexual behaviours that are outside of developmentally ‘normative’ parameters.

**Peer-on-peer abuse in England**

- When surveyed, a quarter of girls and 18% of boys report experience some kind of physical violence from a partner (Barter, et al., 2009)
- Between 30 and 70% of young women report encountering sexual harassment in school (EVAW, 2010; GirlGuiding UK, 2014)
- 10-15 year olds in 2013 were estimated to have experienced 46,000 incidents of violent crime, 79% of which had been perpetrated by someone also aged 10-15 (ONS, 2015)
- More than four in ten teenage schoolgirls aged between 13 and 17 in 2013 had experienced sexual coercion. (University of Bristol and University of Central Lancashire, 2015)
- A survey of adult survivors of child sexual abuse in England in 2011 found that around two thirds had been abused by a young person and not an adult (Radford, et al., 2011).

**Homes**

- Neighbourhood
- School
- Peer Group
- Home
- Child

**Peer Groups**

- Neighbourhood
- School
- Peer Group
- Home
- Child

Mother stated that ‘there were things going on in Sara’s world that she did not have access to’… She described that Sara was ‘being controlled by others who were more powerful’ than her mother.

Sean’s mother had reported that her son’s behaviour was ‘out of control’ a year before… Sean’s mother had called the police to report her son missing stating that she was struggling to manage his behaviour and that he was returning home with unexplained amounts of money and would pack a bag and stay with friends.

Most of the young people and family members interviewed saw factors outside the family as having a greater influence on their gang association. Issues widely seen as more significant included growing up in a ‘hostile’ environment where gang membership, criminality and violence were normalised; negative experiences of school; the pull of peer subculture… and the search for identity, independence and respect.

(Firmin, 2015)

(Catch 22, 2013:4)
Suspects had sexually harmed and assaulted young women together... Suspects reassured one another and blamed the complainant

(Firmin, 2015)

One suspect had no recorded offences in his history and yet committed a serious sexual offence when initiated by two of his peers... Two suspects told a third when join in the assault and when to stop. Two suspects held the complainant down while a third assaulted her

(Firmin, 2015)

For some young men... control could be a collective endeavour, facilitated via social media, to insult; those men deemed unable to keep their girlfriends on lockdown.

(Corr, et al. 2013:8-9)

School moves Susan to another part of the school to avoid contact with the boy... Susan is having problems with another girl in class - school change Susan’s timetable so that she is not in class with this girl. ...In the New Year Staff say that Susan has been threatened by someone from a different school... school assigns a mentor to Susan - the following week Susan is recorded as making rude and offensive comments during mentoring time, threatening a member of staff - school gives a fixed term 3 day exclusion.

(Firmin, 2015, Bold added by author)

A related point in some schools was that, while they placed a laudable emphasis on treating each student as an individual, they sometimes lost sight of group behaviour that was impinging strongly on the behaviour of individuals.

(Institute of Physics, 2015:10)

After a few minutes he stopped and left 6G1 there. She put her clothes back on and went to join her friends. Later that day boys in the school started shouting ‘skirt’ at her.

(Case 6) (Firmin, 2015)

There is some boys in the school that like keep asking me to have sex with them and I am just like "no", like on a daily basis... like they will walk around school and try dragging me into corners and feel me up and everything and it’s just irritating because they don’t understand.

(Barter, et al. 2009:110)
(8B1 was) surrounded by a group of males and had his bag poked by a sharp implement. He was patted down and slapped around the head. (On another occasion) searched by a lone male and had his phone taken.

(Case 8) (Firmin, 2015)

“Big men will stop little girls in the road and the street. In person, it’s real. But you can block it online.” “I was on my own the other day and a man said, ‘Come here and get in my car and we can go for fish and chips.’ It was on a main road so it was okay, but it would have been more scary if it had been at night.” “I get approached all the time when I am in school uniform.”

(Coffey, 2015)

The impact on a young person

• Missing
• Physical Injuries
• Drugs and alcohol
• Offending
• Sexual Health
• Disengagement from school
• Change in appearance
• Mental health and emotional well-being

Contextual Framework for Exploring Adolescence

In relation to young people’s experiences of abuse and vulnerability:
1. Young people develop within a range of social systems
2. Social systems interplay with one another
3. Young people construct, and are constructed by, social systems
4. Young people embody rules of social systems and engage in harmful norms in the absence of alternative systems
5. Young people are dependent upon those who run/manage social systems, as well as their peers, for their social development

Case Review Methodology

Four cases submitted (1 x IDVA, 1 x CSE Service, 1 x YOS, 1 x CYT)
1 x DV, 1 x CSE, 1 x HSB, 1 x SYV... But not that straight forward
Case template completed using case file information plus Care First and YSS records
- The incidents
- The associated contexts
- The response
Coded using 12 nodes and 90 tree nodes
Analysis run on nature of behaviour and nature of response
Used to build vignettes
### Example Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contextual Risk Factor</th>
<th>Interpersonal Risk Factor</th>
<th>Personal Risk Factor</th>
<th>Family Risk Factor</th>
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<td>Low self-esteem</td>
<td>Poor physical and emotional health</td>
<td>Poor academic achievement</td>
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### Explanations and conclusions

**Today – Using same A3 Sheet and case study**

1. **Rate future desistance factors**: How does the research into peer-on-peer abuse help us think about weighting these contexts?
2. **Past behaviours and significant life events** – how did they impact contexts as well as individuals?
3. **Make some judgements**: which contexts of risk/resilience are likely to change?
4. **Identify which contextual risk/protective factors can be used to EXPLAIN ratings**

### Contextual Pathways and Planning

**Today**: Review the assessment sheet and take the intervention plan sheet.

1. **Reviewing the assessment sheet** identify factors that you would ‘flag for action’ for inclusion in the intervention plan.
2. **Take the intervention plan sheet** – contextual adaptation of the integrated plan. Use the information in the assessment sheet and the factors that have been flagged to build the plan.

**Beyond Today**: Quality assurance

- **Identify key external controls that the service can draw upon to address extra-familial risk or enhance extra-familial resilience**
- **Quality Assurance** – has interplay between the different contextual factors (and the relevant weighting of them) been appropriately considered?

### Explanations (2)

**Beyond Today:**

- **Using Episodes** – opportunity to identify interplay between different contexts and any circumstances/influences that have stronger influence than others: is context the most appropriate aspect connecting offences?
- **Predicting adverse outcomes and safety/well-being** – ensure record of contextual concerns (for example continued risk of violence on the street, or peer group attitudes continue to be problematic etc.) so that the plan can seek to target those contextual concerns.

### Intervention Plan Example

<table>
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<tr>
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### Next Steps

1. **Post-It Reflection**:
   a) What will you take away from this session?
   b) What will you do to implement the learning from today?
2. **Monitoring implementation**: looking for volunteers
3. **Join the contextual safeguarding practitioners network** – June onwards.
Keep in touch

carlene@msunderstood.org.uk
carlene.firmin@beds.ac.uk
@carlenefirmin
## Contextual Information Gathering Exercise - Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal, Family and Social Factors</th>
<th>Young Person</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Peer Group</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Neighbourhood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Living arrangements and environmental factors</td>
<td>Child to parent violence</td>
<td>Pro-criminal peer associations</td>
<td>No access to education</td>
<td>Gang-affiliated neighbourhood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Parenting, family and relationships</td>
<td>Historic exposure to domestic abuse</td>
<td>Limited association with safe and pro-social peers</td>
<td>Exposure to crime, drugs use and violence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Young person’s development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Learning, education, training and employment</td>
<td></td>
<td>Associated to sexually exploitative young people through his partner</td>
<td></td>
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### Offending and Anti-social behaviour

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Offending and Anti-Social Behaviour</td>
<td>Potential attitudes related to gender, power and control</td>
<td>Older siblings involved in offending behaviour</td>
<td>Offends along peers – especially Seb</td>
<td>Exclusion from education providers creates greater risk on time on the street or with peers</td>
<td>Largely street based offending in X part of the local area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Patterns and attitudes</td>
<td>Reputational pressures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Other behaviours of particular concern</td>
<td></td>
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### Foundations for Change

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<th>Personal, Family and Social Factors</th>
<th>Young Person</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Peer Group</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Neighbourhood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Resilience and goals</td>
<td>On-going involvement of peers in offending behaviour</td>
<td>Lack of access to education</td>
<td>On-going criminality in the local area</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Opportunities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Engagement and participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Factors affecting desistance</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Contextual Integrated Plan Exercise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Area of Intervention</th>
<th>Young Person</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Peer Group</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Neighbourhood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abusive behaviours in intimate relationship</td>
<td>Referral: Therapeutic support for impact of exposure to domestic abuse</td>
<td>Meeting with mum to explore the impact of domestic abuse on family dynamic</td>
<td>Map peer group dynamics and identify if Micah is the leader or follower with Seb</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Young Person’s Target: Develop skills to build healthy and safe relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Actions: Attend therapeutic support sessions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OTHER CONTROLS**
A framework for developing MAP/ Strategy meetings for young people who display harmful sexual behaviours

Background and purpose of framework

Over the past year the International Centre at the University of Bedfordshire, and the MsUnderstood partnership which it manages, have received repeated requests for information regarding processes that provide oversight of responses to young people who display harmful sexual behaviours (HSB).

During the same time period the a site with whom we have been working has trialled a process of using MAP (multi-agency planning) meetings for young people identified as displaying harmful sexual behaviour (including those who are the subject to an NFA decision by the police and CPS but where concerns remain). This process has been supported by the development of a Terms of Reference, governance structure and an agreed information sharing process.

Where relevant these MAP meetings are related to the multi-agency sexual exploitation meeting where all CSE cases are thematically discussed. Themes related to peer-on-peer exploitation will then have MAP meetings for all young people involved (those identified as exploited and those identified as exploiting them).

The MsUnderstood partnership has monitored this process, and matched it against research evidence into harmful sexual behaviour, to develop a framework for developing processes which monitor responses to young people with harmful sexual behaviour.

In the site two HSB MAPs were observed, as was the multi-agency CSE meeting and complex case discussions. Minutes of all HSB MAPs conducted in the last year (15 meetings) were then subject to manual analysis using a coding framework to identify:

- Key points of consistency across all meetings
- Points of inconsistency that could be addressed through a framework
- Opportunities for contextual assessment and intervention planning for

The findings of this process were used to produce a draft framework for an oversight process – outlined in this document. The University of Bedfordshire worked with the site to further pilot and refine this method further before offering the framework to be piloted in other local authorities beyond this site through the contextual safeguarding practitioner’s network.

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1 The International Centre is a research centre based at the University of Bedfordshire with an exclusive focus on sexual exploitation, trafficking and violence www.beds.ac.uk/ic
2 MsUnderstood is a partnership between the University of Bedfordshire and Imkaan committed to develop responses to young people’s experiences of gender inequality in general and peer abuse specifically
3 From 2016 the International Centre will host a network for practitioners interested in developing contextual responses to adolescent safeguarding

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The Framework

The remainder of this document outlines the key components of a framework for using HSB MAPs (or an equivalent meeting) for monitoring responses to young people who display HSB – followed by a set of appendices with resources and further points of reference to aid the application of this framework into local practice.

1. Meeting objective: agree the objective of the meeting/process that is being introduced.

Introducing the consistent use of HSB MAP meetings as a means of creating consistency and oversight into response to HSB requires a clear, and multi-agency held, objective. According to the Terms of Reference developed by the site:

The purpose of the HSB MAP meeting is to explore the risk of a young person sexually harming others and agree an intervention plan to address this risk. HSB MAP meetings should be distinctly different from other professional or network meetings e.g. CIN Review/LAC Reviews and concentrate on the risk posed by and to a young person who demonstrates harmful sexual behaviour.

Not all local authorities use the MAP model – however the objective above and following principles, structure and resources within this framework can be used to guide discussions related to HSB at strategy meetings and other HSB specific considerations.

2. Underlying principles: messages from research into HSB and the learning from the site’s initial pilot process indicated some key principles that are central to the implementation of this framework.

The following principles provide the foundations for HSB MAP meetings including: all decisions that are taken at such meetings; the tools that are used to guide decision-making and record actions; and any quality assurance processes that are employed to monitor implementation and maintain standards/consistency of approach:

- When young people display, or are thought to have displayed, harmful sexual behaviour this is primarily a safeguarding concern of which enforcement may, but does not have to, form a part of the response.
- The choices, attitudes and behaviours displayed by young people who have sexually harmed others, or are at risk of doing so, are informed by a range of social systems upon which they are dependent for their development – HSB cannot be understood in isolation of context.
- Intervention plans for young people who have displayed, or are at risk of displaying, harmful sexual behaviour should address both the behaviours/attitudes of concern and the contextual factors that may be facilitating or challenging these behaviours/attitudes.
- Associated to the above point professionals have a role to play in establishing the social conditions (within families, peer groups, schools and neighbourhoods) in which young people can engage in safe and healthy relationships.

3. Routes of referral: identify a route for referring HSB concerns into the process that is being introduced.

Routes of referral will differ for each local authority however it is recommended that they follow the same route in operation for CSE referrals albeit potentially with a different...
professional acting as a SPOC for HSB as opposed to CSE queries. Likewise if the identified HSB indicates that peer-on-peer sexual exploitation is a concern then discussions from a HSB MAP, any plan that is produced and any associated concerns should be fed into the work of the local operational partnership response to CSE.

Those piloting this framework should insert the referral route in keeping with their local structure into this section of the framework including contact details of any SPOC.

4. **Key models for reference:** Draw upon research-based models for identifying the severity of the presenting behaviour, the contexts to which it is associated and the required response

- Agreeing the severity of the behaviour - Hackett’s continuum of sexual behaviours (Appendix 1): Behaviours of concern should be considered with reference to this continuum and minutes consistently record the discussion and decision.
- Identifying associated contextual concerns: Firmin’s contextual circles of safeguarding (Appendix 2): The contexts of socialisation that should be considered in relation to the young person’s behaviour. To what extent does the young person’s engagement in these contexts challenge or reinforce the harmful norms that underpin the behaviour of concern.
- Building and monitoring the required response: Intervention Plan table outlined in (Appendix 3)

Introducing these models into HSB meetings provides a route to build consistency into the process from the outset and guides, rather than prescribes, professional judgement.

5. **Attendance and governance:** agree attendance and reporting/oversight structures

In keeping with the principles of this framework when a young person displays HSB this is safeguarding concern. As such HSB meetings should be led and coordinated by children and young people’s services to ensure that it is embedded primarily within safeguarding structures.

To develop some consistency during the pilot phase it is recommended that all HSB MAP meetings are chaired by the same individual – this individual should be identified at the outset of the pilot phase. Once the process is embedded it may be possible to consider a small number of chairs to share responsibility for HSB MAP meetings.

Other agencies that should be present (or considered) as a matter of routine are:

- Children’s Social Care
- Police (CSE and/or HSB leads and where necessary those involved with gangs/serious youth violence)
- CSE and gangs analysts where available (community safety or performance analysts may be able to assist where there is a gap)
- Education provider of young person concerned
- Youth service provider
- Safeguarding Reviewing Service
- Key VCS providers which may be able to, or are already, engage the young person
- Youth Justice Service (manager and case holder where appropriate)
- Health: School Nurse and/or LAC Nurse where appropriate
• Community safety and/or neighbourhoods team (if behaviour is occurring in public spaces)

The thematic trends identified at HSB meetings should be fed into the multi-agency operational structures for child sexual exploitation (sometimes referred to as MASE sometimes as SERAC) and where necessary or relevant the local gangs and serious youth panel. At a strategic level then these themes/actions should be fed into the LSCB (and any established vulnerable-adolescents strategic group or on occasion through a designated sub-group of the LSCB). Community-based trends/concerns can also be fed into the meeting of the Community Safety Partnership Board.

6. HSB MAP Meeting structure: Agree a structure which will act as a template agenda for all HSB meetings.

Below are the key headings proposed for a HSB meeting agenda:

   a) Summary of young person’s current situation and their background
   b) Specific concerns about young person’s harmful sexual behaviour
   c) Identification of vulnerability, risk and resilience factors associated to the HSB (including those identified in any risk assessments already utilised) (list used by the site is built into the tool in Appendix 3)
   d) Strengths
   e) Current professional involvement with the young person and any associated contexts
   f) Decision regarding level of risk (using Hackett continuum)
Decisions regarding interventions – young person, family and broader environmental/social contexts

The proposed agenda is an adaptation from the original site pilot – informed by a review of meeting minutes. During the pilot phase contexts were considered independently of risk factors, behaviours etc. – However this framework recommends that they be considered throughout the process as displayed in Appendix 3. Therefore:

- The young person’s behaviour would be summarised and then contextualised - what did they do and then in what context did this behaviour occur and/or what contexts were associated to the behaviour and how
- Vulnerability, risk and resilience factors (those used by the site are listed in Appendix 4 – although not exhaustive) – some of these are individual; others are familial or based in schools etc. Therefore as they are recorded it would help to split them out into contexts at that point as suggested in Appendix 3
- Strengths – are they contextual or individual? These can also be plotted against the relevant columns in Appendix 3
- Professional involvement – this also needs to be plotted against contexts (Appendix 3). If there are risk/resilience/vulnerability factors in the school or peer group for example has there been professional involvement to address these issues? The same questions can be asked regarding the future plans for intervention.

Developing the MAP structure in this way, assisted by the template in Appendix 3, should aid consistency in both minute-taking and consideration of contexts

7. Quality assurance and monitoring: identify routes to monitor actions agreed at different MAP meetings, scan trends and ensure that meetings are held in accordance with the principles and objective highlighted earlier in this framework

Reviewing the minutes of 15 HSB MAPs identified that beyond an agreed agenda other processes are required to aid a consistent level of quality in terms of the discussion at a MAP meeting and the actions that are agreed. The tool provided in appendix 3 provides a structure for recording the discussion and monitoring the actions taken at MAP meetings. It also provides a visual account of all meetings that can be used to identify trend data.

In order to achieve this it is recommended that the sheet in Appendix 3 is used:

- As part of review to meetings identify where factors/behaviours/contexts have shifted and consider implications for intervention
- To monitor agreed interventions using a traffic light tool (red, amber, green) to flag where interventions have been progressed and where they are yet to actioned
- To identify if any risk/resilience/vulnerability factor has been identified which isn’t subject to any intervention at present. Mapping issues in this way creates a visual demonstration of factors, particularly those that are contextual, for which there are no plans in place

Additional considerations

In addition to the components of the framework, partnerships planning to implement this pilot process need to consider:
• What information-sharing agreements are in place to facilitate open and appropriate sharing of information to meet the objective of the meeting? Who owns the data following the discussion? Ideally processes in place for existing MAP meetings (or their equivalent) should suffice.

• Communications: how will these meetings be communicated to the multi-agency partnership in a way that facilitates participation and information sharing?

• How will trend data identified across multiple HSB MAP meetings be fed into the MASE, Bronze/Gangs panel and any other key multi-agency operational groups concerned with violence and abuse between young people?

Interested in piloting this approach?

For those interested in piloting this model please contact danielle.fritz@beds.ac.uk to arrange a discussion with Carlene Firmin regarding a plan for setting up a pilot and monitoring delivery.
Appendix A - Hackett Continuum of Sexual Behaviours

Which point on this continuum best accounts for the young person’s behaviours? When making the decision explicitly state the reason for the drawing this conclusion.
Appendix 2: Firmin’s Contextual Circles of Safeguarding

- In what ways are the identified behaviours; risk/vulnerability/resilience factors; interventions associated to these different sites of adolescent socialisation?
- In what ways do these contexts interplay with one another in relation to the young person under discussion?
- Which contexts are most strongly associated to behaviours under consideration?
### Appendix 3: University of Bedfordshire’s Contextual Table for gathering information and planning (print on A3 paper for meetings)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group or Sole Offence:</th>
<th>Points for discussion / recording at HSB MAP meeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Young person’s current situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual and contextual factors to consider</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual young person’s characteristics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family / Home(s) characteristics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer group(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood spaces (specify)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contexts Summary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Appendix 4: Risk, Resilience and Vulnerability Factors

When considering the factors below during a HSB meeting allocate them onto the table in Appendix 3 – which are factors that are part of the young person’s engagement in the neighbourhood, which are peer-based factors and which for example are about their home or familial situation etc. Many are repeated in each section in the table below as some young people may, for example, encounter abuse and violence in their school whereas others may experience this at home.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Resilience</th>
<th>Vulnerability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Formal diagnosis of Conduct Disorder or other formal mental health diagnosis</td>
<td>• Abusive behaviour appears to be peer influenced rather than led by young person</td>
<td>• Unsure about their sexual orientation or unable to disclose sexual orientation to their families or peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• History of aggressive behavior</td>
<td>• Abusive behaviour ceased when victim demonstrated non-compliance or distress</td>
<td>• Learning disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• History of cruelty to animals</td>
<td>• Accepts responsibility for the offence</td>
<td>• Recent bereavement or loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Socially and emotionally isolated</td>
<td>• Engages in positive talents and or leisure interests</td>
<td>• Low self-esteem or self-confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Disclosures made then withdrawn by subject or victim</td>
<td>• Good negotiation/ problem solving skills</td>
<td>• Experience of being bullied themselves and/ or coercion into bullying others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recruiting others into exploitative situations</td>
<td>• Developmentally appropriate level of sexual knowledge</td>
<td>• Alcohol and/ or substance misuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Concerns raised regarding sexualised or sexually harmful behaviour during childhood Cold, callous attitude towards offending &amp; appears to lack of empathy</td>
<td>• Makes positive use of support network</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Harmful/Oppressive attitudes towards young women, relationships and consent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Obsession/ pre-occupation with pornography</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evidence of sexual bullying and/or distributing sexually inappropriate images</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Allegations have been made against them in respect of sexually harmful behaviour, including when NFA’d</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>Vulnerability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Familial / Home</strong></td>
<td>• Witnessed domestic violence</td>
<td>• Living in a chaotic or dysfunctional household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Disclosures made then withdrawn by subject or victim</td>
<td>• Experience of abuse or neglect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recruiting others into exploitative situations</td>
<td>• Gang association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Concerns raised regarding sexualised or sexually harmful behaviour within family</td>
<td>• Missing from home or care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Harmful/Oppressive attitudes towards young women, relationships and consent</td>
<td>• Unsure about their sexual orientation or unable to disclose sexual orientation to their families or peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Abusive behaviour challenged by some peers</td>
<td>• Recent bereavement or loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Developmentally appropriate level of sexual knowledge</td>
<td>• Bulling/ sexual bullying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Makes positive use of support network</td>
<td>• Alcohol and/ or substance misuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Peer</strong></td>
<td>• History of aggressive behavior</td>
<td>• Experience of abuse or neglect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Disclosures made then withdrawn by subject or victim</td>
<td>• Gang association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recruiting others into exploitative situations</td>
<td>• Attending school or are friends with young people who are involved in sexually harmful behavior/ sexually exploited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Concerns raised regarding sexualised or sexually harmful behaviour amongst peers</td>
<td>• Missing from home or care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Harmful/Oppressive attitudes towards young women, relationships and consent</td>
<td>• Unsure about their sexual orientation or unable to disclose sexual orientation to their families or peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Obsession/ pre-occupation with pornography</td>
<td>• Recent bereavement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Evidence of sexual bullying and/or distributing sexually inappropriate images</td>
<td>• Bulling/ sexual bullying or loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Abusive behaviour challenged by some peers</td>
<td>• Alcohol and/ or substance misuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School</strong></td>
<td>• Disclosures made then withdrawn by subject or victim</td>
<td>• Experience of abuse or neglect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recruiting others into exploitative situations</td>
<td>• Gang association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Concerns raised regarding sexualised or sexually harmful behaviour within school</td>
<td>• Attending school or are friends with young people who are involved in sexually harmful behavior/ sexually exploited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Opportunities for extra-curricular and or leisure interests</td>
<td>• Missing from home or care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Clear messaging about consent, relationships gender</td>
<td>• Unsure about their sexual orientation or unable to disclose sexual orientation to their families or peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Clearly applied bullying policies and procedures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Response to corridor cultures are</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Resilience</td>
<td>Vulnerability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Harmful/Oppressive attitudes towards young women,</td>
<td>consistent</td>
<td>unable to disclose sexual orientation to their families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationships and consent</td>
<td>• Access to a positive relationship with at least one adult</td>
<td>• Absent or exclusion from education or training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evidence of sexual bullying and/or distributing sexually</td>
<td>• The most significant adults in a young person’s life demonstrate</td>
<td>• Missing from home or care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inappropriate images</td>
<td>protective attitudes and behaviours</td>
<td>• Bullying/ sexual bullying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Harmful/Oppressive attitudes towards young women,</td>
<td>• Positive relationships with professionals</td>
<td>• Alcohol and/ or substance misuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationships and consent</td>
<td>• Makes positive use of support network – engaged in multi-agency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood</td>
<td>partnerships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Disclosures made then withdrawn by subject or victim</td>
<td>• Available extra-curricular and or leisure interests</td>
<td>• Experience of abuse or neglect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recruiting others into exploitative situations</td>
<td>• Access to a consistent and positive relationship with at least one adult</td>
<td>• Gang association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Concerns raised regarding sexualised or sexually harmful</td>
<td>• The most significant adults in a young person’s life demonstrate</td>
<td>• Missing from home or care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>behaviour within local areas where they spend their time</td>
<td>protective attitudes and behaviours</td>
<td>• Bullying/ sexual bullying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Harmful/Oppressive attitudes towards young women,</td>
<td>• Positive relationships with professionals</td>
<td>• Alcohol and/ or substance misuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationships and consent</td>
<td>• Places for safe socialisation are available</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Available extra-curricular and or leisure interests</td>
<td>• Clear response to identified trends in crime and anti-social behaviour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Access to a consistent and positive relationship with at least one</td>
<td>• Relevant neighbourhood partners engaged in response to emerging trends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adult</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Session 1: A contextual account of peer-on-peer abuse

1. Provide research and evidence into contextual associations (domestic abuse and neglect at home, peer group influence, school and community cultures) and theoretical framework

2. Develop case study activity and identify additional resources that would be required

3. Explore/identify the ways in which the issues of CSE, serious youth violence, harmful sexual behaviour, domestic abuse and missing are linked

---

Homes (1)

- A significant minority of young people who have abused, and been abused by, have been exposed to domestic abuse between parents and carers (Boswell 2006, Catch 22 2013, Gadd, et al. 2013, Hackett, Phillips, et al. 2013).
- Studies comparing young people who have been exposed to violence between carers and those who have not have found ‘increased adolescent aggressive behaviour’ in the former cohort (Herrera & Stuewig, 2011).
- Social learning theory: exposed to in family and repeated amongst peers (Losel and Bender 2006).
- Impact on young people’s ability to experience empathy (Herrera & Stuewig, 2011)
- Boundary setting and neglect (Barter et al., 2009; Catch 22, 2013; Letourneau et al., 2009)
- Harmful gender norms or normalising attitudes amongst parents and carers
- Linked to missing episodes and home not acting as a protective factor (Firmin, 2015)
- Many of these outcomes can be mediated or aggravated by additional individual and environmental factors.

Homes (2)

- Sibling association to involvement in peer-on-peer abuse (Catch 22, 2013; Firmin, 2011; Hagell & Jayarathe-Dent, 2006; Khan, et al., 2013); from introductions/pathways, co-offending
- Undermining of parental capacity: (Catch 22, 2013; Hackett, et al., 2013; Losel & Bender, 2006; Nieuwbeerta & van der Laan, 2006; D’Arcy et al., 2015)

Mother stated that ‘there were things going on in Sara world that she did not have access to’ ... She described that Sara was ‘being controlled by others who were more powerful’ than her mother.

Sean’s mother had reported that her son’s behaviour was ‘out of control’ a year before ... Sean’s mother had called the police to report her son missing stating that she was struggling to manage his behaviour and that he was returning home with unexplained amounts of money and would pack a bag and stay with friends.
Peer Groups (1)

- A large amount of peer-on-peer abuse is instigated by, or associated to, peer groups (Cialdini & Trost, 1998; Cowie, 2011; Warf, 2002; Zimring, 1998).
- Particular to adolescent development (Frosh, et al., 2002; Gardner and Steinberg, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2012)
- Aggravating nature of peer presence (Franklin, 2004; Lambine, 2013; Woodhams, 2013)
- Peer normalisation and links to relationship abuse (Barter et al. 2009; Corr, 2013)
- Peer group dynamics: leaders, followers and bystanders (Firmin, 2015; Horvath and Woodhams, 2013; Pitts, 2008) and complexity of power
- Impact on parenting capacity (Catch 22, 2013; Firmin, 2015)
- Bystander intervention (Cossar et al., 2013; Cowie, 2011; Firmin, 2015; Powell, 2013)

Peer Groups (2)

Implied association to context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gang-affected neighbourhoods</th>
<th>Sexual harassment and bullying</th>
<th>Peer recruitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSE in parks, shopping centres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood</td>
<td>Peer Group</td>
<td>Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td></td>
<td>Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer association to IPV</td>
<td>Peer group sexual offending</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic abuse</td>
<td></td>
<td>Neglect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Educational Establishments

- Sites of social development for young people (Cowie, 2011; Frosh, et al., 2002; Jenks, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2012)
- Schools as locations of peer-on-peer abuse – physical, sexual and emotional bullying (Frosh, et al., 2002, Ringrose et al., 2011, Squires & Goldsmith, 2011)
- Inappropriate responses and facilitation of abusive norms (Cowie, 2011; Firmin, 2015; Girlguiding UK, 2014)

Educational establishments (2)

- Harmful gender stereotypes and sexual harassment (Firmin, 2015; Frosh, et al., 2002; Girlguiding UK, 2014; Institute of Physics, 2015; Light, 2007; Ringrose & Renold, 2011)

There is some boys in the school that like keep asking me to have sex with them and I am just like “no”, like on a daily basis... like they will walk around school and try dragging me into corners and feel me up and everything and it’s just irritating because they don’t understand. (Barter, et al. 2009:110)

Sam and Jeff used to touch Rema regularly during the day as they were all attending the same school... The boys would also grab the girls in the corridors and simulate the ‘daggering’ dance move on them. (Sexual harassment of students in school of Rema, Case 4 from Firmin, 2015)
Neighbourhoods

- Street as a site of adolescent socialisation in many Western social contexts (Catch 22, 2013; Finkelhor, et al., 2009; Jenks, 2005; Messerschmidt, 2012; Skelton & Valentine, 1998; Squires & Goldsmith, 2011)
- Gang-associated and serious youth violence routinely associated with neighbourhood-based risk and criminality
- Street based sexual harassment (Bates, 2014; Coffey, 2014)
- CSE associated to public space environments (parks, disused garages, high streets) (O’Arcy, Dhalwai and Thomas, 2015 Jay, 2014)

A Theoretical Framework

Bronfenbrenner – Social Ecological Theory

- Social Ecological Theory
- Development of Bronfenbrenner's mesosystem
- Pursuit for status means that individuals will engage with that which harms them in order to maintain status quo and achieve status

Bourdieu – Constructivist Structuralism

- Fields, Habitus and Symbolic Violence
- Social fields (structures): the rules (doxa) of the environment
- Habitus (agency): an individual’s feel for the rules
- Symbolic violence: engagement in that which is detrimental

Social Fields, Status and Symbolic Violence

- Symbolic violence: because the foundation of symbolic violence lies not in mystified consciousness that only need to be enlightened but in dispositions attuned to the structure of domination of which they are the produce, the relation of complicity that the victims of symbolic domination grant to the dominant can only be broke through a radical transformation of the social conditions of production of the dispositions that lead the dominated to take the point of view of the dominant on the dominant themselves. (Bourdieu, 2001:41-42)
- Learning about healthy relationships while being surrounded by harmful ones
Habtius – agents not subjects

- Active, not puppets
- ‘Generative’ capacity
- Potential to act differently through active engagement in alternative social field
- Social rules may be ‘entrenched but not unsurpassable’ (McNay 2003,97)

Embodiment: Tennis player example

You need only think of the impulsive choice made by the tennis player who runs up to the net, to understand that it has nothing to in common with the learned construction that the coach, after analysis, draws up in order to explain it and deduce communicable lessons from it. The conditions of rational calculation are practically never given in practice (Bourdieu 1990, 11)

Constructivist Structuralism – Interplay

- Embodying social rules actively engaged in constructing the social field
- Active two-way relationship - reflexive
- Multiple engagement in multiple fields – limited by their field of influence
- Query – who are the agents engaged in interplay (public, peers, professionals etc)

Jenks: Development through Dependency

Instead of asking ‘Why is my child a heroin addict? What went wrong in his or her development’ we should, from a sociological perspective, be asking ‘What is it about this free, liberal, advanced, technological democracy that makes heroin a desirable, alternative possible course of action?’ Development through dependency then becomes an instrument in the process of social and cultural reproduction. (Jenks, 2005:40)

Contextual Framework for Adolescence

In relation to young people’s experiences of abuse and vulnerability:
1. Young people develop within a range of social systems
2. Social systems interplay with one another
3. Young people construct, and are constructed by, social systems
4. Young people embody rules of social systems and engage in harmful norms in the absence of alternative systems
5. Young people are dependent upon those who run/manage social systems, as well as their peers, for their social development

Applied to the literature

- Local crime and violence will inform the association of familial characteristics to peer-on-peer abuse (Aisenberg & Herrenkohl, 2008; Losel & Bender, 2006), and the same can be said for schools (Squires & Goldsmith, 2011)
- The nature of home environments can increase the likelihood of peer or street influence/dependence (Firmin, 2015, Warr, 2002)
- The nature of school environments can inform peer group norms and the extent to which harmful behaviours can be challenged (Cowie, 2011), as well as enabling/disourcng bystander intervention
- Young people, adults, professionals, public are ALL AGENTS in this process

And so on……
(Next time we will apply this framework to responses)
Exploring these dynamics through the case study resources

Initial feedback on the cases

1. What were your initial thoughts about the cases – what stood out to you?
2. Do you have any questions about the case content?
3. Have you come across anything similar?

Original Exercise

STAGE 1) Introduce the case

STAGE 2) Introduce the strips

STAGE 3) Introduce assessment and intervention sheets

STAGE 4) Build case – context by context – leaving time for reflection, review and decision-making

Alternative Exercise

What else could you do with these cases?

What else could you do with the original exercise?

Overlapping Issues

How did they overlap in the cases?
In what ways are they different?

Factors that connect...

- Grooming and Consent
- Profiling
- Disclosure
- Peer Influence
- Community safety
- Parental capacity

Next Session

Preparation
- Present ideas for using the case differently – and for how you could include them in your current training with reference to current RESPONSES in Bucks?

Content
- Case file exercise presentations
- Research evidence on young people who abuse peers (physically, sexually and emotionally)
- Hackett continuum, Brooke and other tools to identify abusive behaviours
- Evidence on interventions – approaches that practitioners can take beyond referrals

Resources to come
- Quotations from young people for each context
- Key statistics

References (2)

- Firmin, C. This is it. This is my life... Armed Violence in Violence Final Report. London: ROTA, 2011.

References (3)

References (4)


References (5)


Session 1 Recap: A contextual account of peer-on-peer abuse

1. Explored the research evidence around the different contexts associated to peer-on-peer abuse...
2. Outlined the theoretical positions of Bronfenbrenner, Bourdieu and Jenks to develop a framework for understanding the literature....
3. Began to apply this learning to how we assess and intervene with cases – using case study methodology

Session 2: Outline

1. Applying the learning to cases: what does this mean for assessment and intervention planning
2. Adapting the exercise in your training and consultancy activities
3. Identifying overlap and distinctions between different forms of peer-on-peer abuse
4. Evidence base on young people who abuse their peers

Intervention and Assessment in Cases

Where was the risk located?

Which context was most influential?

Which partners were required to address identified risks?

Contextual assessment and plan
Alternative Exercise
What else could you do with these cases?

What else could you do with the original exercise?

Overlapping Issues

How did they overlap in the cases?

In what ways are they different?

Factors that connect...
Grooming and Consent
Profiling
Peer Influence
Disclosure
Parental capacity
Community safety

Evidence on young people who abuse their peers
### Language and terminology

- Domestic abuse perpetrator
- Instigator
- Recruiter
- Juvenile sex offender
- Young people with harmful sexual behaviours
- Gang member or associate
- Suspect

### Behaviours (1) (Hackett, 2011)

1. Normal
   - Developmentally expected
   - Socially acceptable
   - Consensual, mutual, reciprocal
   - Shared decision making

2. Inappropriate
   - Single instances of inappropriate sexual behaviour
   - Context may be inappropriate
   - Generally consensual and reciprocal

3. Problematic
   - Problematic and concerning behaviour
   - Developmentally unusual and socially unexpected
   - Generally consensual and reciprocal

4. Abusive
   - Victimising intent or outcome
   - Includes misuse of power
   - Coercion and force to ensure victim compliance
   - Involuntary
   - May lack reciprocity or equal power
   - May include levels of compulsivity

5. Violent
   - Physically violent sexual abuse
   - Highly intrusive
   - Instrumental violence which is psychologically and/or sexually arousing to the perpetrator
   - Sadism

### Behaviours (2) (Brook Traffic Light)

- Physical
- Sexual

### Behaviours (3) (Barter, 2009)

- Rates
- Reason
- Severity
- Impact

### Returning to the circles

- Victimisation
- Criminality
- ASB
- Substance misuse
- Sexual harassment

- Violent or aggressive peer groups
- Peer group offending models
- Social isolation

- Gender, Age, Previous victimisation, Learning Disabilities, ASB profile
- Domestic abuse
- Stalking influence
- Neglect
- Parental LD Capacity

### Key Authors

- Barter et al. 2009 and 2015
- Barter & Berridge (2011) edited collection
- Batchelor (2005)
- Beckett et al. (2013)
- Bijleveld et al. (2007)
- Chung (2005)
- Finkelhor et al. (2009)
- Franklin (2004)
- Gadd et al. (2013)
- Hackett (2014)
- Hackett et al. (2013)
Findings related to the 'suspects' in the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categorisation of young people</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complainant</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspect</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witness</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Individual demographics

- Predominantly young men: 92%
- Aged: 40% aged 13 – 14 (slightly older than complainants)
- Ethnicity: recorded for 69, over 90% BME (although similar to complainants)
- Disability: 2 x learning disability
- Care status: 7 x looked after young people
- 15% were bereaved
- 75% were recorded as 'truanting'
- 33% were identified as missing substances
- 5% were recorded as suicidal (although data was missing for 20% of young people)
- Previous victimisation: Physical (76%), Emotional (89.5%), Sexual (2.6%)
- Previous offending: 68% NFA, 42% conviction, and 36% in school environment.
- Missing: frequency and length of time

4B3 went missing for a week and stated that he had taken £40 which had got him food for the week; reported missing again nine months later. (Case 4, intermittent report of missing episodes)

9B3 went missing for three days after an arrest for affray, following a stop and search. The missing report states that 9B3 returned at approximately 23:00 and was banging on the door to be let in, but his mother refused to open the door because it was late – she knew he had lost his key. He then went missing again and didn’t arrive at education, and neither did many of his friends, the following day. (Case 9)

803 followed home by a group of males. They pushed her up against a wall and put their hands up her skirt, touching her vagina. They stopped when they realised she was crying. (Case 7, a suspect a year prior to the murder)

During a (social media) conversation 5B1 asked a young woman for sex, she refused so he asked her to strip and threatened to show people (at their school) their conversation if she didn’t. She stripped naked for him. A few weeks later she stripped again after he blackmailed her into giving him money in order to leave her alone. (Suspect in Case 5 in the months prior to the rape in question)

Implied association to context

Home environments

- Harm identified (42%)
- Domestic abuse (24%)
- Intra-familial CP issues (24%)
- Other safeguarding concerns (30%)
- Capacity to safeguard (46%)
- Help-seeking (25%)
6B1 mother came into the school stating that she was concerned about 6B1’s behaviour and attitude at home (when he was 13): ‘6B1 does not do as asked at home. Switches his mobile off so he does not have to speak to parent.’ (Case 6, suspect’s parent)

3G14 Mother had threatened to kill herself and her father had also threatened to kill himself on separate incidents. (Case 3, parents of lead suspect)

Peer Groups

- Provided a conducive context for rape in all six cases
- 16% (n=20) adopted a leadership role (primarily through participation)
- 5 of 6 cases leaders also abused alone, followers did not
- Role shift (14%F, 6%B)
- Exposure to harm in peer group - 8 out of 9 cases, including routine physical violence
- Other criminal behaviours - 79%
- Hosting intimate relationship abuse
- Harmful gender norms - 97%
- Positive bystander intervention 35% - two in ten suspects of peers

Implied association to context

Suspects assisted one another in sexually harming the complainant e.g. holding the head of the victim while another suspect orally rapes her...Suspects directed one another about how they should harm the victim...Harmful gender stereotypes were stated out loud during the assault

One suspect had no recorded offences in his history and yet committed a serious sexual offence when initiated by two of his peers...Two suspects told a third when join in the assault and when to stop. Two suspects held the complainant down while a third assaulted her

Suspects had sexually harmed and assaulted young women together...Suspects reassured one another and blamed the complainant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abuse Type</th>
<th>Leader (n=20)</th>
<th>Follower (n=52)</th>
<th>Bystander+ (n=21)</th>
<th>Bystander- (n=26)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Abuse</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Protection</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity to parent</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix N
Schools

- At least 47% of suspects had committed offences in school prior to the abusive incident
- Five of a 6 cases suspects sexually harassing young people in school
- Five out of six cases suspects physically assaulted in school (and in seven cases threatened by older students)
- Prevalence of bullying and emotional abuse
- Wider student and staff attitudes

On record as having told a girl ‘I will rape you’, forced the head of another girl towards his groin area, and another allegation of indecent exposure. (Case 3)

After a few minutes he stopped and left 6G1 there. She put her clothes back on and went to join her friends. Later that day boys in the school started shouting ‘sker’ at her. (Case 6)

Following the witnessing of a physical assault on a female student, 6B1 is ‘spoken to’ and staff note that he is already on a red report from the head teacher. The girl (6G6) has informed the teacher that he had done this before and that he is in a local gang. (Case 6, bold added by author)

Implied association to context

Neighbourhood

75% encountered harm in their neighbourhood of which
- 95% experienced or were exposed to physical harm
- 84% were exposed to harmful sexual behaviours
- all came into contact with criminal activity in that field.
- 95% fearful in local area

Timeframe difference to complainants and witnesses

Gaps in evidence base

- Difference between group and sole perpetration
- Difference between those who abuse younger children and those who abuse peers
- Comparators of those involved in physical and sexual peer victimisation
- Contextual interventions that have been subject to evaluation and review

BUT: enough to consider implications for intervention
Next Session

Preparation
• Prepare a training content that includes learning from the session and/or a case study activity

Content
• Evidence on interventions – approaches that practitioners can take beyond referrals
  ✓ CP Process – genograms and peer group maps
  ✓ Principles of MST
  ✓ Bystander intervention
  ✓ Co-managed cases
  ✓ Trauma-informed practice and attachment
  ✓ Whole-school approaches
  ✓ Place-based approaches

• Equalities

Resources to come
• Quotes from young people for each context
• Key statistics

References


References (2)


References (3)


Session 2 Recap

1. Applied learning from cases to assessment planning
2. Identified initial ways to embed messages and case resources into existing training / consultancy
3. Identified where peer-on-peer abuse siloes overlap and where they are distinct (processes vs. experiences)
4. Evidence base on young people who abuse their peers
Session 3: Outline

- Preparing session content – incorporating lessons from the sessions
- Research on interventions
  - Principles of MST
  - CP Processes – genograms and peer group maps
  - Bystander intervention
  - Co-managed cases
  - Trauma-informed practice and attachment
  - Whole-school approaches
  - Place-based approaches
- Mapping Bucks Interventions against contexts

Interventions – the Research

Creating social conditions for alternative action

Principles of MST (1)

Principles of MST (2)

Incorporating learning into existing training
**Child Protection Processes (SCR)**

**Children Acts 1989 and 2004**

- Statutory duty to protect young people from risk of significant harm
- What is significant harm:
  
  Any physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, neglect, accident or injury that is sufficiently serious to adversely affect progress and enjoyment of life. Harm is defined as the ill treatment or impairment of health and development.

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**Child Protection Processes (2)**

Key components of the legislative framework:

- Harm caused by the parent/carer
- Capacity of parents to safeguard young people from significant harm
- Processes in place to respond – S.17 (Child in Need), S.47 (Child Protection)
- Case conferencing and child protection plan
- Legal removal of the child or placement on voluntary agreement

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**Genogram Symbols**

- **Square**: Male
- **Circle**: Female
- **Diamond**: Male
- **Triangular**: Female
- **Filled Diamond**: Wife
- **Filled Square**: Husband
- **Filled Circle**: Child
- **Filled Square**: Grandparent
- **Filled Diamond**: Aunt
- **Filled Triangular**: Uncle
- **Filled Oval**: Extended Family
- **Closed Oval**: Biological Family

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**Transferring Approaches**

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**Transfer (1) – Genos to Peers**

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**Transfer (2) – Capacity to Safeguard**

- **Neighbourhood**
- **School**
- **Peer Group**
- **Home**
- **Child**

What’s capacity in which space? AND Which space is impacting which service’s capacity?
Bystander approaches

Co-Managing Cases

Examples from:

• CAMHS within alternative educational provision

• YOS and R U Safe Provision (learning from case review)

Trauma-Informed Practice

Any event that overwhelms a person's capacity for positive coping

• exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence in one (or more) of the following ways:

1. Directly experiencing the traumatic event(s)

2. Witnessing, in person, the event(s) as it occurred to others

3. Learning that the traumatic event(s) occurred to a close family member or close friend; in cases of actual or threatened death of a family member or friend, the event(s) must have been violent or accidental;

4. Experiencing repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details of the traumatic event(s), e.g., first responders collecting human remains; police officers repeatedly exposed to details of child abuse.

Trauma-Informed Practice (2)

The Five Core Values of Trauma-Informed (one interpretation)

• Safety: ensuring that the young person feels physically and emotionally safe

• Trustworthiness: young people know that that providers and practitioners will ensure that expectations are clear and consistent and that appropriate boundaries (especially interpersonal ones) are maintained

• Choice: preferences of young people are taken into consideration

• Collaboration: input from young people will be considered in practices and decisions.

• Empowerment: services are developed and delivered to maximise young people’s empowerment

Trauma-Informed Practice (3)

Safety

Stabilisation

Telling

Relational Engagement

Positive Enhancement
Consideration during placement

physical safety
psychological safety
relational safety

Theories of Attachment

What is required of services?
Impact on Professional Relationships
Secure attachment
Insecure avoidant attachment
Insecure ambivalent attachment
Disorganised Attachment

Whole-School Approaches (Handout A)

Place-Based Approaches and Situational Prevention (Wortley)

Realised through the contextual approaches in sites

Consistent processes for NFA referrals
- Sites with majority or significant minority of NASE referrals peer-on-peer
- All YP featured in peer-on-peer referrals subjected to MAP meeting
- Twin processes run for identified suspects and complainants
- Review of peer connections and behaviours against Hackett spectrum
- Intervention designed against contextual model

Site work (2) (Handout B)
Next Steps

• Maintain the group / network – lead identified?
• Join the practitioners network – a route to monitor implementation and gather more resources

• Embedding into existing training sessions
• Embedding into case consultancy
• Informing multi-agency discussion
• Informing quality assurance
• Informing policies

Stay in Touch!
carlene@msunderstood.org.uk
carlene.firmin@beds.ac.uk
@carlenefirmin
Practitioner Briefing #5: The role of detached youth work in creating safety for young people in public spaces

Danielle Fritz
with Dr. Paul Olaitan and Dr. Carlene Firmin

MsUnderstood Partnership (2016)
Young people’s perspectives on detached youth work

‘It doesn’t have to be the whole world telling you, but if someone...come[s] out of nowhere trying to help you change this and say, “Yo, you can do something good” – that little piece of comfort can help you mentally as well. And you could be like, “You know what, cool, let me try again’’. (Young man)

‘With the youth worker you can tell them, like, most things and they will actually help. They will actually act on it.’ (Young woman)

‘[The detached youth workers will] speak to you in a reasonable way – they’ll chat to you and be like, “Yo, why’d you do that? These are your consequences now”. But for someone to come up to the circle and be like – expect they know you from the system – Nah, don’t do that. I don’t know you. Nah, stay in your league... For [the detached youth workers] to come and speak to me – it’s not like they’re disrespecting me. There is privacy... Obviously, you think eventually when you’re by yourself, “you know what, yea. I shouldn’t have done that.” Not everyone is bad in these estates. It’s the choices we do, innit. Certain choices are good, certain choices ‘aint good. No one’s perfect. But obviously that’s where they come in – they help us a little bit and they can talk to us like that’. (Young man)
**Introduction**

This briefing paper discusses the benefits and limitations of detached youth work provision in creating safety for young people in public spaces. It forms part of a programme of work by the MsUnderstood Partnership to assist the development of local responses to peer-on-peer abuse. The briefing considers unique features of detached youth work; whether workers enhance young people’s safety in public spaces and transform the spaces themselves; factors that constrain the impact of detached youth work; and implications of the findings on safeguarding and commissioning.

**Background**

Young people experience peer-on-peer abuse in a range of social environments. As children move into adolescence, they spend more time socialising with peers, at school and in public spaces. Within these contexts, young people may encounter healthy norms that promote pro-social relationships or they may encounter harmful norms that are conducive to abusive and exploitative relationships (Firmin, 2016). Local responses need to identify, assess, and intervene in all of the social environments where peer-on-peer abuse occurs — in essence to take a ‘contextual’ approach to the phenomenon.

Detached youth work is one method of engaging with and intervening in young people’s social environments. While detached youth work has changed over time and according to local contexts, it may broadly be defined as a type of youth work provision that delivers informal education to young people on their own terms and in spaces of their choosing. Detached youth workers develop relationships with young people over time and then work with them around a range of issues, such as employment and education, youth violence and child sexual exploitation. Detached youth work itself becomes one of the social fields around young people (Van de Walle et al, 2011).

**Methodology**

Over a six-month period, researchers observed detached youth work sessions and conducted focus groups in two London boroughs. In total, researchers observed eight sessions, conducted two focus groups with detached youth workers, two focus groups with young people, and two focus groups with multi-agency partners. Preliminary findings of the study were presented to and discussed by youth workers from six London boroughs during a roundtable discussion held in May 2016. Fieldwork data was then qualitatively coded and analysed using NVivo 11 software.

**Features of Detached Youth Work**

Participants in focus groups identified the following as crucial to detached workers’ engagement with young people: working in locations of young people’s choosing; and building relationships.
**Location**
Detached youth workers engage directly in young people’s social spaces: estates, parks, shopping centres, and other places where young people socialise. Engaging with young people in these spaces reverses the typical power dynamic between young people and professionals. Within offices and buildings, professionals are in positions of authority, whereas detached youth workers must negotiate relationships on young people’s terms. By maintaining a consistent and long-term presence in an area, young people begin to trust detached workers. Detached workers are then able to witness young people interacting in peer groups and understand the power dynamics within these groups in the localities in which they form. Workers come to understand the contexts in which young people live, allowing them to empathise with young people’s realities (Lavie-Ajayi, 2013).

> ‘When you’re walking the streets and getting to know the neighbourhood and seeing deprivation, or you’re seeing the vandalism or whatever, then when young people are talking to you about their area, you know what that means - you know that the shop down the road has been closed and looks awful, and the rubbish is out there, and it’s shit, and the door doesn’t work. You understand that’. (Detached youth worker)

> ‘I always say it, when I go to the areas I work in, I can taste it, I can feel it, I can smell what’s going on in that area. I put a foot on that pavement and I can feel, I can sense … I have a good empathy and understanding of what’s life like in that particular area on a day-to-day basis’. (Detached youth worker)

**Relationship building**
Detached youth workers must establish relationships before starting programmes of work with young people. In addition to maintaining a physical presence within an area, participants in focus groups identified the following as important to relationship building:

- **Time:** Detached youth workers often need time (months to years) to establish themselves as trustworthy and capable in the eyes of young people and their wider peer networks;
- **Lack of an obvious agenda:** Detached workers do not approach young people with an articulated agenda. The work is led by and developed with young people, which contrasts with young people’s experiences of other services;
- **Voluntary engagement:** Young people choose to engage with detached workers – it is not imposed on them by a statutory service or court.

> ‘It’s because we’ve got a certain level of trust that I can have the confidence to tell them things. But if they came up to me and kept asking questions and nagging me like social workers… But again, that comes through the years. It don’t just come straightaway. Like they’ve been there since we were little’. (Young man)

> ‘Because S. acts like our friend so we feel like we can tell her more things by her doing that’. (Young woman)
Detached youth workers also form relationships with peer groups and community members surrounding individual young people. During focus groups, detached youth workers described the process of slowly establishing a presence in an area over months. To establish a relationship with the wider community, workers often reach out to shopkeepers and other local business owners, older members of the community, professionals working within educational settings, family members of young people and, sometimes, older gang members. In other words, detached youth workers form relationships with contexts as well as individual young people.

**Creating Safety in Public Spaces**

Once detached workers establish relationships with young people and their peer groups, they are adept at then enhancing the safety of young people within risky environments. In some circumstances, they are able to improve the safety of the risky contexts themselves. As conceived within this briefing, ‘safety’ refers to a young person’s physical, relational and psychological safety (Shuker, 2013). Detached youth workers help create safety for and around young people by:

- Challenging behaviour and attitudes through dialogue;
- Building resilience to risk and creating safety plans;
- Identifying opportunities to disengage from risky or harmful behaviours; and
- In some circumstances, transforming the risky context itself

**Building resilience to risk and creating safety plans**

Detached workers encourage young people to think about their own safety in different environments. Although detached workers are engaging young people within their peer groups and neighbourhoods, efforts to build resilience tend to focus on an *individual’s* resilience to risk. In practice, this could look like a discussion between a worker and a young person in which they discuss and agree upon measures for staying safe in different situations. Other times, discussions around safety may arise during planned activities. One detached worker described the activities they run as the ‘carrot’ that attracts young people to the sessions. During the sessions, workers can begin to address some of the issues that place young people at risk.

*‘She kinda like helps us be safe. She tells us what to do in case anything happens. She gives us an idea of what to do in that situation’. (Young woman)*

**Challenging behaviour and attitudes through dialogue**

Detached workers engage young people in a range of discussions around issues of personal safety, risky behaviours and attitudes that promote harmful or risky behaviours. Workers may engage young people within peer groups or have side conversations with individuals—the interactions are often fluid. Young people are able to express their opinions and discuss their actions without fear of judgment. In turn, workers challenge young people, offering
them opportunities to critically interrogate their actions and opinions in an open environment, often within peer groups.

During one session, for example, researchers observed how the detached worker challenged the use of harmful language within a peer group. A young person would select a song to play and if a member of the group pointed out a lyric that promoted harmful stereotypes, then the group member who identified the lyric could put on a song of his choosing. Within the context of the youth work session, young people were able to practice and experience alternative ways of thinking and acting.

Opportunities to disengage from risky or harmful behaviours and contexts
Detached workers help young people exit risky environments by encouraging them to access other forms of support and opportunities. Detached workers in focus groups explained that stigmas around services like social care and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) often prevent young people from seeking support they are entitled to. Young people were more willing to engage with a service if recommended by their youth worker because of the trust in their relationship.

Transforming Contexts
Youth workers’ presence itself can create a temporary sense of safety for young people and their peer groups in public spaces. Detached youth workers create safe social environments in which young people can engage in alternative ways of thinking and acting. In one borough, for example, workers brought young people from neighbourhoods in conflict together for a mechanics programme. Through the sessions, workers also engaged the young people in thinking around conflict resolution. While the mechanics programme did not resolve inter-neighbourhood tensions, it provided young people an opportunity to spend time with young people from rival areas and experience, temporarily, an alternative to area conflict.

At times, detached workers make the environment around the young person safer by addressing a need in the area that has created risk within an environment. For instance, detached workers in one borough identified that young people’s involvement in anti-social behaviours (ASB) was largely caused by a lack of activities or opportunities. By engaging young people on the street, detached workers were able to co-design activities that occupied young people’s time in constructive ways, which led to a drop in ASB in the area.

Yet detached youth workers are limited in their capacity to transform risky or harmful contexts. Detached workers are often not able to change the structural barriers and underlying harmful norms that create risky environments. The main impact of detached workers on young people’s safety remains largely individualised – they help young people exit or be safer within risky environments.
‘There’s nothing they can do about it to be honest. What can they do about us leaving the area and having other people want to harm us? What can they really do about that? Nothing. What they can do is just try and make us stop that lifestyle really’. (Young man’s response to the question: What role detached workers can play in mitigating violence between groups of young people?)

Challenges facing detached youth workers

Although detached youth work is a neighbourhood-based service, workers’ ability to work more widely on issues of community safety is limited, in part due to a targeted youth work culture that emphasises individualised outcomes on specific issues. Partners’ expectations place further pressure on detached workers to perform functions outside of the traditional remit of detached work.

Targeted Youth Work Culture

As a non-statutory service, detached youth work (and youth work more generally) holds a precarious position relative to other services. Within local authorities that have retained detached youth work after recent funding cuts, detached teams often form part of a larger ‘targeted youth work’ service. Targeted youth support aims to identify the needs of vulnerable teenagers and enable them to access early support; it is a preventative approach undertaken by different agencies.

Yet a targeted approach conflicts with what many see as core values of detached youth work, and youth work more broadly: maintaining flexible and participative methods around informal education. Detached workers no longer have the same flexibility to work on issues identified by young people. Instead detached workers in some areas must try to achieve prescribed outcomes – often around getting young people into education or employment, or eliminating particular behaviours (Pitts et al, 2002). An individualised approach further limits workers’ ability to direct interventions at young people’s environments (Lavie-Ajayi and Krumer-Nevo, 2013).

Detached workers also have less time to speak with shopkeepers, parents and other members of the community. In the past, detached workers were out in neighbourhoods 3-5 times a week for hours at a time. With that consistent presence they created a wider sense of safety for the community and provided community reassurance. Presently, detached work forms part of a much broader suite of youth workers’ responsibilities. Managing multiple roles can impact detached workers’ ability to engage with young people, especially when workers manage youth conditional cautions.
‘We haven’t got enough time to invest in the old style – going into the area and meeting with the neighborhood and the parents. I often find myself these days more – almost like – like avoiding certain roads because I know that we’ll walk there and the parents will be hanging out on their balcony ... I know that sounds awful’. (Detached youth worker)

‘You’re wearing two different hats – if you’ve got a young person you’re working with on a [youth conditional] caution and has no intention of going ... then you’re the person that has to send that back to court ... But then you can see them as part of your group on a Thursday night, and you don’t want the young person to avoid coming to group because they don’t want to see you because they’ve not been going to you for cautions. That has happened. It puts you in a really difficult place’. (Detached youth worker)

**Partners’ Expectations**

Partnership working has also changed for detached youth workers. In the past, within a community-based approach to detached youth work, partners included shopkeepers, park wardens, housing caretakers, etc. With the focus now on individualised outcomes for young people, partners have shifted to include social care, youth offending services, police, etc. Yet partners do not always understand what detached youth work is, and sometimes expect detached workers to perform functions that do not align with the skills or expertise of workers. For example, detached workers described the tension between the interest from partner agencies in receiving intelligence from detached teams, and the workers’ interest in maintaining the trust of young people and the wider community.

Participants also expressed frustration that detached work is often seen as a tool for ‘rapid response’ after an incident. Some partners expect that detached workers will gather information after a serious incident or provide support to affected young people. Detached workers point out that they need an existing presence within the community and relationships with young people in order for such interactions to be meaningful.

‘As I say all along, we are not fire fighters. We are not rapid response. What are we going to do? So what, you’re going to send us out there. For what? It can actually be more dangerous. You don’t know the area. You don’t know the group’. (Detached youth worker)

**Conclusion**

Detached youth work offers unique opportunities to engage young people in their social environments. By entering these social spheres, workers are able to slowly develop relationships with young people and public environments and ultimately improve individuals’ safety within contexts that pose a risk of harm. Workers also create safe spaces in which young people can interrogate their own opinions and behaviours, and try to embody healthier alternatives. In some circumstances, workers are able to transform risky environments themselves by addressing gaps that created risk in the first place. Yet despite detached youth work being a neighbourhood-based service, workers’ ability to create safer
environments is limited, in part due to a targeted youth culture that emphasises individualised outcomes on specific issues. As detached workers adapt to the realities of limited funding, they often take on multiple roles, which undermines their capacity to develop relationships with young people and the broader community. Overall, detached workers continue to engage and intervene in contexts around a young person, but the impact is often individualised.

**Implications for Safeguarding and Commissioning**

- Commissioners should consider where detached youth work sits in relation to other services and partners. The methods and ethos of detached work do not always fit neatly within a targeted youth work model. As a neighbourhood-based service, consideration needs to be given to the ways in which detached youth work can maintain/create relationships with community safety partnerships.
- Commissioners should consider funding long-term, full-time detached youth work so that detached workers are able to build meaningful relationships with young people, their peer groups and wider communities. Detached work should not be seen as a rapid-response tool after serious incidents involving young people.
- Those with oversight of detached teams could consider developing group outcome measurements to capture the impact of detached work on peer groups. Individualised outcome assessments will not capture progress made within groups – for example, whether a peer group becomes a supportive, healthy context for those within the group.
- Awareness of the role and purpose of detached youth work varies among other services. This affects partners’ expectations and ability to share information with detached teams. Those with oversight of detached teams could work to better inform partners and engage detached workers in decision-making within multi-agency meetings.
- The contribution of detached youth work in building a response to peer-on-peer abuse needs to be expressly considered in relevant strategic documents, actions plans and multi-agency structures. This is particularly important in areas seeking to develop a more contextual response to the issue.

If you have any queries on this briefing, please contact Danielle.Fritz@beds.ac.uk.

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References


