

# The Next Chapter



## Reviewing your extra-familial harm panel - Guidance

# Introduction

The 'In the name of safeguarding' report ran a survey of 15 extra-familial harm panels in England and Wales. From this survey we have learnt about the education experiences of young people impacted by extra-familial harm. The survey also gave a snapshot of the children and issues that extra-familial harm panels were focussing on in November 2022. The findings of the survey can be found in the report.

This guide can be used by children's social care departments and other safeguarding partners to review and audit your own extra-familial harm panels. The guidance outlines the method used in the 'In the name of safeguarding' research to guide professionals to consider patterns and trends related to the types of young people and harm that are seen at panels. It is not a complete guide to reviewing extra-familial harm panels to align with Contextual Safeguarding. It allows authorities to consider their own panels in comparison to the findings of the main 'In the name of safeguarding' report.

## Why review your extra-familial harm panels?

Extra-familial harm panels are used in many (but not all) children's social care departments nationally. They allow multi-agency professionals to come together to discuss children and young people (and more lately contexts) that professionals are worried about and to develop plans around how to increase safety. Panels have different names in different places. A Multi-Agency Child Exploitation panel (MACE) is a common panel name of this type.

Generally, panels don't usually review all cases of extra-familial harm open to social care. Often it is children that professionals are most worried about that get discussed. It also means that children often have to be open to social care. Because of these factors, professionals and social care systems are operating 'threshold' decisions about who or what issues will be discussed. Because of this it can give a window into the types of harm and children that professionals are worried about. Routinely reviewing the 'cases' discussed at panels can be a helpful way to see patterns and trends. Many of these patterns are discussed in the 'In the name of safeguarding' report.

## Before you begin

This guidance assumes that those using the guidance are from children's social care. If you are not, you may have to adapt your approach. To start reviewing your panels you will need to have access to the panel minutes and case files of children discussed. If you want to consider the education experiences of young people you are likely to also need support from an education colleague.

In the project, participants were asked to access the minutes of the first panel meeting held in November 2022. Only one panel was included to minimise the workloads of those participating in the survey. If you are reviewing your own panel, we recommend including multiple panel dates. The number of children discussed at panel and the frequency of the panel will likely determine how many meetings you focus on. To be able to do meaningful analysis you will need to include a large sample. Anything from 20-50 cases would give a helpful indication of trends. The more cases the better. However, do not 'cherry pick' cases. Choosing the cases discussed at meeting over a period of time will help you with sampling.

To help you record and analyse your data you can access a blank Excel template on the 'In the name of safeguarding' website page. This guidance assumes you have a basic working knowledge of Excel and understand how to use 'data validation' and 'pivot tables'. The Excel template is pre-set with 'data validation' lists. This means that for certain questions you can only select one option. It is important that data validation is used so that mistakes aren't entered into the spreadsheet that would limit analysis. For example, in column D 'gender', when you click in the cell a drop down list will appear. To change the options listed and to add more you can change the list on the 'list' tab and then use the data validation option.

The 'example' tab on the Excel provides an example case.

# Collecting data

1. Start by accessing the minutes to your panel/s over a period of time.
2. Using these minutes you will need to access the case files or each child discussed.
3. Use the Excel template to enter the information (ensure that the document is held in a secure location).
4. Column A: Enter the meeting date for each child discussed.
5. Column B: You may want to create a unique ID for each child.
6. Column C: Age – enter their age at the time of the meeting.
7. Column D: Gender.
8. Column E: Ethnicity – the current Excel outlines a list of ethnicities based on those provided in the survey. However, this will likely need to be changed and adapted. Use the 'lists' tab to do so.
9. Column F: As the number of cases reviewed is likely to be low you may need to group certain ethnicities together to analyse trends in relation to race and ethnicity. In the report ethnicities were grouped based on whether they were 'racially minoritised' or 'non racially minoritised'. Of course, this is a complex question. To do so you will have to make some choices over which ethnicities are considered minoritised or not.
10. Column G: The current pre-set list allows you to select 'yes', 'no', 'don't know'. This list could be amended to include the types of disability.
11. Column H: EHCP.

To enable easier analysis, the following questions about young people are split across multiple columns.

1. Columns I-S should be used to record the type of the extra-familial harm the young person is impacted by. Select '1' if the young person is impacted by the harm and '0' if they are not.
2. Rows T-Y are examples of social care status. These will need to be amended for your own site's categories. As above, select '1' for yes and '0' for no.
3. Columns Z-AF are for the education placement type that the young person was in at the time of the meeting. These will need to be amended for your own site's categories. As above select '1' for yes and '0' for no.
4. Columns AG-AV are for recording any exclusions or moves the child has experienced at any point before the meeting. These will need to be amended for your own site's categories. As above select '1' for yes and '0' for no.
5. Column AW should be used to enter a written account of the reason for exclusion. In the research these written accounts were then 'coded' for the types of reason. If you wish to do this, example categories are supplied in columns AX to BK. To use these, select '0' or '1' depending on the reason for exclusion detailed in column AW. Look at the example tab for more information and read the report for the methodology of this.
6. Continue inputting information for each young person discussed.

# Analysing data

You can use excel to undertake basic analysis of the data but to do this you will need to know how to use pivot tables. This guide does not explain how to use these. Instead, we outline some questions and areas you may wish to explore with the data you have. If you have included 'cases' from multiple panels over a period of time you may want to analyse the data for these separately, to show any patterns or changes. You could analyse for the following:

- The number of young people discussed at panel.
- The average age and age range of young people discussed.
- The percentage breakdown of genders discussed.
- The percentage breakdown of the ethnicity categories discussed. This information on its own will not highlight any disparities. You may wish to analyse the data against the general ethnicity of young people open to social care in your area or the local demographics of the area.
- The number of young people with a disability.
- A breakdown of the types of harm discussed. For example, 33% of cases were about child sexual exploitation.
- The social care status of young people discussed.
- The education settings, exclusion experiences and reason for exclusion. These would be provided as percentages.

Using pivot tables, it is possible to analyse different information against each other. This will help show if there are particular patterns in the types of young people discussed at panel. You may want to consider analysing: ethnicity categories, gender, disability and social care status against:

- Education placements
- Exclusions
- Reasons for exclusions
- Types of harm

# Reflective questions

If you use this guidance and analyse the data using the guides above you will have a set of findings that are comparable to those outlined in the report. You may wish to ask some further questions. For example:

1. How easy was it to access information about children's education experiences?
    - a. Was this difficult to access or did your systems easily record information on exclusions?
    - b. Do discussions about education and the impact of exclusion regularly form part of panel discussions?
  2. Are there patterns in the types of education placements students attend?
    - a. What percentage are in mainstream?
    - b. If many different placements are used what contributes to this variation?
  3. Does your panel invite representatives from education and are they facilitated to attend?
  4. Is the role of education valued by panel participants?
  5. Are young people's thoughts and needs related to education considered in planning processes?
  6. Are there variations locally between schools and the relationship different schools have with social care? What steps are taken to facilitate these relationships?
  7. Do your findings evidence particular biases. For example:
    - a. Are certain ethnicities over/underrepresented in the data relative to the local social care or geographic population?
    - b. Are particular types of harm attributed to certain groups more than others? For example, 'anti-social behaviour' for non-racially minoritised young people and 'gangs' for racially minoritised young people?
    - c. Are some types of exclusion used more for particular genders? For example, are more boys permanently excluded than girls?
    - d. Are certain harm types attributed to particular genders. For example, child sexual exploitation for girls and child criminal exploitation for boys?
    - e. Are their trends in how disabled young people or young people on certain social care plans categorised?
  8. Are there gaps in information?
    - a. Is more known about certain groups than others?
    - b. If information is 'not known' why is this?
  9. Is there evidence of exclusion being used that directly relates to a young person's experiences of exclusion?
  10. Is exclusion seen as a safeguarding issue?
  11. Are exclusions being used 'in the name of safeguarding'?
  12. Does the panel support schools to understand trends in extra-familial harm and provide them with support to keep children in schools?
  13. Are steps taken to look at trends across education providers? For example, if a school excludes more than others what work is done to support the school and tackle this?
  14. Could your data be concealing 'hidden' exclusions?
  15. Is there evidence of illegal exclusion (e.g., excluding for absence) and how will this be addressed?
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# Next steps

Once you reviewed your panels it is important to consider will you do with the information and what steps will you take to act on it. Will you then review the information to see if change is happening? How often will you review it?

If you have found this process helpful please do reach out to the Contextual Safeguarding programme to discuss your findings.