



THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE
RESEARCHING CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION,
VIOLENCE AND TRAFFICKING



Contextual Safeguarding Strategic Visit North Yorkshire January 2020

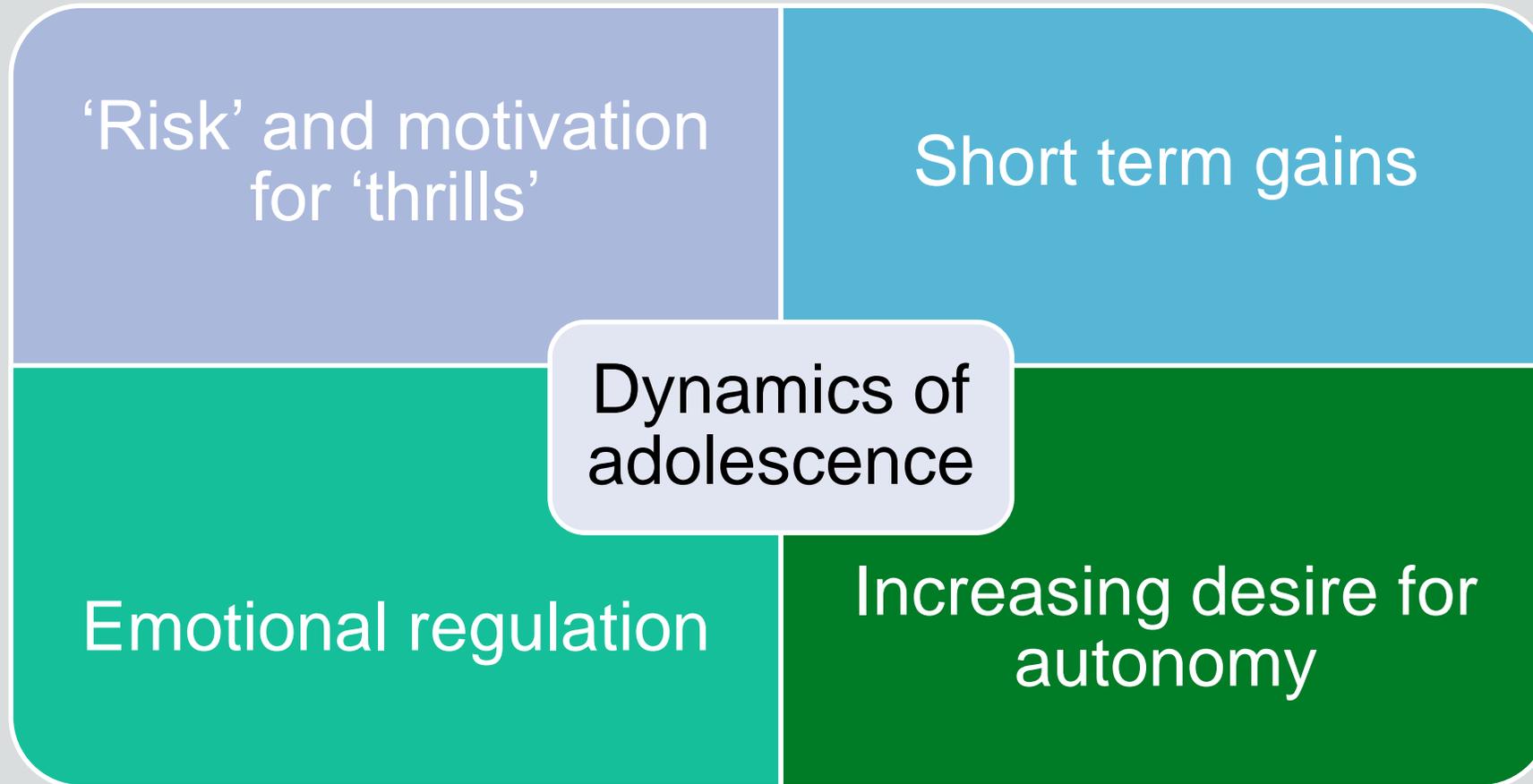
Dr Carlene Firmin

@C_S_Network

Session overview

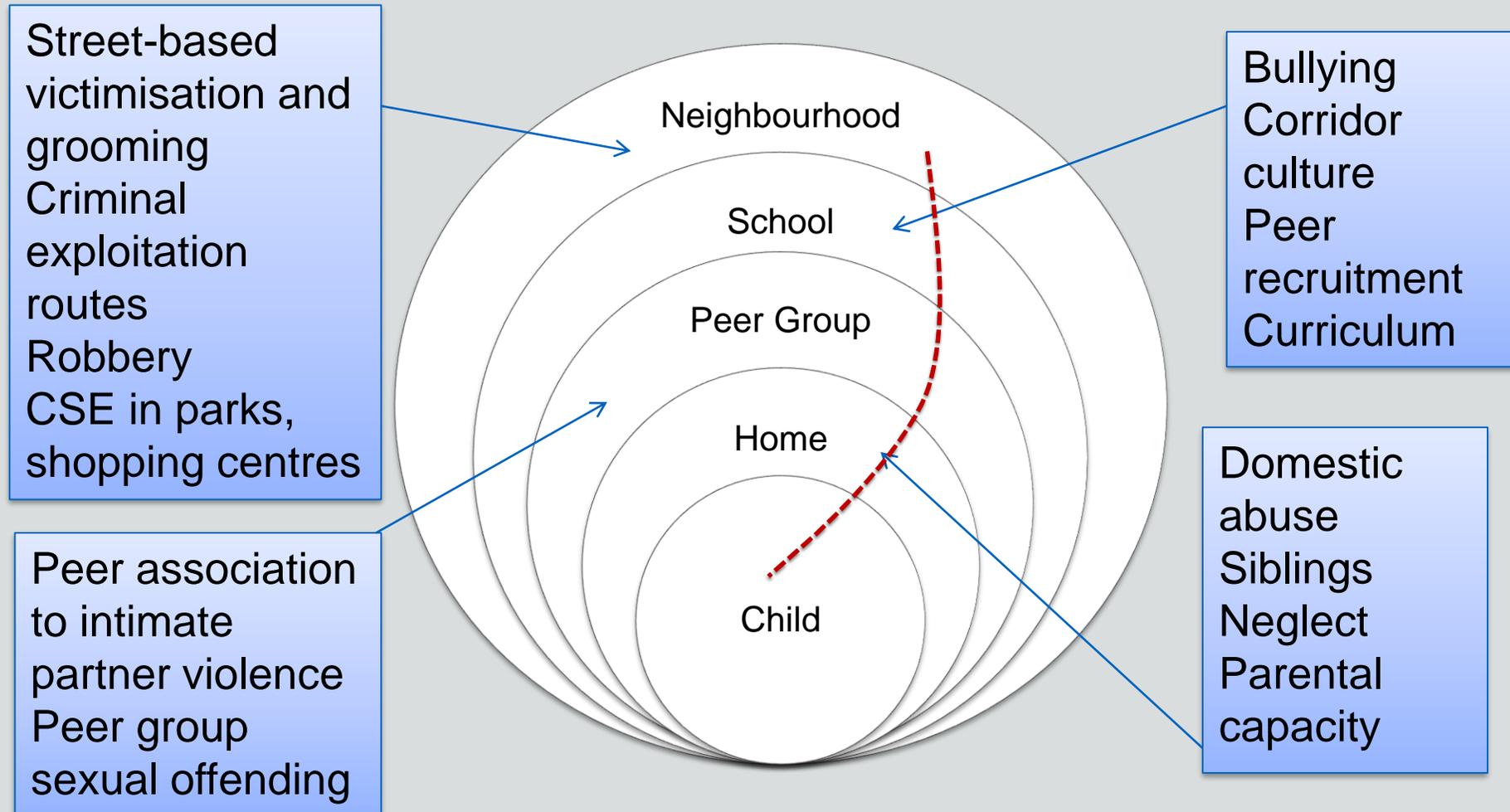
1. **Looking back: the disjunction and the framework**
2. **Learning from Testing Site 1**
3. **Looking forward:**
 - a) **Current developments and reflections in test sites**
 - b) **Network engagement**
 - c) **Strategic engagement**

To safeguard young people, we need to understand their developmental stage

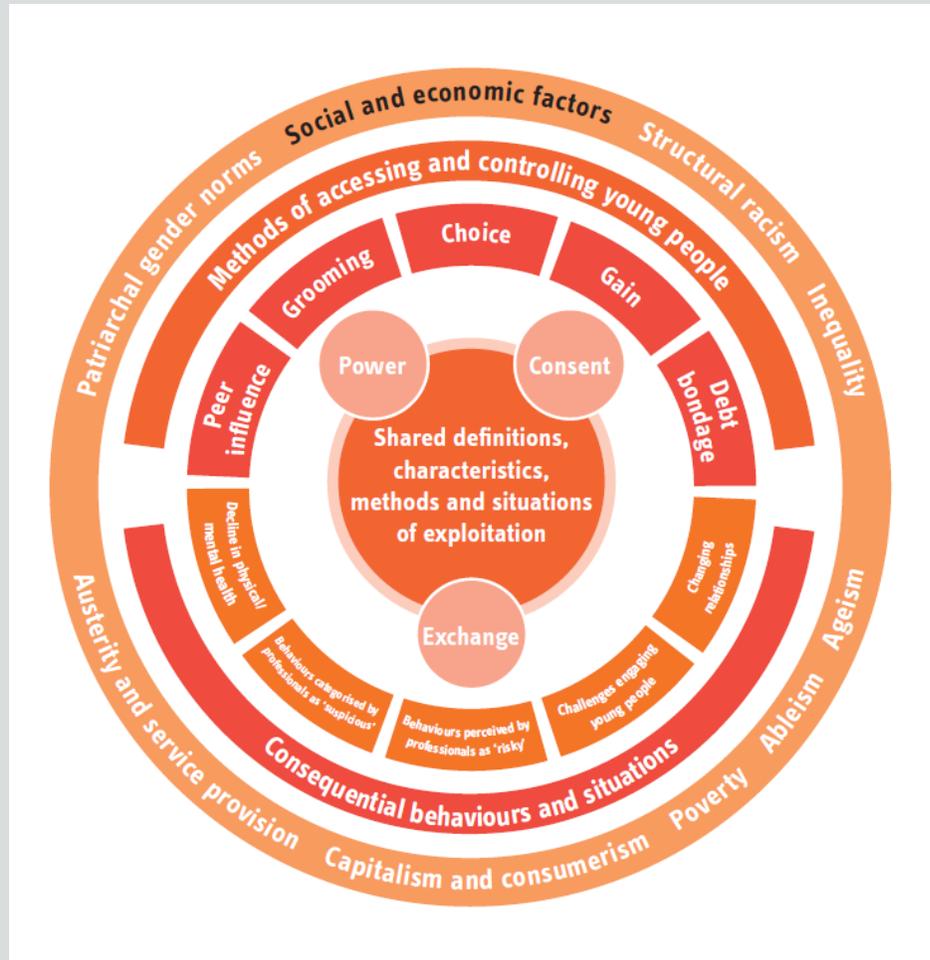


Adolescent vulnerability is highly contextual

(Firmin, 2015; Firmin, Wroe and Lloyd, 2019)



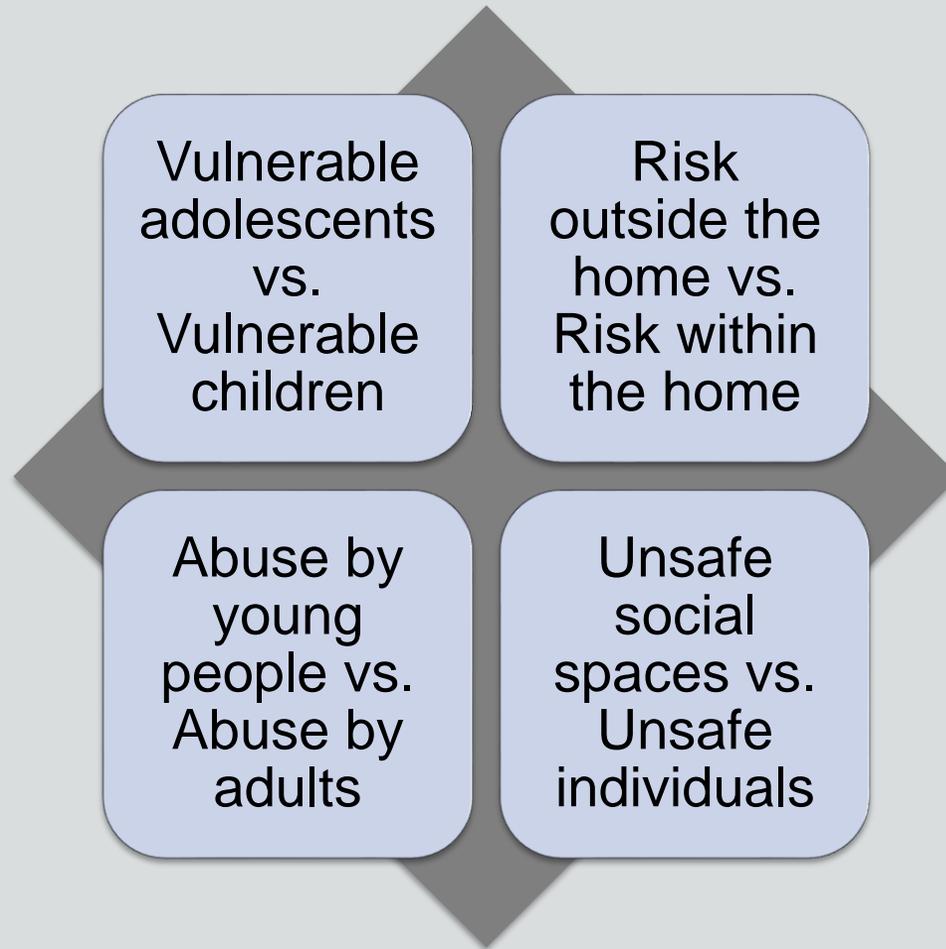
To address extra-familial harm therefore we need to engage with:



1. Peer relationships and influence
2. The process and impact of grooming/coercion
3. Work *with* young people's sense of agency and desire to make choices
4. Make an offer- counteract the gain
5. Mitigate the risks of 'debt'

Firmin, Wroe and Lloyd, 2019

The System Challenge: 'It hasn't reached a threshold'



The system has historically deprioritised extra-familial harm to adolescents because it does not know how to identify and respond to its contextual dynamics

Investigating local interpretations of threshold: Significant harm vs. Parenting (Lloyd and Firmin,2019 forthcoming)

Which is the primary driver for decision-making access to statutory intervention?

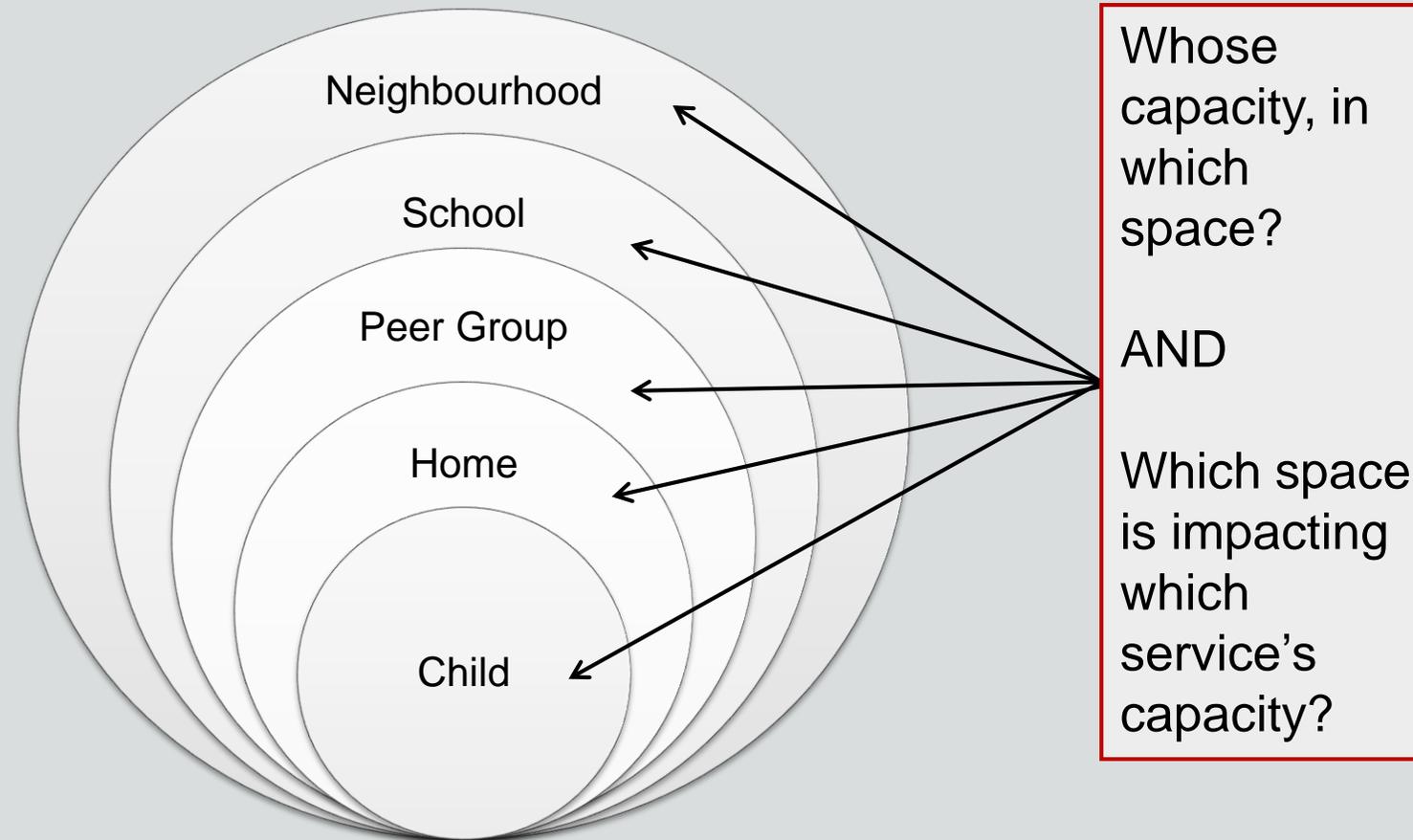
- What is the pathway for:
 - a) Child at risk of significant extra-familial harm + significant concerns about parenting?
 - b) Child in need in extra-familial settings + significant concerns about parenting?
 - c) Child at risk of significant extra-familial harm + no concerns about parenting (appropriate care and concern)
 - d) Child in need in extra-familial settings + no concerns about parenting (appropriate care and concern)

The Contextual Safeguarding Framework (2016)

(Firmin et al. 2016)

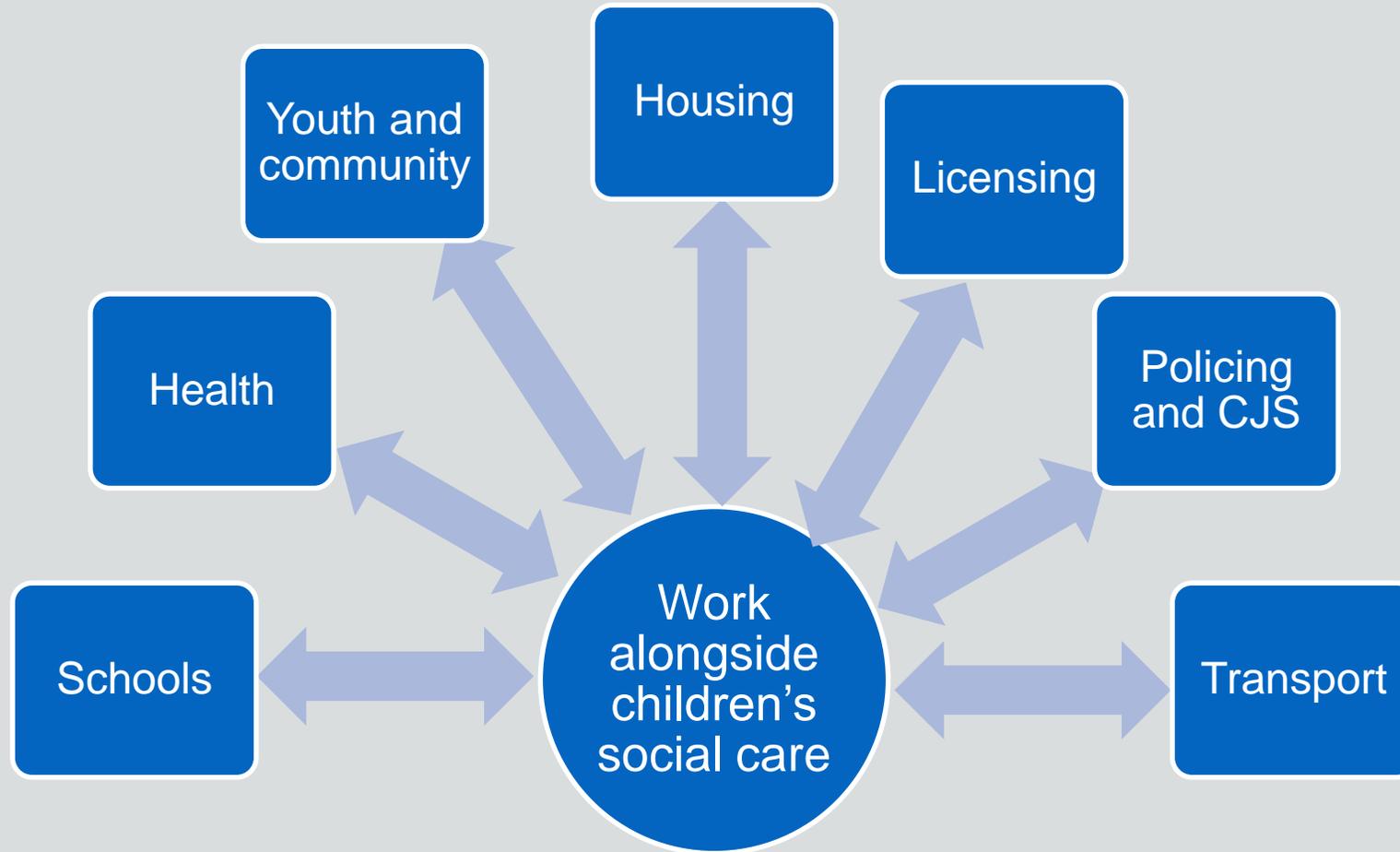


A CS system will look beyond the parents' capacity to safeguard

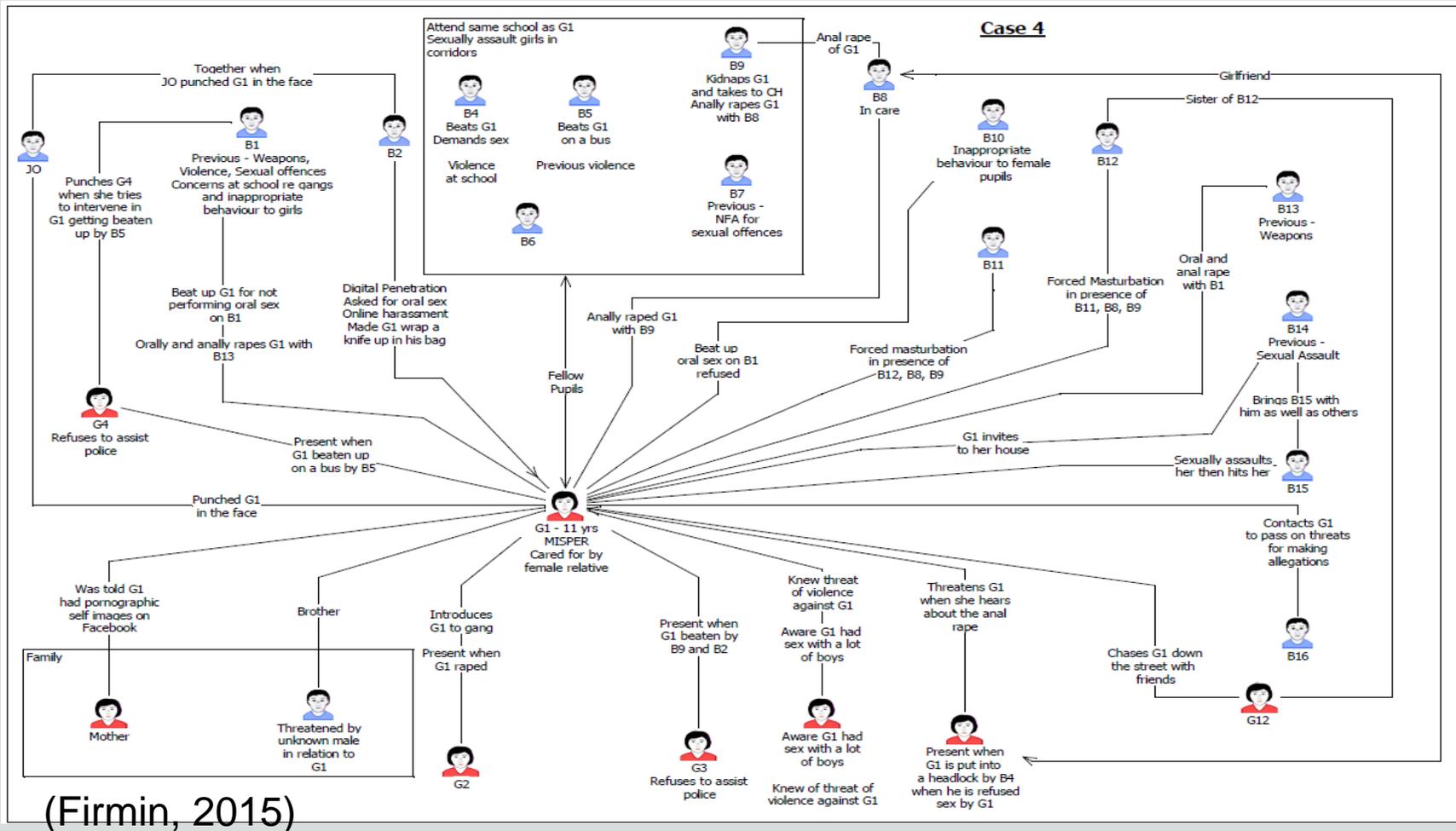


(Firmin et al. 2016)

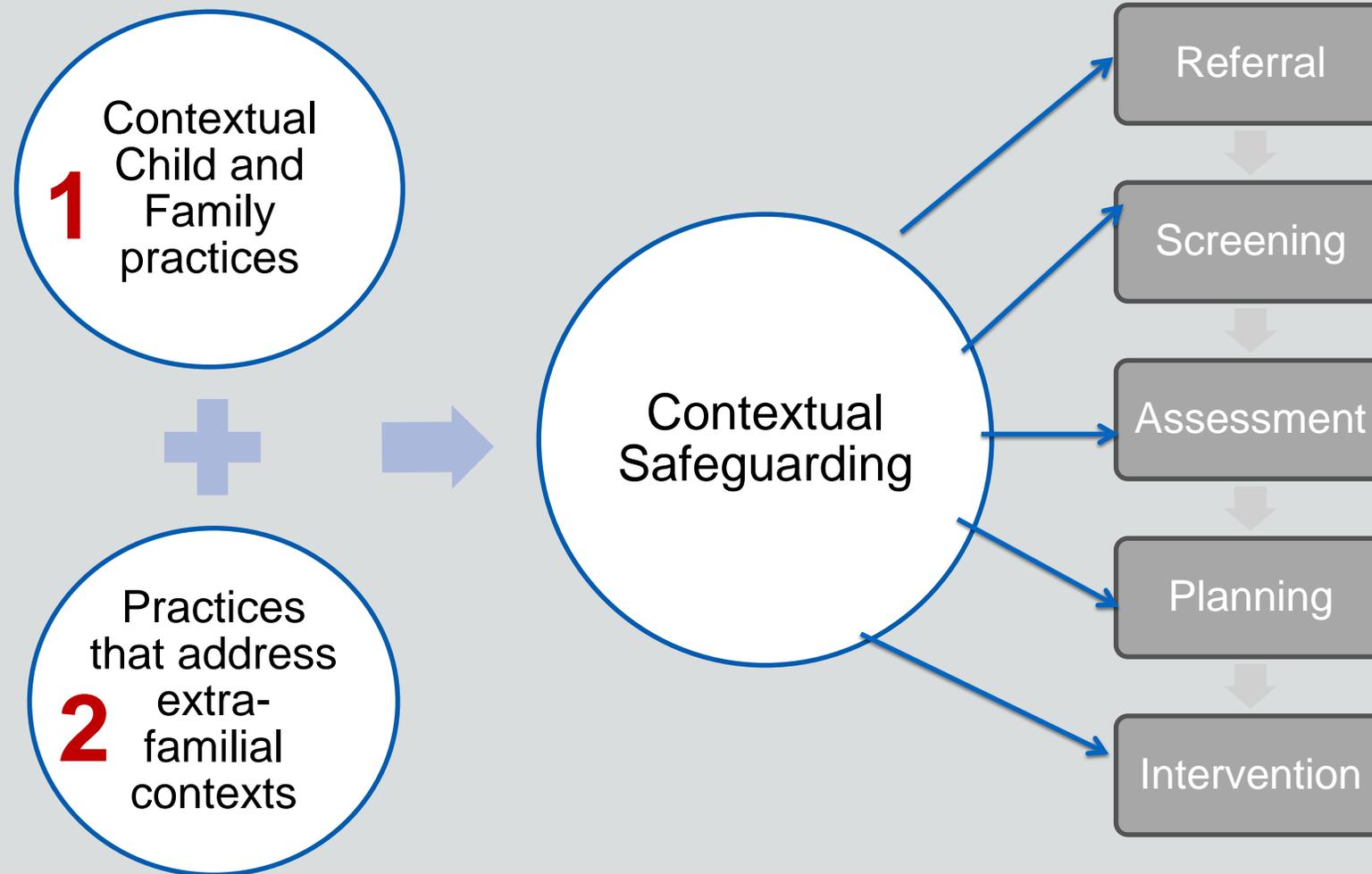
'Everyone's responsibility' will mean creating safe spaces



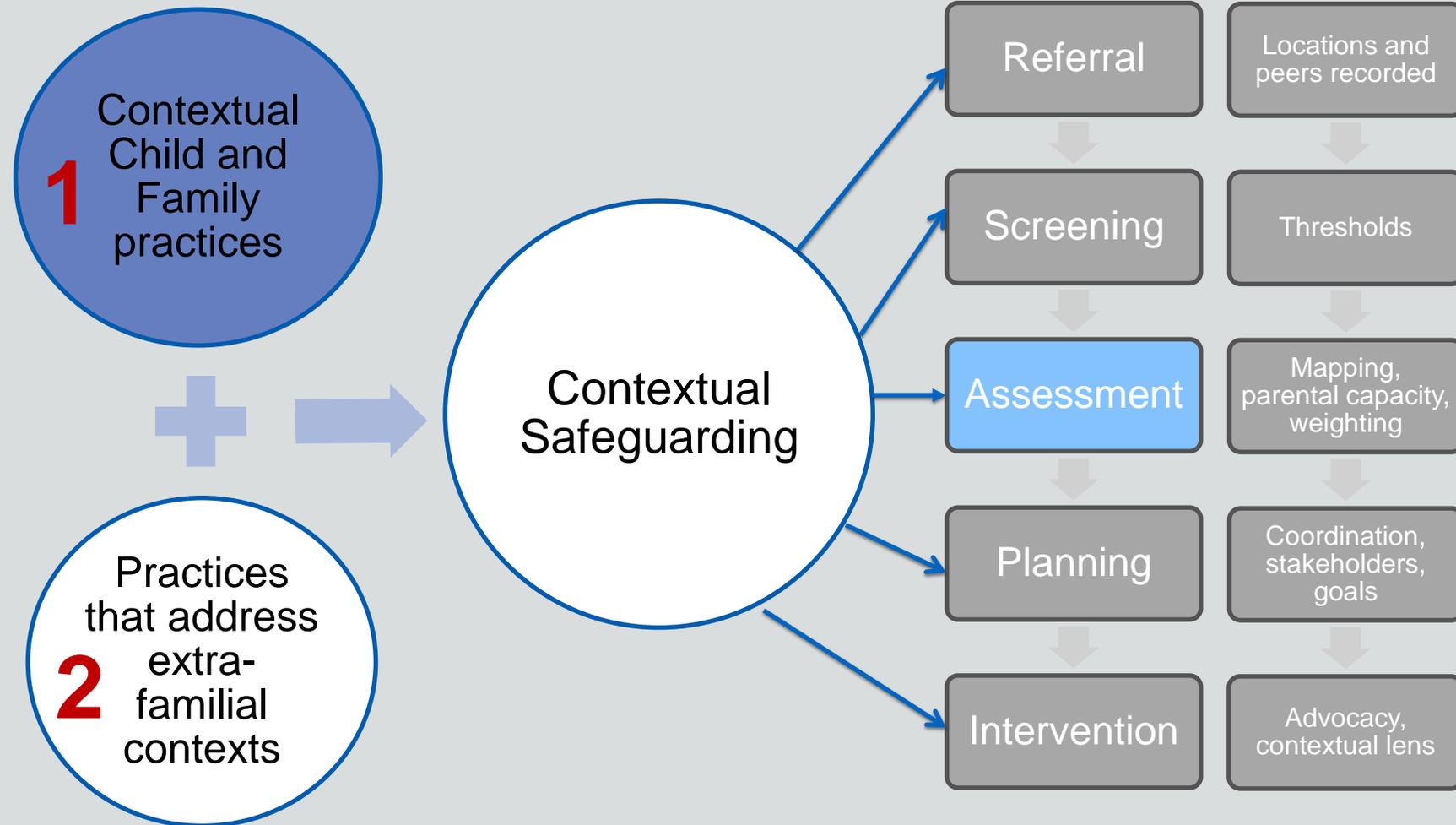
Recognising the significance of peer relationships

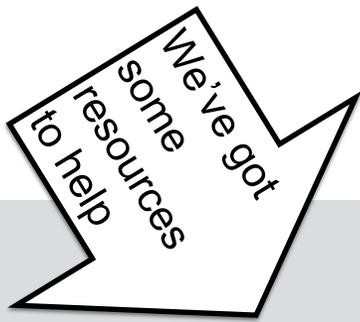


Learning Test 1: Two Tier Implementation

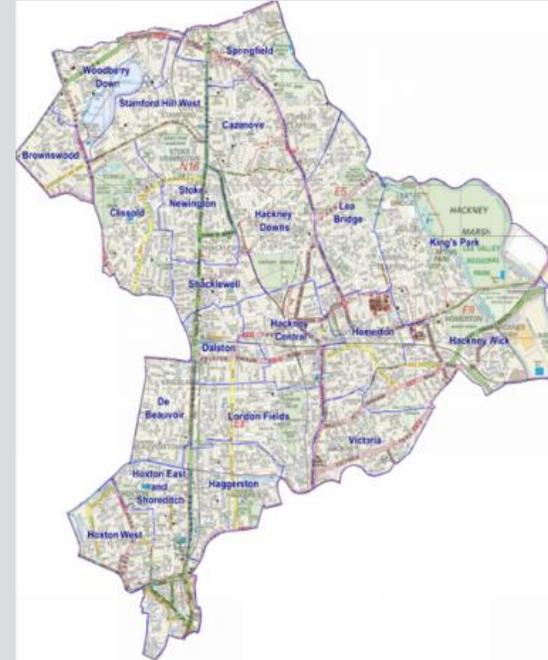


Tracking through work at Level 1



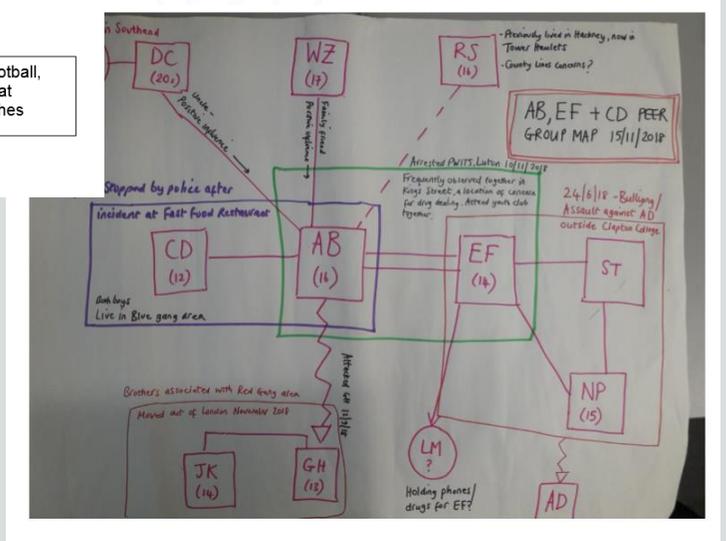
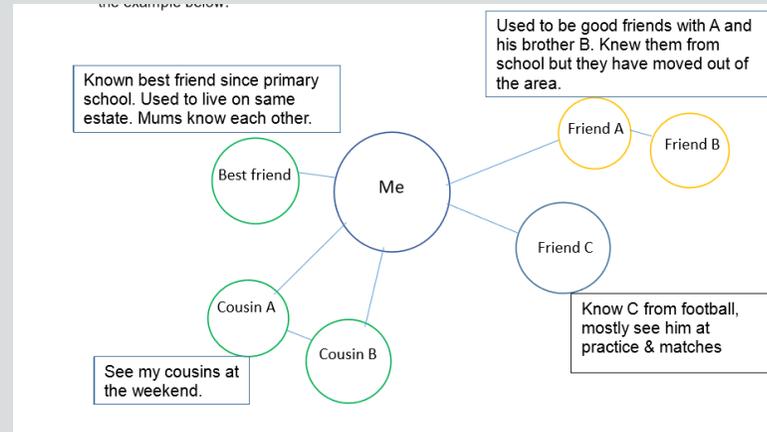
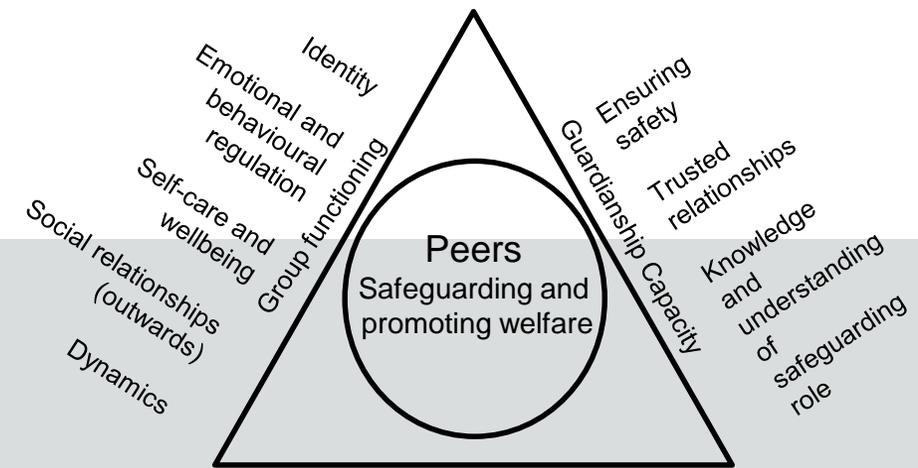


- Support the young person so heat map their local area to initiate a conversation about where they feel safe or unsafe.
- Engage a young person in a conversation about the different circumstances/situations around them – and identify what is positive or concerning about this
- Give parents the space to think about the impact that extra-familial contexts may be having on their young person and/or the relationship they have with their young person.



Mapping and understanding peer relationships:

- Work with a young person to map their friendships and peer associations.
- Map connections between young people open to the service and consider the implications for individual plans and potentially shared activities
- Identify what policies you might need from your service or wider partnership to identify how to engage with peer relationships safely and ethically



We've got some resources to help

Assessing public spaces and school settings

Looking at responding to young people in this situation through a contextual safeguarding lens allowed all key partners to work together and understand their role in supporting and safeguarding young people in this space. This response led to a decrease in anti-social behaviour and helped to form a stronger relationship between the young people and the library staff, ultimately, creating a safer space for young people to socialise. This in turn has had a longer impact on safeguarding young people engaging in this space as the library staff are more confident in engaging with young people and identifying and raising safeguarding concerns. (Test Site F, recorded impact of coordinated response across plans that advocated for location based work)



Student Survey

This student wellbeing survey can be used by schools to help understand student experiences of safety and harm. The guidance includes a survey template that can be adapted for different schools and concerns.



**Stakeholders and delivery partners:
Surveys**



Development of policy frameworks and legal guidance

II) Context Wellbeing Framework

	Behaviours/Indicators	Experiences/Contexts
Universal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people, and where present, staff and/or other appropriate adults in a context report friendship groups to be supportive and age-appropriate friends Young people state that they feel safe in this context Young people report they are exposed to a range of ideas and opportunities to give them choices about their lives Young people are aware of safeguarding responses Young people and staff (if present) report that sexual behaviour is developmentally appropriate in context Young people report that relationships are socially acceptable, consensual and reciprocal 	<p>Role of Adults</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement in a multi-agency approach to safeguarding Appropriate guardianship and oversight is in place Adults and/or peers take an active and consistent approach to being community guardians – and feel equipped and empowered to protect the context Young people feel confident to access multiple trusted adults who provide a protective role within the community Schools consider safeguarding in both the school site and local neighbourhood School has a designated Mental Health lead <p>Procedural, Systemic and Structural Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School delivers PSHE and RSE Safeguarding and referral policies (where relevant) include physical design of space and data to monitor trends Placement decisions are made with relational, physical and psychological safety in mind For businesses, licensing application and review process demonstrates attention to and compliance with safeguarding requirements
Universal Plus/etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School has a high rate of fixed-term exclusions or managed moves School has high levels of non-attendance and lateness at school Young people report high levels of bullying, including online Young people are exposed to the selling or use of illegal substances Normalisation of criminal activity/ASB i.e. shoplifting or Public Order Offence in a group Young people hold victim-blaming views Location where there are multiple instances of personal theft Location where young people are exposed to single instances of violence Location where multiple young people congregate during missing episodes leading to harm Location where young people are aware of others carrying weapons and feel compelled to do so themselves Context in which there is underage and problematic alcohol consumption Multiple young people can identify the context as one in which problematic behaviours occur and/or they feel unsafe Peer group or context is one in which a number of young people repeatedly display problematic and harmful behaviours Young people have experienced or displayed instances of sexually inappropriate behaviour and language, including sexual harassment Young people and peers normalise and accept harm and inappropriate behaviour 	<p>Role of Adults</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The behaviour displayed in the context, and the impact on young people, is primarily viewed as a behavioural/criminal issue rather than a matter for safeguarding Professionals have limited understanding of the level/prevalence of risk due to inconsistent or unusable recording systems Physical location of harmful incidents are not assessed or intervened in following incidents Adults with responsibility only challenge individual behaviours or respond inconsistently when aware of them Adults guardians normalise and accept harmful behaviours <p>Procedural, Systemic and Structural Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools respond to incidents in individualised or isolated manner School or multi-agency professionals have limited understanding of the level/prevalence of risk due to inconsistent or unusable recording systems Policies and procedures which govern the context insufficiently guide the response required to address the issues Placement decisions (i.e. custodial arrangements) place young people at risk Context is one in which harmful incidents take place Where relevant some design/structural elements enable safeguarding issues to go undetected, for example low lighting and overgrown bushes
Complex/ High Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School has a high rate of permanent exclusion over a long-term period Instances of sexual abuse/violence within school or other context Young people groomed into sexual or criminal exploitation as either victim or instigator at school, through school-based networks or other contexts Non-consensual harmful sharing of sexual images Multiple or a pattern of suicide and/or significant self-harm Young people have been intentionally victimised by peers or adults using significant grooming, coercion or force Peer bystanders in the context actively encourage or normalise highly problematic behaviours (i.e. victimisation, criminality) Young people are exposed to physically violent, highly intrusive behaviours, which may at times appear sadistic in nature Significant harm occurring due to young people avoiding the context/school in order to stay safe A peer group in which serious harmful sexual behaviour takes place Peer recruitment of young people into criminal exploitation at school, in the local area or between students i.e. online Young people commit crimes together causing them imminent or significant risk of harm 	<p>Role of Adults</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff/adults have normalised the behaviour being displayed or blamed those being harmed for what has happened Adults with responsibility hold victim-blaming views Adults with responsibility have failed to identify and/or challenge the behaviours or attitudes which put young people at risk of harm Adults with responsibility are reluctant to engage with partner organisations to address the concerns in this context Place managers have failed to identify and/or challenge the behaviours or attitudes which put young people at risk of harm

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- Thresholds review and introduction for contexts
- Case management system amendment
- Legal advice on peer assessment and mapping
- Information sharing frameworks and documentation for context conferences

Approach to multi-site development Scale-Up Project

Formal testing

- Bristol
- Kent
- Knowsley
- Swansea
- Wiltshire
- Ealing
- Barking and Dagenham
- Sutton
- Merton

Create

- Assess existing response to EFH against the Contextual Safeguarding framework (Tiers 1 and 2)
- Work with group of local professionals to create an on-paper version of their CS approach using the findings of system mapping
- Initiate discussions with young people, parents and leaders on local CS approaches

Test

- Support professionals in the site (local implementation group) to test the on-paper version of the approach
- Gradual testing of Tier 1 approaches throughout the system and 2-3x formal pilots of Tier 2 work
- Learning from pilots used to inform final design of approach

Embed

- Support site to implement and embed the CS approach designed for the site
- Embed a monitoring and evaluation framework to support development
- Create an online toolkit for the site to facilitate national learning

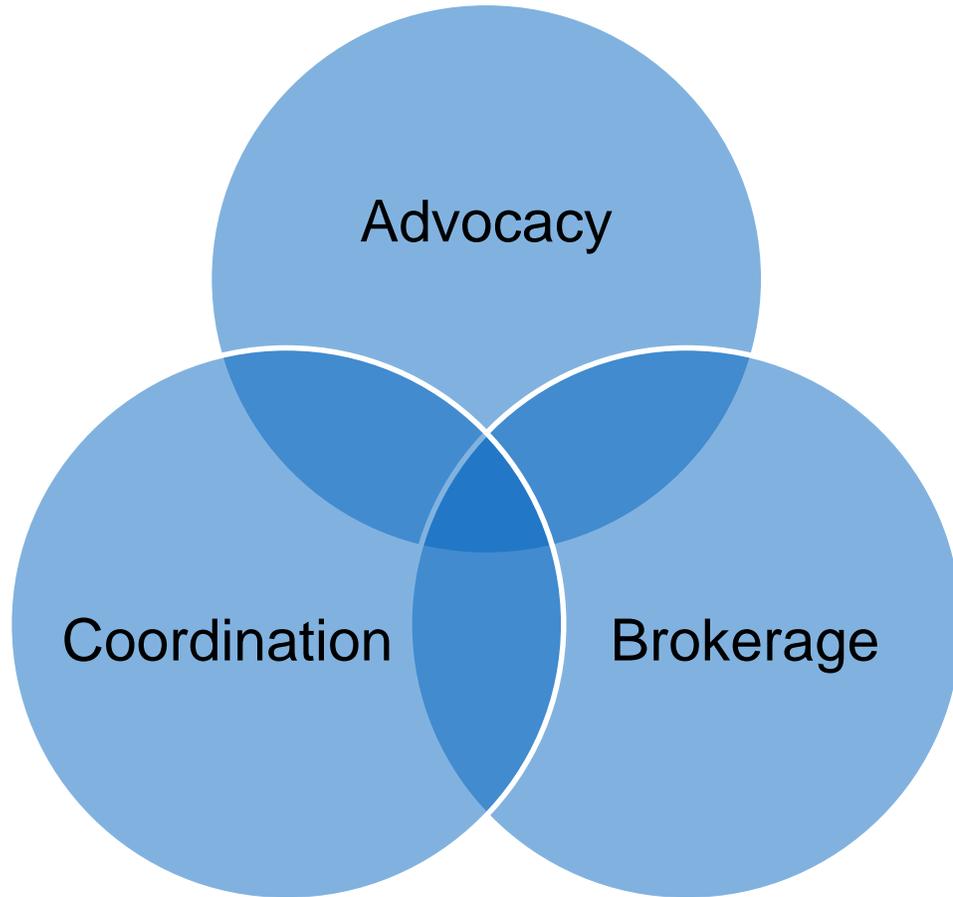
Changing threshold application

D11 is believed to be at continuing risk of significant physical harm due to his behaviour and association with possible gang related activity within the community. **As the risks posed to D11 are outside the family home it is crucial that when analysing the risk a contextual safeguarding approach** is taken to do this... **it is evident that D11 has been provided with a stable upbringing by parents who love and care for him.** There is no evidence that there are any significant issues at home for D11 which would indicate there is another pull factor for D11's behaviour which may be linked to criminal exploitation. **As D11 has stated that there will be further retaliation in relation to the most recent incident it is my professional opinion that D11 is at continuing risk of significant harm and therefore an Initial Child Protection conference should be held** (*Dip-sample exert, Test Site C*)

As part of on-going safety planning with A and her mother **Push and Pull factors need to be identified and ensure that A has safe places and spaces which she can go to**, to prevent further criminal activity or peer pressure to engage in risky behaviours. (*Decision – coordinate on a Child in Need Plan, ASB and CSE concerns, Test Site B*)

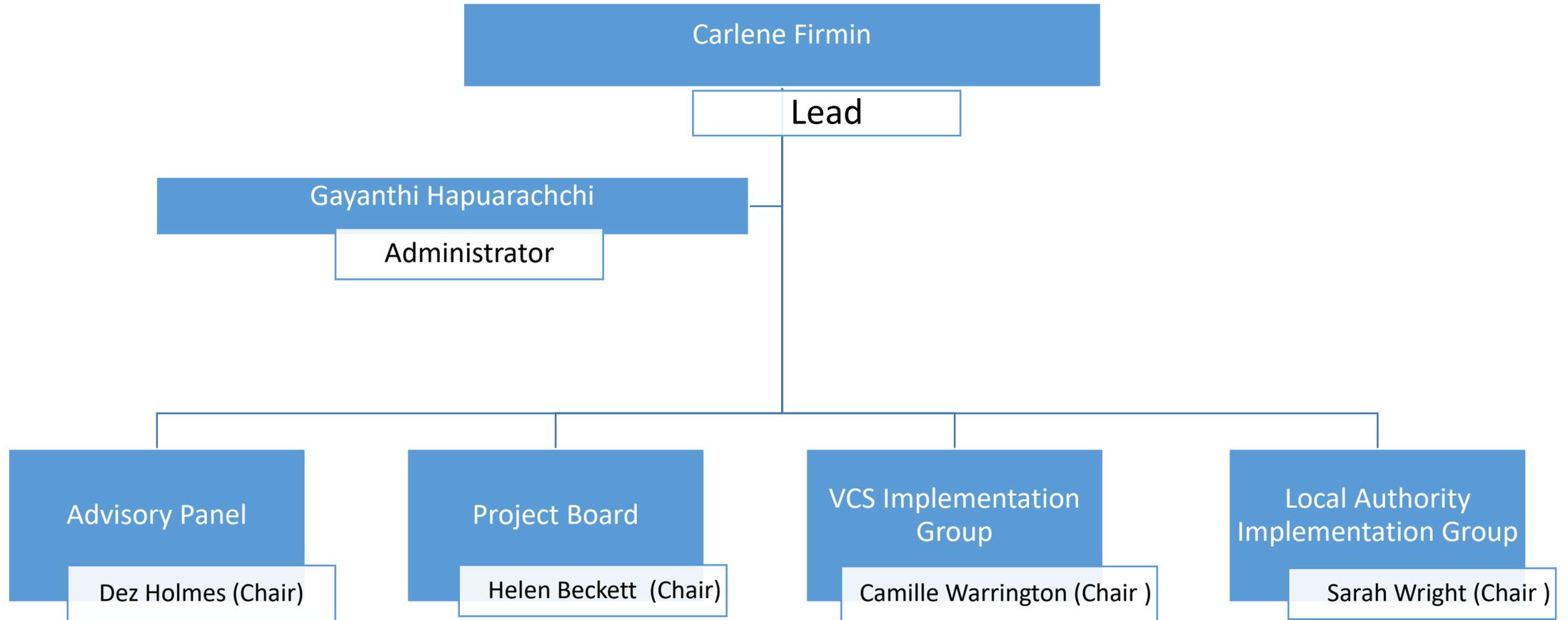
- Many areas with work with hold cases with social work oversight; moved into Child in Need in recent 12-18 months
- Some do hold significant harm in extra-familial contexts at CP
- Those that get past screening tend to stay in the system with some form of oversight
- Ongoing question of YOS and CSC case holding, and discrete team vs. service wide response to adolescence

Reflecting on a social work role in a CS system



- Staff recording what is needed including – ‘I don’t know what else we can do’
- Using multi-agency meetings to raise contextual concerns and advocate for partner involvement
- Forthcoming research will demonstrate parents asking for social work involvement to coordinate and leverage support
- In some areas this is framed around preventing family breakdown, or repairing family relationships

Contextual Safeguarding Governance Arrangement Structure



Working Together to Safeguard Children

A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

July 2018

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Contextual safeguarding

33. As well as threats to the welfare of children from within their families, children may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families. These extra-familial threats might arise at school and other educational establishments, from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online. These threats can take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple threats, including: exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as county lines; trafficking, online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. Extremist groups make use of the internet to radicalise and recruit and to promote extremist materials. Any potential harmful effects to individuals identified as vulnerable to extremist ideologies or being drawn into terrorism should also be considered¹⁹.

34. Assessments of children in such cases should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life and are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. Children who may be alleged perpetrators should also be assessed to understand the impact of contextual issues on their safety and welfare. Interventions should focus on addressing these wider environmental factors, which are likely to be a threat to the safety and welfare of a number of different children who may or may not be known to local authority children's social care. Assessments of children in such cases should consider the individual needs and vulnerabilities of each child. They should look at the parental capacity to support the child, including helping the parents and carers to understand any risks and support them to keep children safe and assess potential risk to child.

There are 5 additional, related details elsewhere in the document

		Chapter	Paragraph
1.	early help services will typically include ... <i>responses to emerging thematic concerns in extra-familial contexts</i>	1	2
2.	information sharing is also essential for the ... <i>when multiple children appear associated to the same contexts or locations of risk</i>	1	25
3.	Social workers...understand the level of need and risk in, or <i>faced by</i> , a family from the child's perspective	1	56
4.	[organisations] should have arrangements in place for: ' <i>creating a culture of safety, equality and protection within the services that they provide</i> '.	2	3
5.	YOTs...are therefore well placed to identify children ... <i>and the contexts in which they may be vulnerable to abuse</i> '.	2	41-9

Getting involved!

We have also created a Local Area Interest Network – 25 localities in England and Wales are members– in addition to test sites who will be exploring:

- Context conferences
 - Peer assessments
- Workforce development
- And threshold application

2020 - 2022

Over 6,500 members at the start of 2020

- Where we will publish all test site resources
- We want to hear from you! Blogs, case studies, podcasts that capture and share you practice and lessons learnt

Questions, contact, feedback

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For more information and resources visit our the Contextual Safeguarding website:

<https://www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/>