



EALING'S CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING CHAMPIONS NETWORK NEWSLETTER

Raise awareness. Share learning. Together we can make a difference.

Quote of the month:

"At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us."

— Albert Schweitzer

Welcome to the December edition of our newsletter. This month we want to help you to plan for the upcoming winter break. We've also shared highlights from our first year as Core Champions and our plans for 2022.

Thank you for your support and for joining us as we learn together about the realities of contextual safeguarding in practice.

We hope you manage to get a well-deserved rest in the coming weeks and look forward to working with you in 2022.

Cat, Catherine, Shannon and Suzy



Ealing Broadway Shopping Centre at Christmas.
Photo sourced from Wikitravel

Planning for the winter break

It's Catherine here. What a year it has been! I am sure we would agree that 2021 has had its fair share of up's and downs and twists and turns.

As most of us embark on a well-deserved break we thought it would be helpful to remind you to check in with children and young people and explore their plans for Christmas and the 2 weeks holiday from school or college. This could include asking them about things they are most looking forward to.

Although for some this is a time of celebration and joy, we know that this can be a time of tension and pressures for many of the families we support. Here are some tips we thought you might find helpful when planning ahead:

- Inform statutory services if you have any safeguarding concerns for a child or young person - please don't leave this to the last minute before going on leave.
- If you won't be working, let your young person or family know when you'll be back at work
- If not done already, help your child or young person to identify a trusted adult they can talk to if they are ever feeling worried or scared (don't forget to let the trusted adult know they may be contacted!)
- Provide your young person and family with relevant emergency contact details, (eg. police 999)
- Provide the child or young person with other contact details they may find helpful (eg. NSPCC childline 08001111 and for parents/carers the NSPCC helpline 0808800500 help@nspcc.org.uk)

How are we doing?

Ealing's Contextual Safeguarding Core Champions started 2021 as 2 Contextual Safeguarding Advisors, 1 Senior Social Worker in an Adolescent Frontline Team, 1 Operations Manager from Youth Justice and a Team Leader from Safer Communities.

One year on we continue to be overseen by Christina Evers, who is the Contextual Safeguarding Co-Ordinator for Ealing and a Team Manager in MAST Adolescent. The core champions now consist of 3 Contextual Safeguarding Advisors (Shannon recently joined Cat and Catherine in this role). Suzy, who is Operations Manager for Youth Justice, is also still a core champion.

Since April 2021 we have been sending this monthly newsletter which includes features on a spotlight topic or direct work tool - people have kindly told us that they find it helpful. We have developed a Contextual Safeguarding Champions Plan (reviewed on a 6 monthly basis). We also hold monthly Core Champion meetings (scheduled in advance) as well as monthly newsletter planning and debriefing discussions. We continue to facilitate bi-monthly Contextual Safeguarding Champions Network Meetings which brings together a range of professionals from different agencies.

We have collated a Resource Bank that lists relevant services and agencies in Ealing, learning from the training we attended with the University of Bedfordshire and direct work tools that can be used with young people and families. This is available to members of the Champions Network.

We have continued to be highly supported by Senior Management and the Ealing Safeguarding Children's Partnership.

We are seeing a good range of professional attendance at the bi-monthly Champions Network Meetings who each bring a wealth of knowledge.

We really enjoy working together as Core Champions. Whenever possible, we have set ourselves tasks that we believe to be reasonable to undertake alongside our regular jobs.

We have also all gained new skills and appreciate that we are given considerable autonomy in this role.

There has of course been some challenges and things for us to work on in 2022. For example, we hope to support Network members to further share their learning from the bimonthly meetings with their teams. We also hope to get more feedback on the experience of being a Network member and using the Resource Bank.

Change is difficult especially when a system has been set in its ways for years. We have learnt to accept that people or agencies are all at different stages in their understanding of and implementation of Contextual Safeguarding and that is okay. We also recognise that success takes time and people may have different way of measuring positive outcomes.

In 2022 we hope to welcome an even wider representation of partners both to the Champions Network and to the newsletter readership.

We will also be adapting the Resource Bank so there is a version for young people and families and pulling together a case study library of examples of positive work which will be based on audit findings and your feedback.

We want to thank each and every person who has taken the time to read our newsletter, attended our network meetings, sought advice and continued to embrace contextual safeguarding as an approach to helping young people to be safer.

We've come to realise that self-care is something we need to keep on our agenda too - we couldn't keep doing this work without it! So this is also a reminder to take time for yourselves over the Christmas period. Stay safe and have fun! We all deserve it.





December Shout-Outs

SWiS social worker, **Matthew Smart**, has undertaken some excellent work with both a vulnerable young person and her family. He has demonstrated empathy for the challenges the family are facing and helped them to make sense of what may be going on and why. In being transparent with the young person about his role and his concerns for her as well as showing up for her in a consistent way, he has become a person she will reach out to when things are difficult so that they can plan the next steps together. We've noticed that Mathew often reflects on the process of mentalisation (one of the core values of Ealing's Brighter Futures model) and uses this to build deeper understanding of the young people/families he supports.

Shannon nominated **Cat White** and **Catherine Imobeke** for their hard work and consistency over the year as Contextual Safeguarding Advisors. They have continued to ensure the voice of young people is heard and regardless of the situation the young people may find them in, that they are being supported and not blamed. They recognise that language is important and makes a big difference when engaging young people. They are not afraid to politely challenge and discuss decisions and remain passionate and committed to their roles.

As Core Champions we also wanted to thank **Christina Evers** for her leadership over the last year. The role of "Contextual Safeguarding Core Champion" is new to Ealing. Christina has supported and encouraged us to capitalise on our strengths and make the role our own. She's been a constant source of advice, advocacy and amazing ideas. When things are feeling especially difficult, she helps us to keep on track and reminds us of our core aims and the importance of self-care and looking out for each other. Thank you Christina!

Vulnerability Screening Tool

Ealing's Contextual Safeguarding Team provides consultative support for all Ealing professionals who are seeking to help a young person who may be at risk of harm from outside their family.

If you have concerns about extra familial harm for a young person you are working with please complete the Vulnerability Screening Tool on Mosaic or if you don't have access to Mosaic you can request the Word template via vulnerabilitiestool@ealing.gov.uk. You can also email the team for a consultation and the duty worker will aim to get back to you within one working day.

Please note that the team will be taking a break from 23rd Dec 2021 to 4th Jan 2022 should you be seeking support at that time.

Ealing's Contextual Safeguarding Champions Network

Ealing's Contextual Safeguarding Champions Network is next due to meet at 11am on Thursday 16 December. Benefits of membership include access for you and your team to our Contextual Safeguarding Resource document as well as information about the latest extra-familial risk themes for the borough.

If you are interested in joining, please [get in touch](#).

Contact

Ealing's Contextual Safeguarding Core Champions are:

Suzy Grihault: Operations Manager, Youth Justice Service

Catherine Imobeke: Contextual Safeguarding Advisor, Contextual Safeguarding Team

Shannon Upton: Contextual Safeguarding Advisor, Contextual Safeguarding Team

Cat White: Contextual Safeguarding Advisor, Contextual Safeguarding Team

If you have any questions about this newsletter or the Contextual Safeguarding Champions Network, [please email us](#) and one of the team will get back to you as soon as possible.