

EALING'S CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING CHAMPIONS NETWORK NEWSLETTER

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

Quote of the month:

"You really can change the world if you care enough."

Marian Wright Edelman, activist for children's rights

Welcome to the October edition of our newsletter.

We chose the quote above to honour Black History Month and because it inspires us as a group.

This month we're bringing you an update from us as a team, a piece on contextual safeguarding terminology, upcoming training dates and more. We hope you enjoy.

Cat, Catherine, Shannon and Suzy.



What is Contextual Safeguarding?

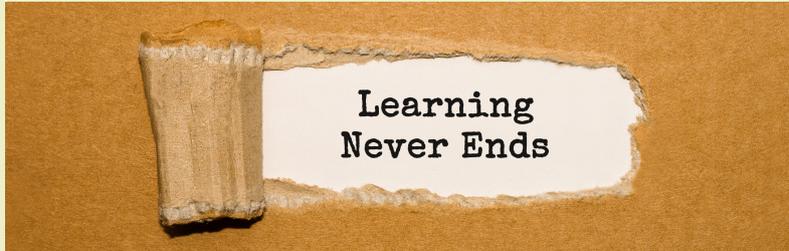
"Contextual Safeguarding" is a term that you may have heard being used amongst colleagues in children and family services and partner agencies across Ealing and beyond. As Ealing's Contextual Safeguarding Champions, we are excited to see so many colleagues share our enthusiasm for this area of work. It's essential, especially when we're thinking about something as important as safeguarding children, that language is used accurately and with a shared understanding of meaning. With this aim in mind, we thought it might be useful to share some key definitions with you:

Contextual Safeguarding: A term originally coined by Dr Carlene Firmin (University of Bedfordshire) to describe a specific approach to thinking about and responding to extra-familial harm. Not every safeguarding response to extra-familial harm can technically be described as contextual safeguarding.

Extra-Familial Harm: Harm a child or young person may be at risk of or experiencing from outside the family environment. In Ealing, this has been interpreted to include but is not limited to: child sexual exploitation; child criminal exploitation; serious youth violence; gangs; radicalisation; missing and intimate partner violence or domestic abuse.

If you want to find out more, we highly recommend checking out the [Contextual Safeguarding Network's](#) website. Ealing's Contextual Safeguarding Team also offers training to Ealing colleagues who safeguard children as part of their role.

If you ever find yourself getting confused, that's understandable. This is a new area of work with respect to safeguarding and it represents an expansion on the more traditional social services approach of thinking about the risk of or actual harm experienced by a child from within the family. We're all learning and figuring this out together. If we can get the language right, the rest will hopefully follow.



**Learning
Never Ends**

A check-in from us

A lot has happened since we launched the first Contextual Safeguarding Champions Network newsletter back in April 2021. This month, having stopped and taken stock ourselves, we wanted to give you an update:

- We continue to send out the **newsletter** on a monthly basis having taken a brief break over August. We're so grateful for the constructive feedback received and hope we can continue to make this a helpful resource for you.
- So far, **Ealing's Contextual Safeguarding Champions Network** has met twice for its bi-monthly meeting with the next meeting scheduled for 11am on Thu 21 Oct 2021. We've settled on a time of 1 ½ hours for each meeting. In August we used some meeting time to work on a group agreement. We're delighted and honoured to have such a diverse representation of skilful and committed colleagues in the network. We particularly appreciate the slot in the meeting when the group discusses their observations on current themes and patterns in Ealing with respect to extra-familial harm.
- We have written a **resource document** which covers a wide range of Contextual Safeguarding topics and includes direct work tools, information about partner agencies (and their contact details) and signposting to useful information on the Contextual Safeguarding Network website. The resource is designed to be easily accessible and represents a pooling of all our experience and knowledge into one place. We hope you find it useful. As of next week the resource document will be accessible to members of the Contextual Safeguarding Champions Network as well as members' teams.

We also wanted to share our reflections on what it's been like to be a Contextual Safeguarding Champion in Ealing so far:

Cat White, Contextual Safeguarding Advisor: It turns out the highlight of being a Contextual Safeguarding Champion, for me, has been the other champions. The commitment, openness to learning and creativity of the group makes me want to do and be better. We have so much work still to do but I'm proud of what we've accomplished. The newsletter, in particular, was something that I had wanted to do for some time. It brings me joy to be involved in it each month. Being a champion has helped me to remain ever-hopeful for positive changes for young people in Ealing at risk of extra-familial harm. I'm so grateful for the opportunity to be involved and the encouragement we receive from managers. I only wish there were a few more hours in the day so I can do even more things to support the wider group.

Catherine Imobeke, Contextual Safeguarding Advisor: When I first joined Ealing in 2017, Contextual Safeguarding felt like a buzz word that was bandied around and I never fully understood what it meant in practice. However, over time and since having the privilege of becoming a champion, my knowledge in this area has grown and I now understand the significance of changing the way we work with children/YP and their families who are affected by extra-familial harm in order to try and bring about more effective and sustainable change. We do acknowledge that cultural shifts do not happen overnight and we still have a long way to go to embed this approach across the whole system. But I have enjoyed being part of this new exciting journey with my fellow champions and other keen and enthusiastic colleagues, and look forward to seeing where it leads us to.

Suzy Grihault, Operations Manager, YJS: It has been a number of years now since I heard Carlene Firmin first speak about Contextual Safeguarding. It caught my attention then as a logical, practical and effective way of looking at extra-familial harm. As my knowledge has grown it has remained an area of work that I really believe can have a significant impact in the safeguarding of vulnerable young people with whom work. Being a champion has given me the opportunity to extend my own knowledge and enthusiasm for this valuable area of work and also collaborate with like-minded colleagues who feel equally inspired to carry contextual safeguarding forward.

Shannon Upton, Senior Social Worker, MAST Adolescent: I feel that I have the best of both worlds in a unique position; being a frontline social worker in the MAST Adolescent team working directly with young people experiencing extra familial harm and being part of the strategic planning of how Ealing are taking forward Contextual Safeguarding. This allows me to see things from both perspectives and help develop new ways of working that I know I will benefit from. Whilst it may mean I am having to put in extra hours on top of my casework, I remain passionate and committed, enjoying working with the other Champions. Seeing the others equally as enthusiastic as I am is something that keeps me motivated and I feel that we are starting to see progress with the plan that we have implemented including the newsletters, network meetings and the new resource bank.

If you're interested in joining the Contextual Safeguarding Champions Network, we would love to hear from you. Please email us: cschampions@ealing.gov.uk and one of the core champions will get back to you as soon as possible.



Upcoming training With Ealing's Contextual Safeguarding Team:

Missing from Home and Care	Tues 19 Oct	10am
Child Sexual Exploitation	Wed 27 Oct	10am
Return Home Interviews workshop	Wed 3 Nov	10am
Contextual Safeguarding	Tue 23 Nov	10am
National Referral Mechanism and Trafficking	Wed 8 Dec	10am

To book please visit CPD online.



October Shout-Outs

As always, we've seen many examples of outstanding practice this month. However, there were two colleagues that especially stood out for us:

Amin Haque, Youth Justice (YOT) Police Officer, has been supporting a young person who has been the victim of serious youth violence as well as their family. His assessment of the situation following direct work undertaken has been invaluable for safeguarding planning. We don't doubt Amin's signature sense of empathy and knowledge of the system and safeguarding options available have helped the young person and their family to feel both heard and safer.

Clarissa Amaniampong, Family Support Practitioner in MAST Adolescent, has built a trusting relationship with a young person who is at risk of exploitation. She showed her commitment and care for that young person recently when she drove to North East London to collect them and bring them home when they had called her to say they felt unsafe where they were.

Thank you Clarissa and Amin for your outstanding work.

If you have any nominations for excellent practice in response to extra-familial harm, [please do let us know.](#)

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 vulnerabilitytool@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.

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: Senior Social Worker, MAST Adolescents 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.

