Contextual Safeguarding in Practice

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#ContextualSafeguarding
@carlenefirmin

Presentation Overview

- Contextual Safeguarding – what and why

- The Four Domains of a Contextual Safeguarding Approach

- Current implementation in national policy frameworks

- Current implementation in Hackney

- Practice Case Studies

- Hackney's Extra-Familial Risk Panel

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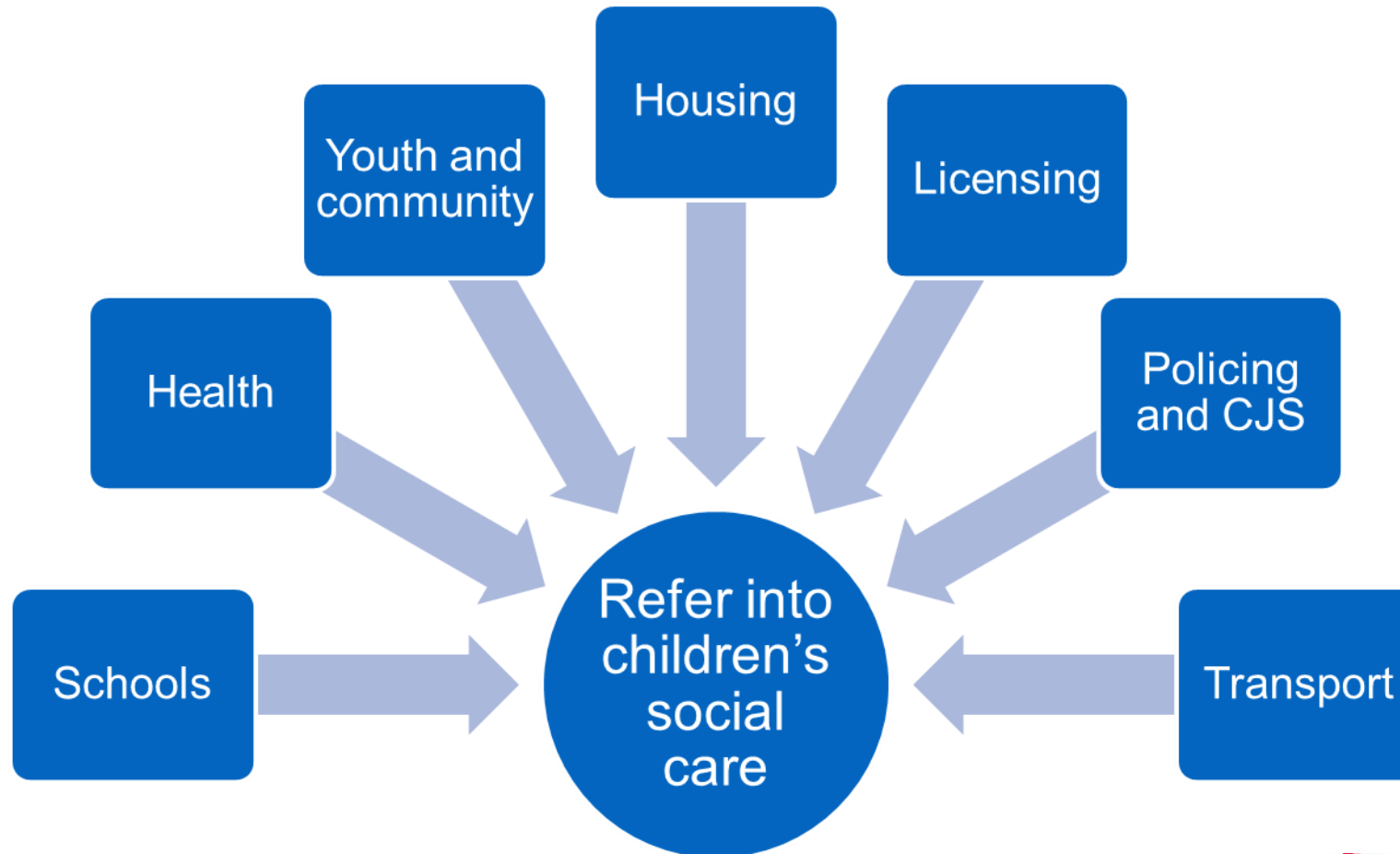# Contextual nature of abuse in adolescence (Firmin, 2015)
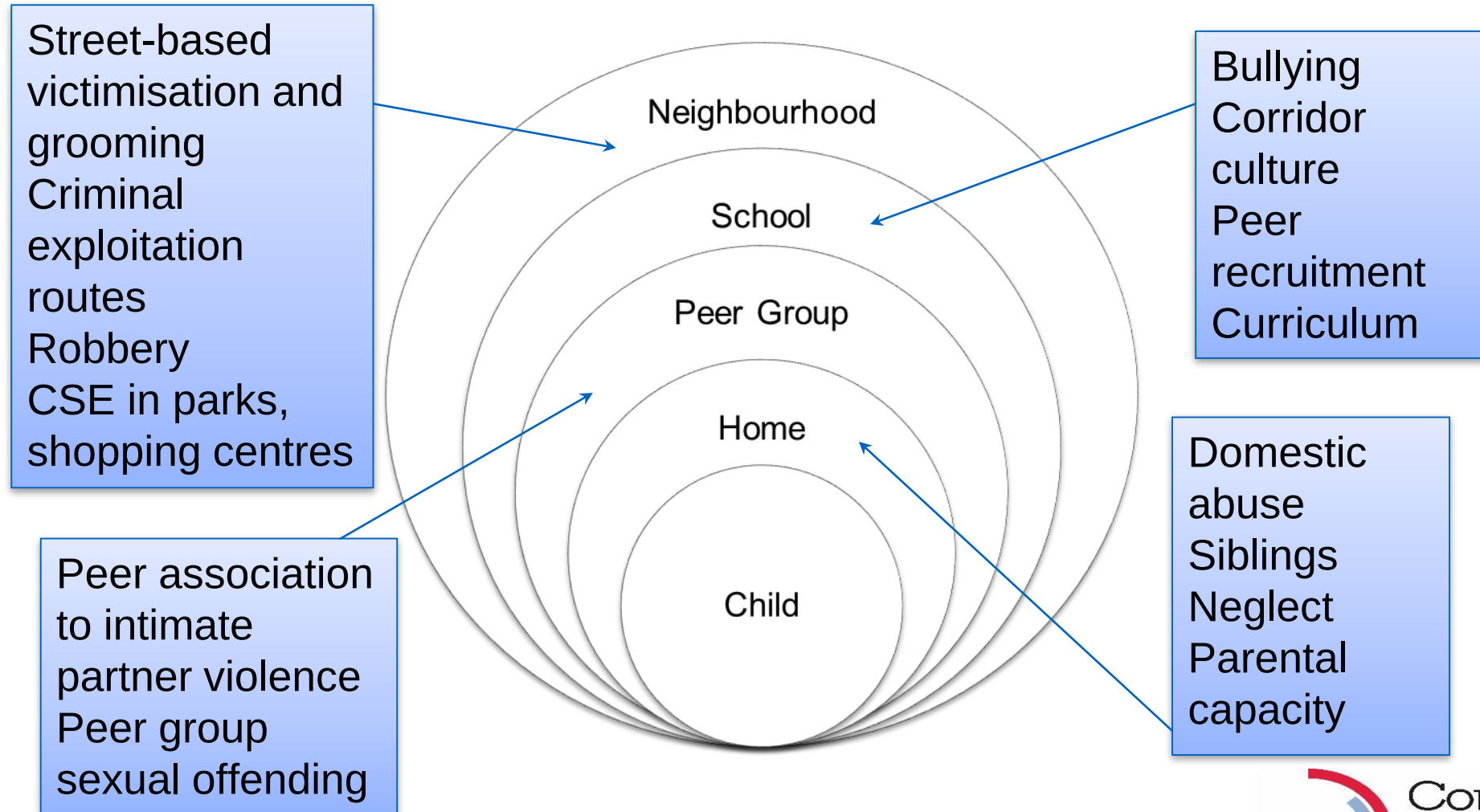
Traditional reach of child protection
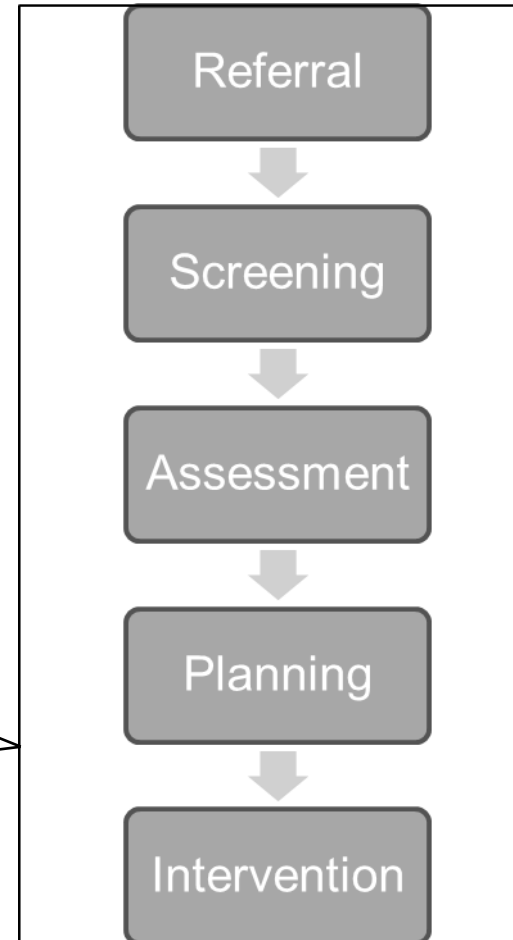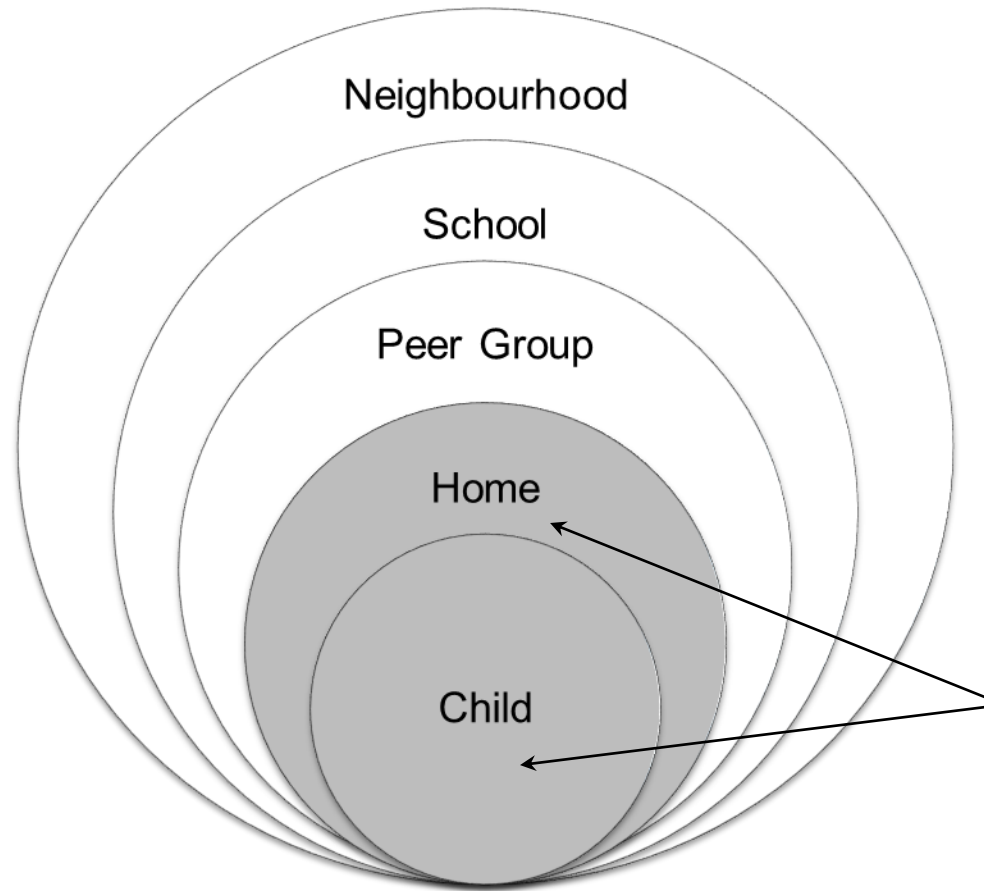
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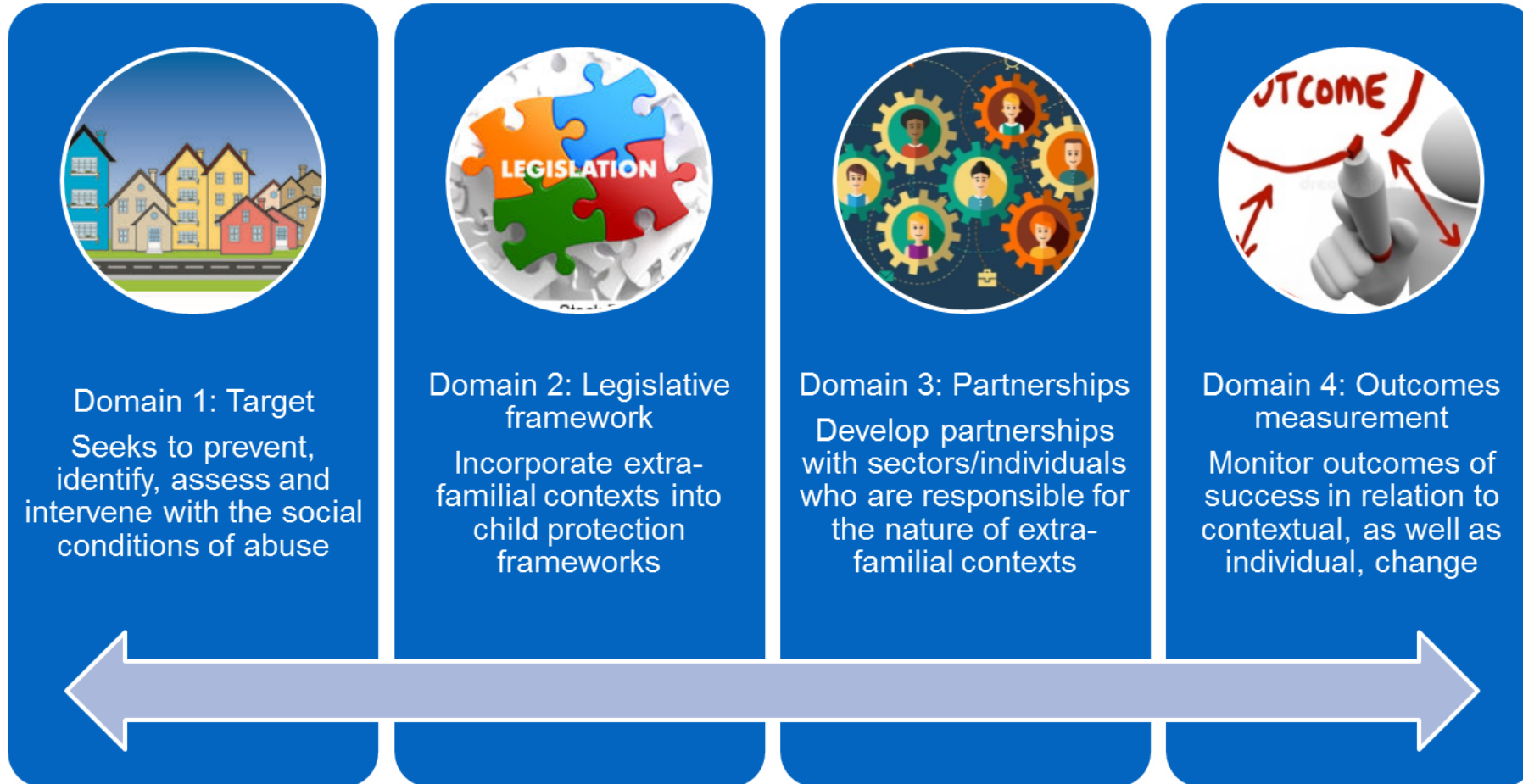# Safeguarding is 'Everyone's business' = referral and information

Definition of Contextual Safeguarding (Firmin, 2017)

*Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to **understanding, and responding** to, **young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families**. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their **neighbourhoods, schools and online** can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of **extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships**. Therefore children's social care practitioners need to engage with individuals and sectors who do have influence over/within extra-familial contexts, and recognise that **assessment of, and intervention with, these spaces are a critical part of safeguarding practices**. Contextual Safeguarding, therefore, expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people are vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts.*

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Contextual Safeguarding

Domain 1: Target

Seeks to prevent, identify, assess and intervene with the social conditions of abuse

Domain 2: Legislative framework

Incorporate extra-familial contexts into child protection frameworks

Domain 3: Partnerships

Develop partnerships with sectors/individuals who are responsible for the nature of extra-familial contexts

Domain 4: Outcomes measurement

Monitor outcomes of success in relation to contextual, as well as individual, change

(Firmin et al, 2016)

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Inclusion in Working Together (2018) (1)

Contextual Safeguarding (Chapter 1 – Paras 33-34)

• Explained in paragraph 34 – recognition that extra-familial risks such as sexual and criminal exploitation are forms of abuse requiring safeguarding response

• 'interventions should focus on addressing…wider environmental factors'

• It is important to address the contextual risks faced by young people who have instigated or perpetrated harm as well as those who they have abused

Inclusion in Working Together (2018) (2)

Five detailed changes

- early help services will typically include … *responses to emerging thematic concerns in extra-familial contexts* (Chp 1, para 12)

- 'information sharing is also essential for the …*when multiple children appear associated to the same contexts or locations of risk* (Chp1, para 25)

- Social workers…understand the level of need and risk in, *or faced by*, a family from the child's perspective (Chp 1, para 56):

- YOTs…are therefore well placed to identify children … *and the contexts in which they may be vulnerable to abuse*'. (Chp 2, parah 41-9)

- [organisations] should have arrangements in place for: '*creating a culture of safety, equality and protection within the services that they provide*'. (Chp2 Para 3)

Inclusion in schools' safeguarding guidance

Advice

•**Reference to Contextual Safeguarding as informing a whole-school approach (embedded in paragraphs 81-82)**

•A **culture** that makes clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is always unacceptable

•strong preventative education programme will help **create an environment** in which all children at the school or college are **supportive and respectful of their peers** when reports of sexual violence or sexual harassment are made.

•Policies, processes and curriculum under constant review to protect all their children.

•Reports of sexual violence and/or harassment (especially where there is evidence of patterns of behaviour) **may point to environmental and or systemic problems**
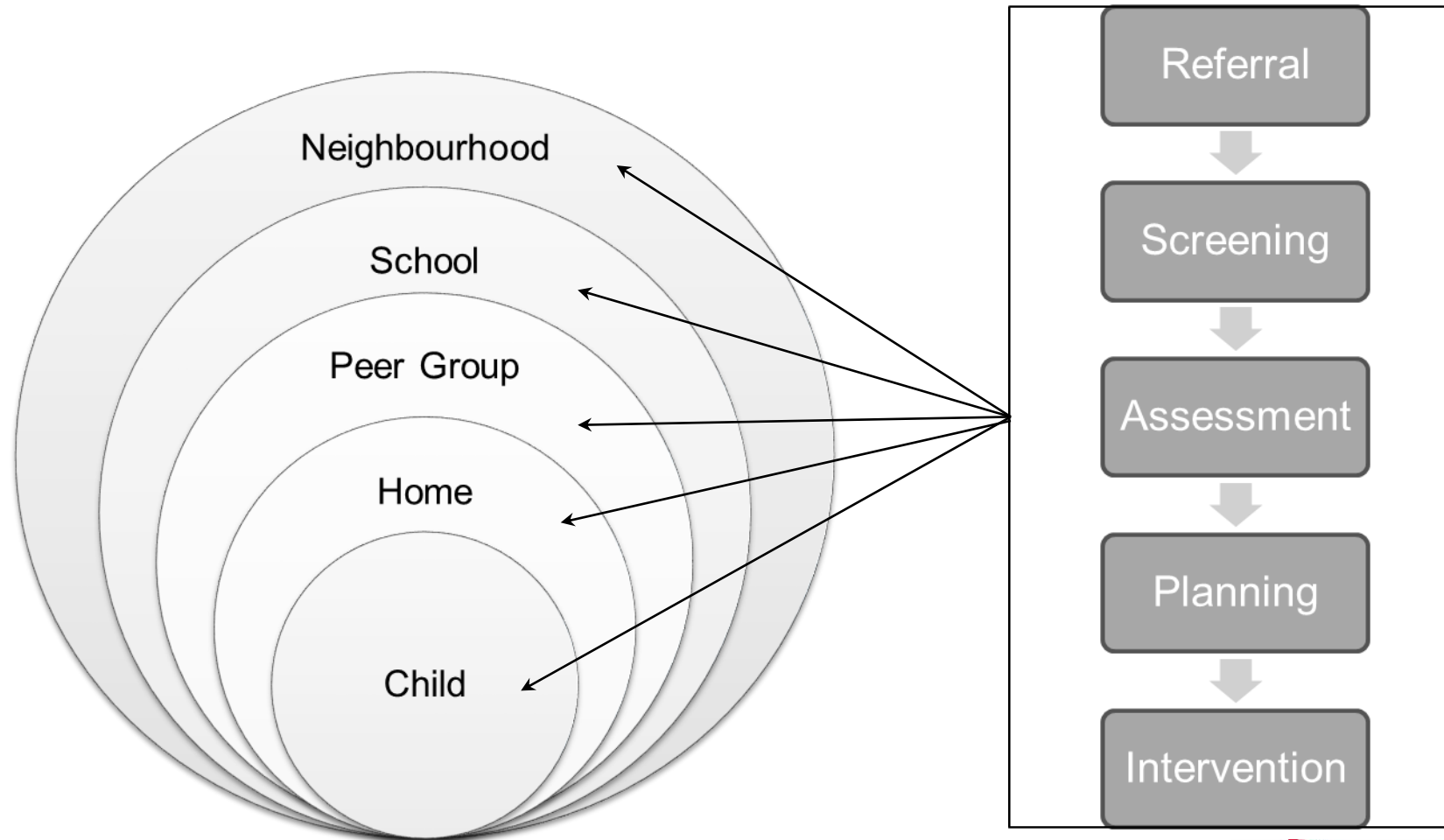
KCSIE

• New Chapter on peer-on-peer abuse – particularly peer-sexual abuse

• Reference to Contextual Safeguarding – particularly with an emphasis on an interplay between risks outside of schools and student welfare
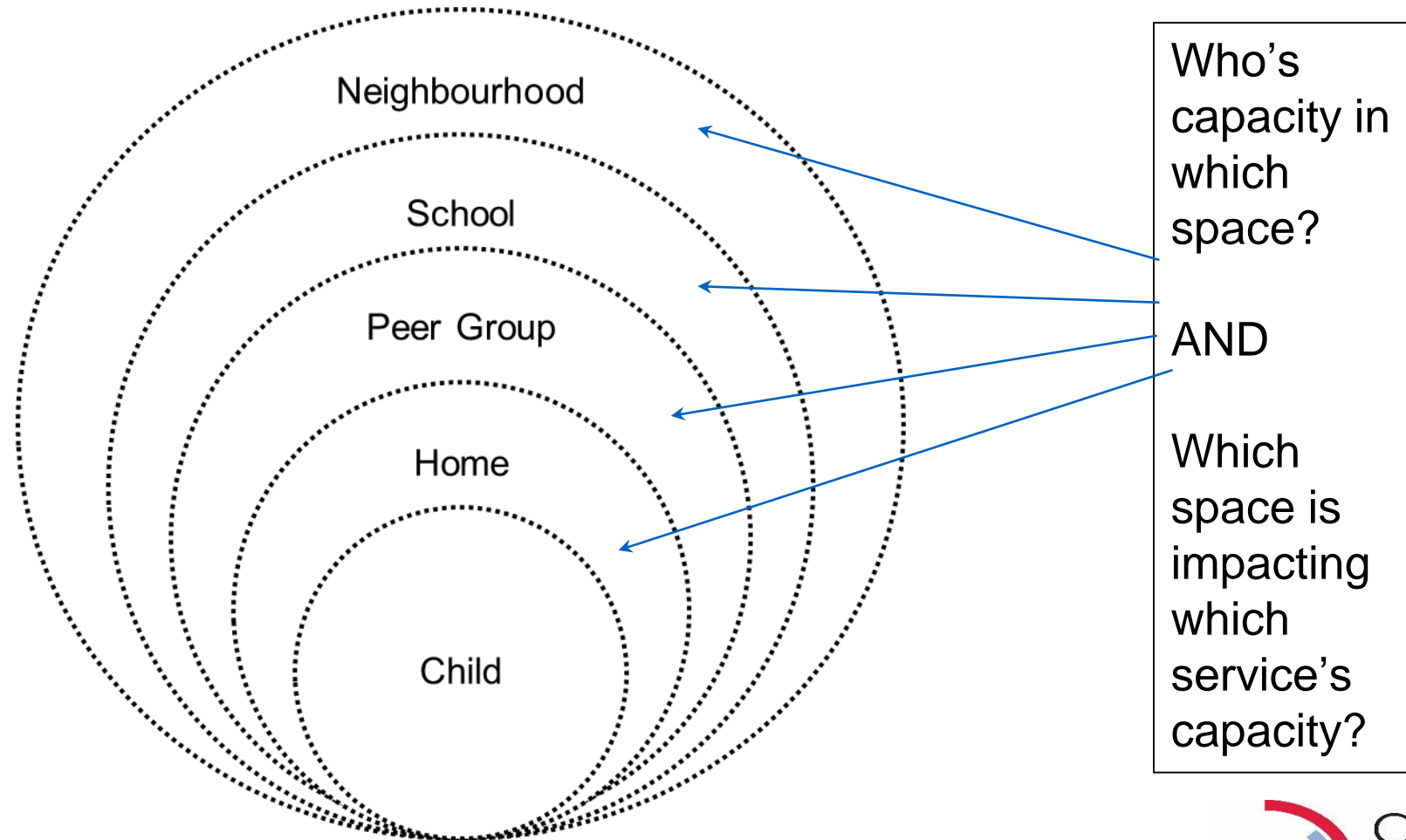
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Implications for safeguarding

Creating a Contextual protection, welfare and safeguarding system

(Firmin et al. 2016)

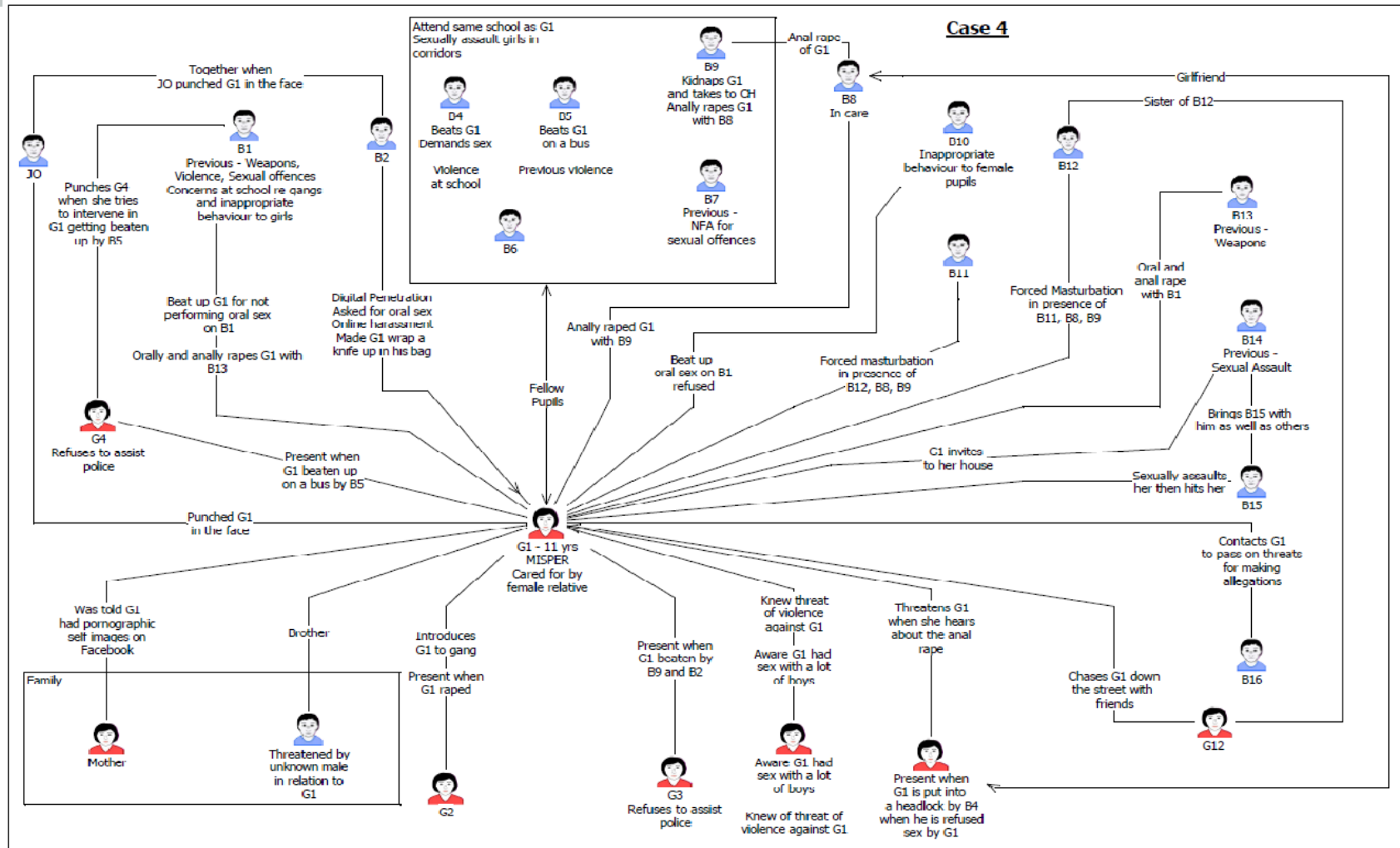# Expanding 'Capacity to Safeguard'

Neighbourhood

School

Peer Group

Home

Child

Who's capacity in which space?

AND

Which space is impacting which service's capacity?

(Firmin et al, 2016)

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To: 'Everyone's business' = creating safe spaces
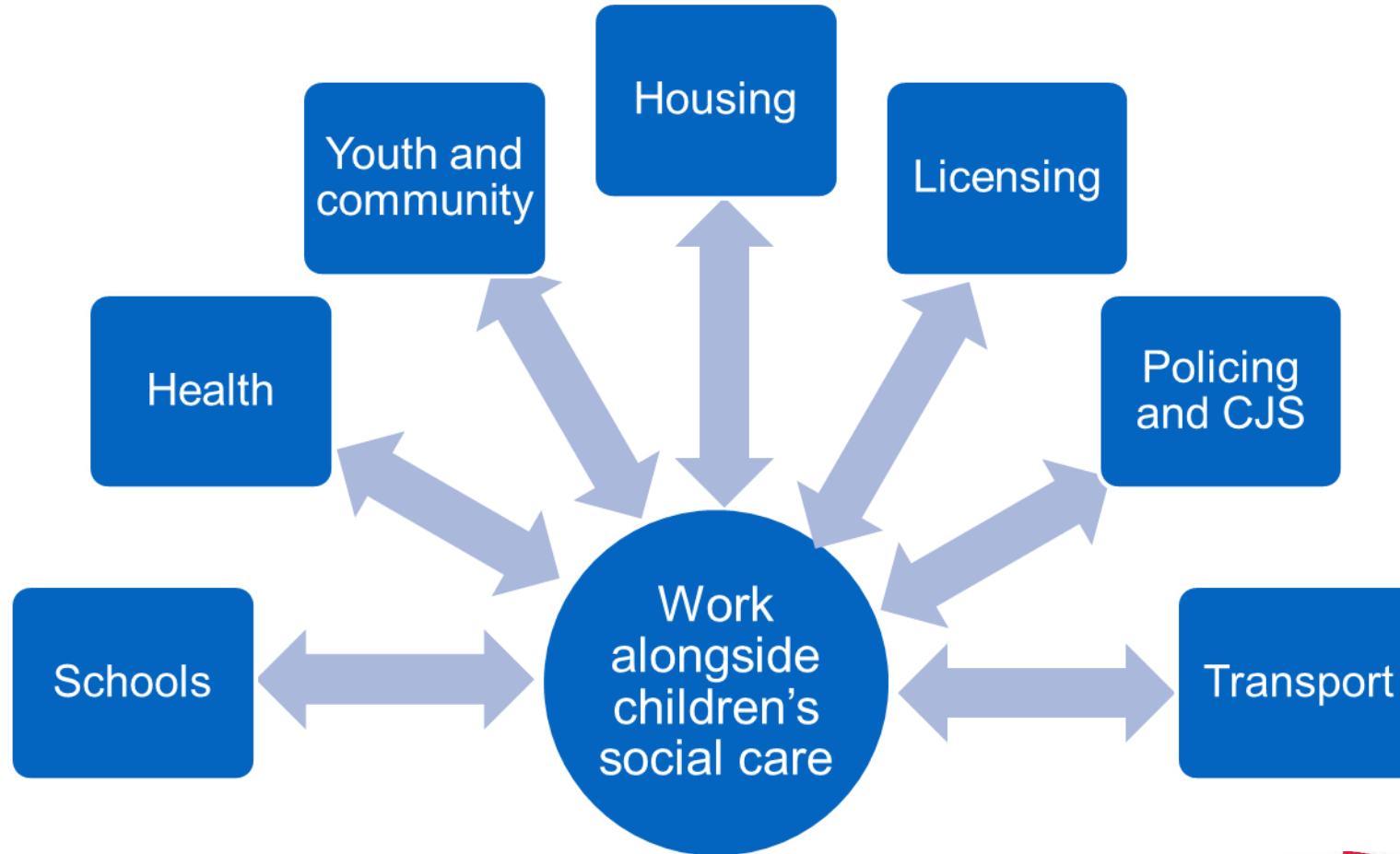
Mapping peer relationships

(Firmin, 2017)

Implementation in Hackney

Referral and screening

FAST are undertaking a number of activities to assist with receiving referrals on contexts – and identifying contexts within child and family referrals

Peer mapping guidance in progress and legal guidance received

Podcast recorded on use of MOSAIC for opening an 'organisation' referral

Ad hoc contextual referrals coming in health, education and youth service

Assessment

10 child and family assessments conducted using new CS guidance– nearing publication and testing in other parts of the service

Tests for embedding changes in MOSAIC

Context assessments designed and trialled in schools, peer groups and public spaces

School assessment toolkit online, neighbourhood toolkit and peer group guidance in development

Planning

1 x School context conference and 2 x neighbourhood context conference piloted

Associated Terms of Reference, Guidance, information sharing agreements in development

Design of extra-familial risk panel

Clarification regarding the use of CP conferences for extra-familial risks

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Interventions

Safety mapping resource designed

MVP bystander interventions being piloted and trainers available in children and family service

Bespoke peer group intervention in design

Policy reform as intervention

Intervention catalogue drafted

Design and detached interventions being considered following neighbourhood conferences

Policies and partnerships

Well-being framework under revision

Context Threshold document in final draft stage – CF to review (required now to assist embedding process)

Protocol for extra-familial risk panel developed

CS embedded into policy documents for schools published by HLT

Contextual matters added to the assessment protocol

Embedding

Embedding approaches priority for team:

- Embedding assessment guidance across service including CIN, LAC, Leaving Care, YH and YJS

- Partners making contextual referrals

- ICT solutions being finalised

- Thresholds document critical for embedding within partnership

- Revisions to case consultation toolkit may be required

- Champions training

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Practice Example: Peer Group Assessment

High school teachers are told by a student that a group of their peers is sharing a sexually indecent image of their peers on a snapchat group. Following initial inquiries the school refers these young people into children's services – in addition to school sanctions. Outside of Contextual Safeguarding children's service would have closed all referrals in this case as all parents were protective and there were no concerns at home. Instead, children's services accepted this referral as a peer group referral and initiated a group assessment to understand group dynamic, risk, vulnerability and strengths. Through that process it emerged that this group was one of many at the school who had shared images previously, and that were this group at another school it wasn't clear if the incident would have occurred at all. The social rules at play within the school had normalised image sharing and it was the school therefore that became subject to assessment and intervention – via whole-year bystander programmes, staff training and a review of policies and procedures to better include the school position on image sharing. This approach was intended to prevent future incidents and re-referrals by addressing the contextual dynamics of the HSB.

Practice example: Neighbourhood Conference

A referral to the FAST (First Access Screening Team) identified concerns about an individual being the intended target of an attempted murder.

The referral initiated a child and family assessment of that individual which, using the contextual framework for assessing, identified the individual's friendship group and their locality of contexts of harm.

One particular housing estate in the borough was identified as a location of harm - serious, violent incidents took place in that location over a sustained period of time including 2 firearms discharges and 4 stabbings/attempted stabbings.

"Drill Videos" were filmed in the location with the content being confrontation, violent and abusive which may have served to perpetuate violence.

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Practice example: Neighbourhood Conference

Team completed an assessment in the location identifying key stakeholders in the locality to contribute to information sharing/gathering.

The location was identified as a location at significant risk and a context conference was convened

The assessment could not determine whether the location and physical landscape of the estate was the cause of harm or whether the associated peer group was the cause of harm.

However, the assessment identified the need to support the community with a trauma informed approach, develop community guardians and to better coordinate the resources being deployed into that locality as well as better understand the peer group and the drivers of harm for them.

Strategic Example: Extra-Familial Risk Panel

- EFRP has a unified approach; similar issues affect young people who cause harm outside the family and those who experience harm
- EFRP hears and takes action on cases where -
  - child / young person or a group of children / young people
  - at risk of, or already experiencing harm caused by people outside their family and/or
  - at risk of, or already causing harm to young people outside their family
- Systemic approach; the professional system at EFRP identifies the risks and needs present in the different systems inhabited by young people and seeks to reduce risks in these systems for identified individuals + for contexts themselves
- EFRP is a multi-agency panel meeting weekly
- EFRP replaces MAP CSE and MAP HSB meetings and pre-MASE
- EFRP is chaired by Children and Family Services and MPS
- EFRP uses Peer Relationship Map, Young People's Safety Maps, Geographical Maps, Chronologies and professional input
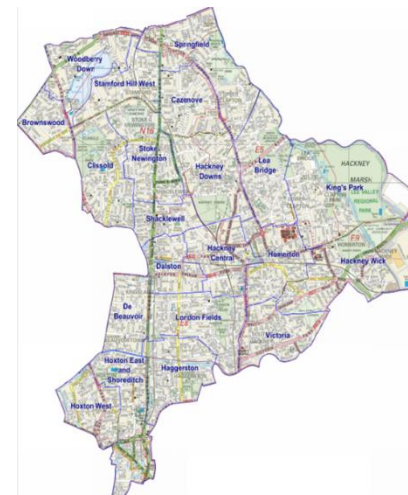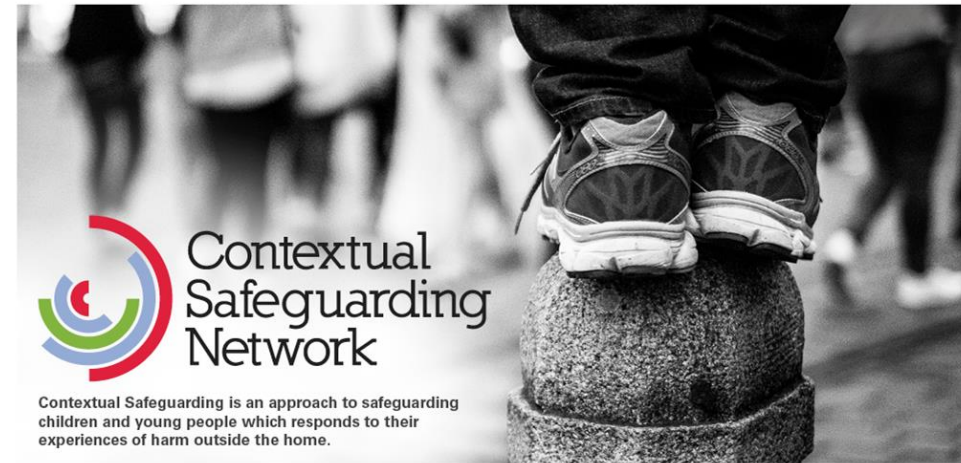- EFRP is focused on risk-reduction through action

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Opportunities to get involved

- Practitioner's network....
  2,200 and growing

Questions, contact, feedback

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For more information and resources visit our the Contextual Safeguarding website: https://www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/

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