



Item 6

28th August 2025

Glasgow Community Planning Partnership

Safe Glasgow Partnership

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Health and Social Care Partnership Approach to Contextual Safeguarding

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to update members on the Health and Social Care Partnership approach to Contextual Safeguarding.

Recommendations:

The Safe Glasgow Partnership members are asked to note the report.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Contextual safeguarding recognises that young people may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation in environments beyond their family home. We have seen over recent years in Glasgow that peer influence, community norms, and online interactions can significantly impact on the safety of our young people.
- 1.2 We have grown to understand that multi agency interventions must extend beyond the family home to target the contexts in which such harm occurs.
- 1.3 There are several areas of contextual safeguarding which have been in focus in recent years including; Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) which involves children being coerced, controlled, or manipulated into criminal activity, often for the benefit of others; includes county lines, drug trafficking, theft, and money laundering. Alongside young people carry knives for reasons of fear and self-protection, peer pressure and exploitation, alongside often unresolved trauma.
- 1.4 The Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) alongside key partners use child protection measures to manage contextual safeguarding for young people adapting traditional child protection safeguarding approaches to address risks that occur outside the home, such as in peer groups, schools, neighbourhoods, and online spaces.

2 Young People Profile

- Young males, but girls are also affected.
- From care-experienced backgrounds.
- Experiencing poverty, trauma, or exclusion.

3 Grooming and Control Tactics

- Gifts, threats, violence, and emotional manipulation.
- Social media to recruit and monitor.
- Peer pressure and debt bondage.

4 Legislative and Policy Backing

- The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and the UNCRC Incorporation (Scotland) Bill underpin children's rights and welfare.
- Scotland's Serious Organised Crime Strategy uses the "4 Ds" approach: Detect, Deter, Divert, Disrupt—applied to protect children from exploitation.

5 Professional Assessments

- Expand our child protection assessments to include peer relationships, school environments, neighbourhood dynamics, and online activity.
- Use tools like mapping exercises or peer group analysis to understand the broader context. This is normally carried out as part of multi-agency collaboration.

6 Multi-Agency Collaboration

- Work with schools, youth services, police, housing, and community organisations to share intelligence and coordinate responses.
- Our Child Protection Committee (CPC) alongside Police operations, are central to local safeguarding efforts, ensuring that social work, police, education, health, and third-sector partners work together.
- They lead on local protocols, training, and learning reviews when exploitation is suspected or confirmed.
- Recognise signs of grooming and exploitation and understanding the power dynamics and coercion involved in CCE – in turn responding were possible without criminalising the young person.

7 Place-Based Interventions

- Safeguarding plans can include actions to disrupt harmful environments, such as:
 - Community safety mapping.
 - School-based interventions.
 - Youth outreach and diversionary programmes.

8 Peer Group Work

- Address harmful peer dynamics through group interventions, restorative approaches, or positive peer mentoring.
- Recognise that sometimes the peer group, not just the individual, needs support or intervention.

9 Policy and Practice Development

- Embed contextual safeguarding into local safeguarding policies and training.
- Ensure practitioners are equipped to identify and respond to extra-familial harm.

10 Challenges Identified

- Inconsistent definitions and understanding of CCE across agencies.
- Underreporting and lack of disaggregated data.
- Criminalisation of victims, especially in the justice system.
- Limited support services tailored to CCE victims.

11 Next Steps

- Develop a national definition and framework for CCE.
- Improve data collection and sharing across agencies.
- Provide training for professionals on recognising and responding to contextual safeguarding.
- Ensure non-criminalising, trauma-informed support for victims.
- Invest in preventative and diversionary programmes.

- Support youth centres and community hubs. Provide safe, welcoming environments where young people can build relationships, learn social skills, and access support.
- Deliver violence prevention education not just in schools, but also in alternative settings for those excluded or disengaged.
- Use peer-led programmes and real-life stories to make messages relatable.
- Use restorative justice, mentoring, and counselling to address underlying issues.
- Involve young people in designing solutions and shaping services.

Tackle poverty, housing instability, and school exclusion. Ensure access to mental health services, employment pathways, and positive role models.

12 Recommendations

12.1 The Safe Glasgow Partnership members are asked to note the report.