Context Assessment Triangles

March 2019

Background

Traditionally approaches to child protection have focussed on children and their families. As such, the frameworks and methods used when assessing children have focussed predominantly on individual children and their families. In *Working Together* Child and Family assessments are supported with an assessment triangle which outlines three key elements of assessment: The Child's Development Needs, Parenting Capacity and Family and Environmental Factors (Figure one below).
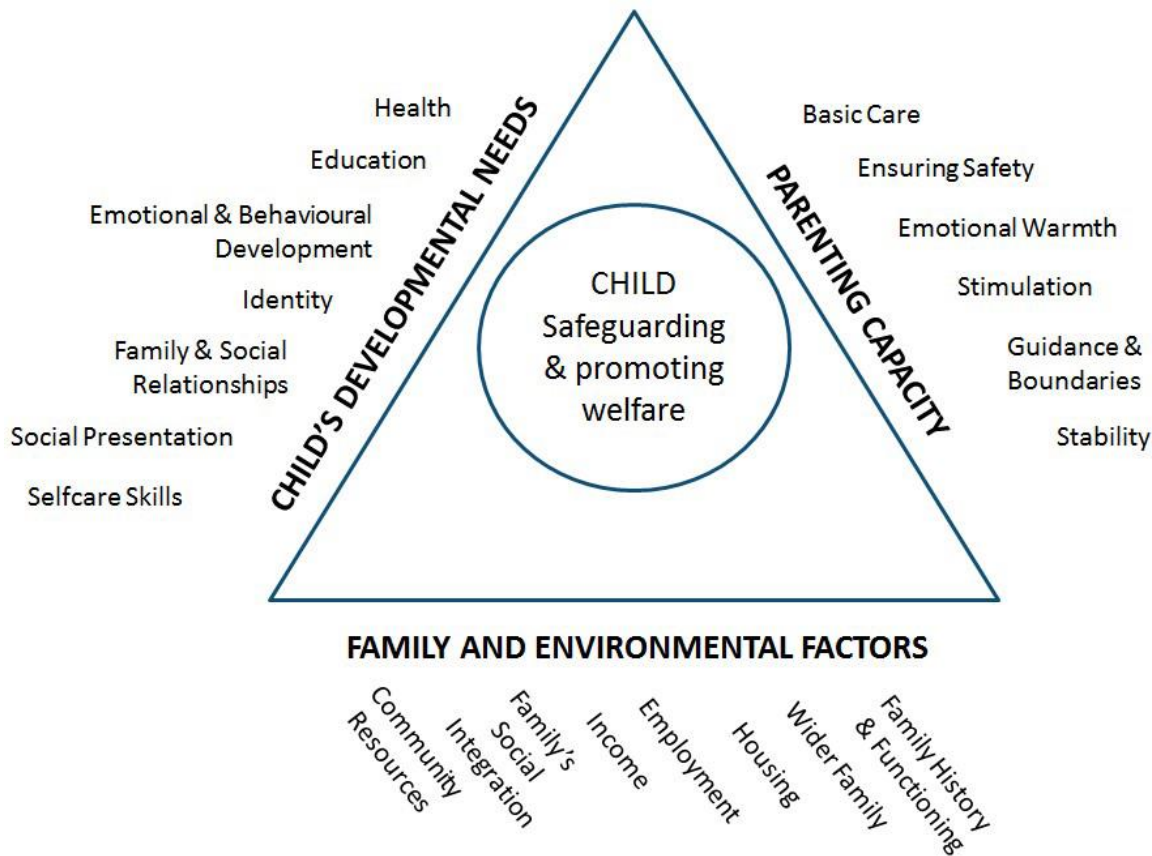

Figure One: Child and Family Assessment (Working Together, 2018)

In Contextual Safeguarding, we are asking practitioners to consider contexts beyond individual children and their families. At tier two, assessments consider different issues, such as those related to schools, peer groups and neighbourhoods. As such, practitioners need frameworks that support them to consider factors that may be different to those in a traditional child and family assessment.

To support this work we have developed three new assessment triangles: one for schools, peers and neighbourhoods. These triangles are aligned with the original assessment framework but include elements we recognise as important to assessing contexts, gained through our work in neighbourhoods, schools and with peer groups. This document provides printable versions of all three guides but individual guides for a thorough review of the assessment methods needed to complete context assessments for a school, neighbourhood and peer group assessment are available in the Assessment section of this toolkit under Tier 2. Each triangle includes a breakdown of some example questions/ areas of focus to be used as a guide.
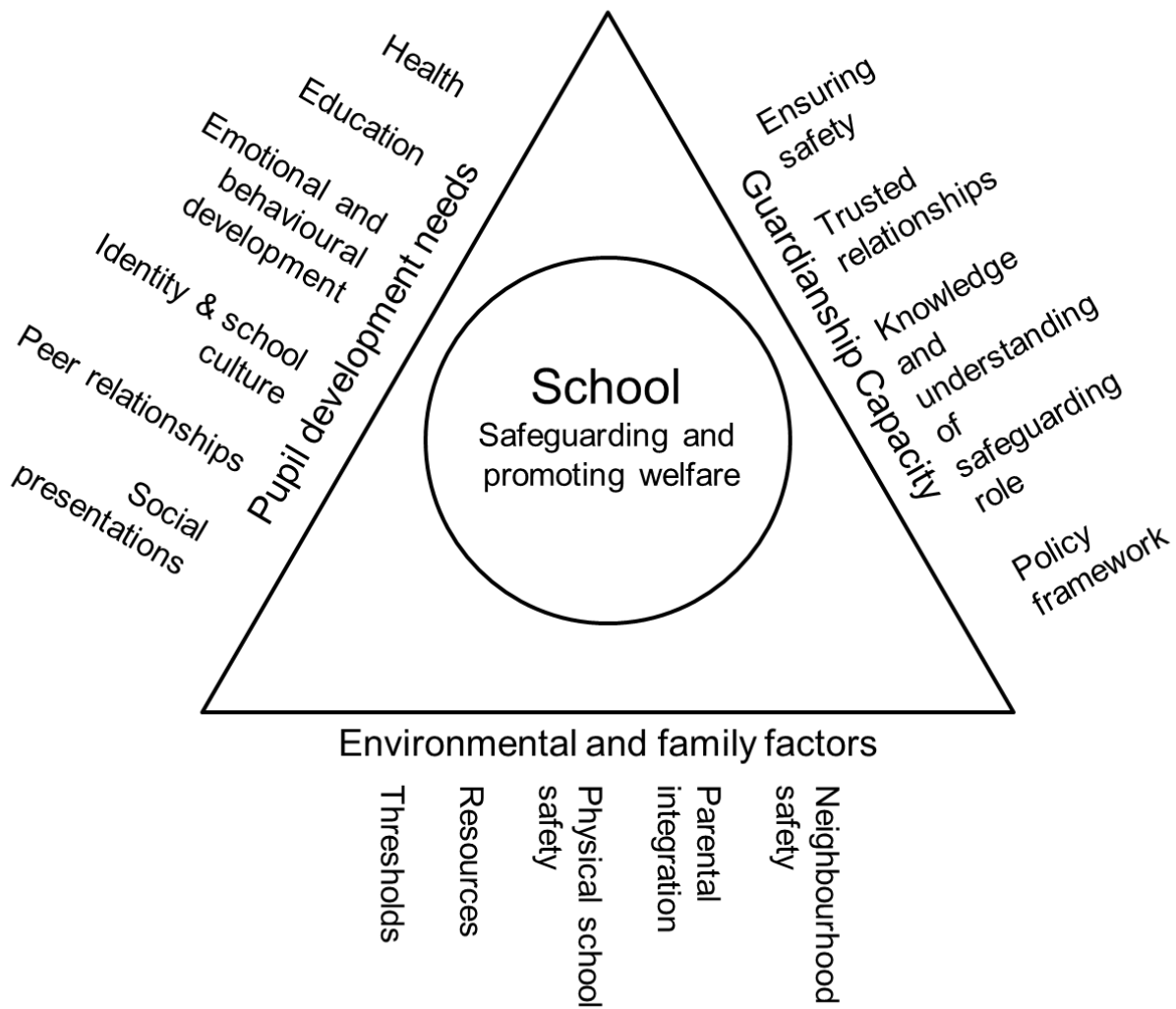
Schools

Figure Two: School assessment triangle (Lloyd, Walker & Firmin, 2018)

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School Assessment

Pupil Development Needs	Health	**Are there health concerns affecting the wider student population?** • Consider mental health, sexual health
	Education	**What education is provided to students relating to wellbeing and safeguarding?** • Is there a robust sex and relationships curriculum? • Is SRE integrated across subjects? • What opportunities do students have to learn about current issues that may be affecting students, e.g. consent, abuse through image sharing, safety, etc.
	Emotional and Behavioural Development	**The moods and emotional regulation of the students** • If focused on a particular peer group in a school how does the group respond to different issues? • How is the behaviour of students responded to by the school i.e. punitive or through welfare responses?
	Identity and school culture	**How they view themselves** • What is the ethos of the school? • Are harmful sexual behaviours/gendered ideas normalised? • Do students and staff support each other?
	Peer relationships	**What are interactions like between students?** • How do students respond to issues affecting students i.e. through support or isolation and retaliation? • Are there mechanisms to support and intervene safely when harm occurs i.e. through bystander programmes or peer mentoring?
	Social relationships	**How is a peer group seen?** • How do others [teachers/other groups/parents/shop keepers] see the group? • What are the links and relationships between students (peer mapping)
Guardianship Capacity	Ensuring Safety	**How do guardians (i.e. teachers, caretakers, local businesses, non-teaching staff) ensure safety?** • Who are the guardians? • Are guardians in the school (or those outside) able to ensure safety for students? • Do guardians and those with responsibility for the context ensure safety?

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	Trusted relationships	**Do students have relationships with adults in the school that they trust?** • Do students trust teaching staff? If not why? • What options do students have to speak about their problems? • Do staff respect confidentiality when responding to issues?
	Knowledge and understanding of safeguarding role	• Are guardians aware of their responsibility for safeguarding in this context? • Is there appropriate training for all staff in the school? • How are guardians responding to harm (i.e. online provider reporting monitoring illegal activity; parents reporting to police if missing; professionals making referrals)
	Policy framework	• Are there up to date and appropriate policies in place that support all guardians? • Do guardians understand the policy and their role?
Environmental and Family Factors	Neighbourhood safety	**How safe do students feel in the local neighbourhood (including online)?** • Do students feel safe on their journey to/from school? • Are there issues that area affecting other students/ young people in the area locally? • How involved are the school in working with local partners who have responsibility for creating safety in the neighbourhood? • What are students experiences of safety online? • Does the school have policies in place to respond to harm outside the school, including online?
	Parental integration	**How integrated are parents within the school?** • Are parents provided with avenues to discuss issues affecting their children? • Are their opportunities for parents to learn about issues such as online harm, safety, etc.? • Are parents supported to speak with other parents whose children may socialise together?
	Physical school safety	**How safe do students feel in school?** • Can students name areas where they feel safe/unsafe? • Are there opportunities for students to discuss safety in school? • If incidents occur in school are the locations recorded? • Does the school make changes to the physical landscape (closing areas, encouraging use, increasing supervision) in areas where incidents occur?

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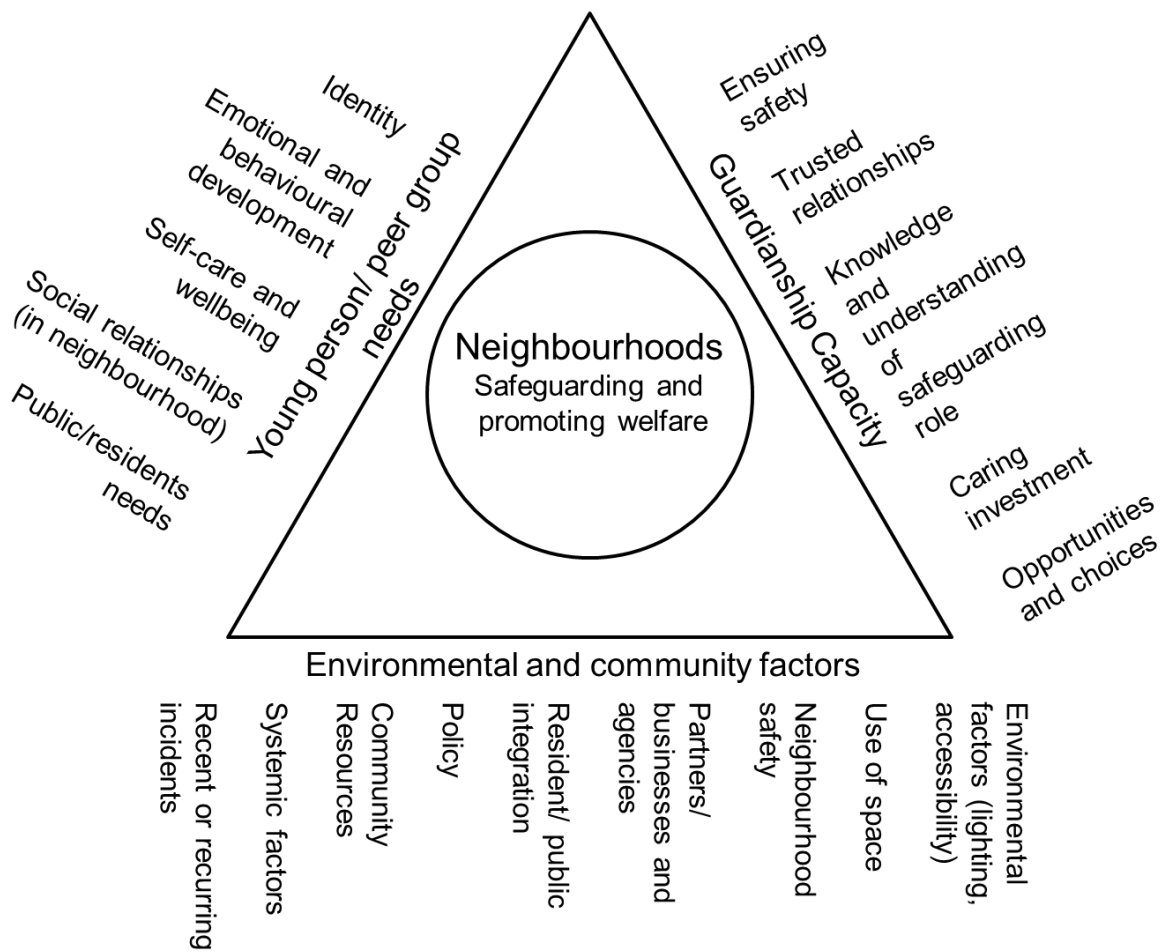|		
	Resources	**What resources are available to staff and parents to support students?** • Is training available? • What resources and tools do school staff use?
	Thresholds	**Are there clear thresholds for responding do harm?** • Are staff aware of thresholds for responding to harmful sexual behaviours? • Are schools aware of thresholds used locally by children's social care?

Neighbourhood

Figure three: Neighbourhood assessment triangle (Lloyd, Owens and Firmin, 2019)

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Neighbourhood Assessment

Young person/peer group Needs	Identity	**How they view themselves** • How does the peer group/young person see themselves?
	Emotional and behavioural development	**The moods and emotional regulation of the group/young person** • If focused on a particular peer group how does the group respond to different issues?
	Self-care and wellbeing	• How does the peer group support each other? • Are young people in this area happy? • Do young people in this area support each other?
	Social relationships	**What are the young person/peer groups relationships within the community?** • How do others [teachers/other groups/parents/shop keepers] see the group/young person? • What are the links and relationships between young people in the neighbourhood (peer mapping)?
	Public/resident's needs	**What do residents and community members think?** • What issues do local community members care about? • What are the relations like between adults and young people? • What do community think is working well/ what would they like to see change?
Guardianship Capacity	Ensuring safety	**How do guardians (i.e. teachers, caretakers, local businesses, non-teaching staff) ensure safety?** • Who are the guardians? • Are guardians in the local area able to ensure safety for students? • Do guardians and those with responsibility for the context ensure safety?
	Trusted relationships	**Do young people have relationships with adults in the neighbourhood that they trust?** • Do young people trust adults in the neighbourhood? If not why? • What options do young people have to speak about their problems with adults?
	Knowledge and understanding of safeguarding role	• Are guardians aware of their responsibility for safeguarding in this context? • Is there appropriate training for guardians? • How are guardians responding to harm (i.e. online provider reporting monitoring illegal activity; parents reporting to police if missing; professionals making referrals)?

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	Caring investment	• Are there adults in the neighbourhood who care about and are invested in the welfare of young people? • Do young people know who these are and feel able to access them?
	Opportunities and choices	• Are young people are exposed to a range of ideas and opportunities to give them choices about their lives?
Environmental and Family Factors	Environmental factors	**What is the physical design and layout?** • What aspects of the physical landscape/layout might impact safety? • Is the area open with opportunities for supervision, or are there secluded areas (e.g. lack of lighting, overgrown bushes) that may facilitate harm?
	Use of space	**What is the space used for?** • Are there positive activities? • What evidence is there of harm? E.g. alcohol use, selling of drugs, etc.
	Neighbourhood safety	**How safe do adults and young people feel in the neighbourhood (including online)?** • Are there issues that area affecting other young people in the area locally? • What might impact young people and adults feelings of safety?
	Partners, businesses and agencies	**Who operates within the area?** • What provision is there for young people? (e.g. youth provision, detached youth work) • What agencies have involvement in the area – police, licensing, etc. • What businesses operate and what involvement do they have with children and young people?
	Resident/public integration	• Are residents and public views considered? • Do residents have opportunities to become involved and support young people? • Are their opportunities for residents/the public to learn about issues such as online harm, safety, etc.?
	Policy	**What policies are relevant to the neighbourhood area?** • Do local business and agency policies have issues relating to safeguarding children? • Do local agencies include policies relating to safeguarding in neighbourhood contexts?
	Community resources	**What community resources are available?**

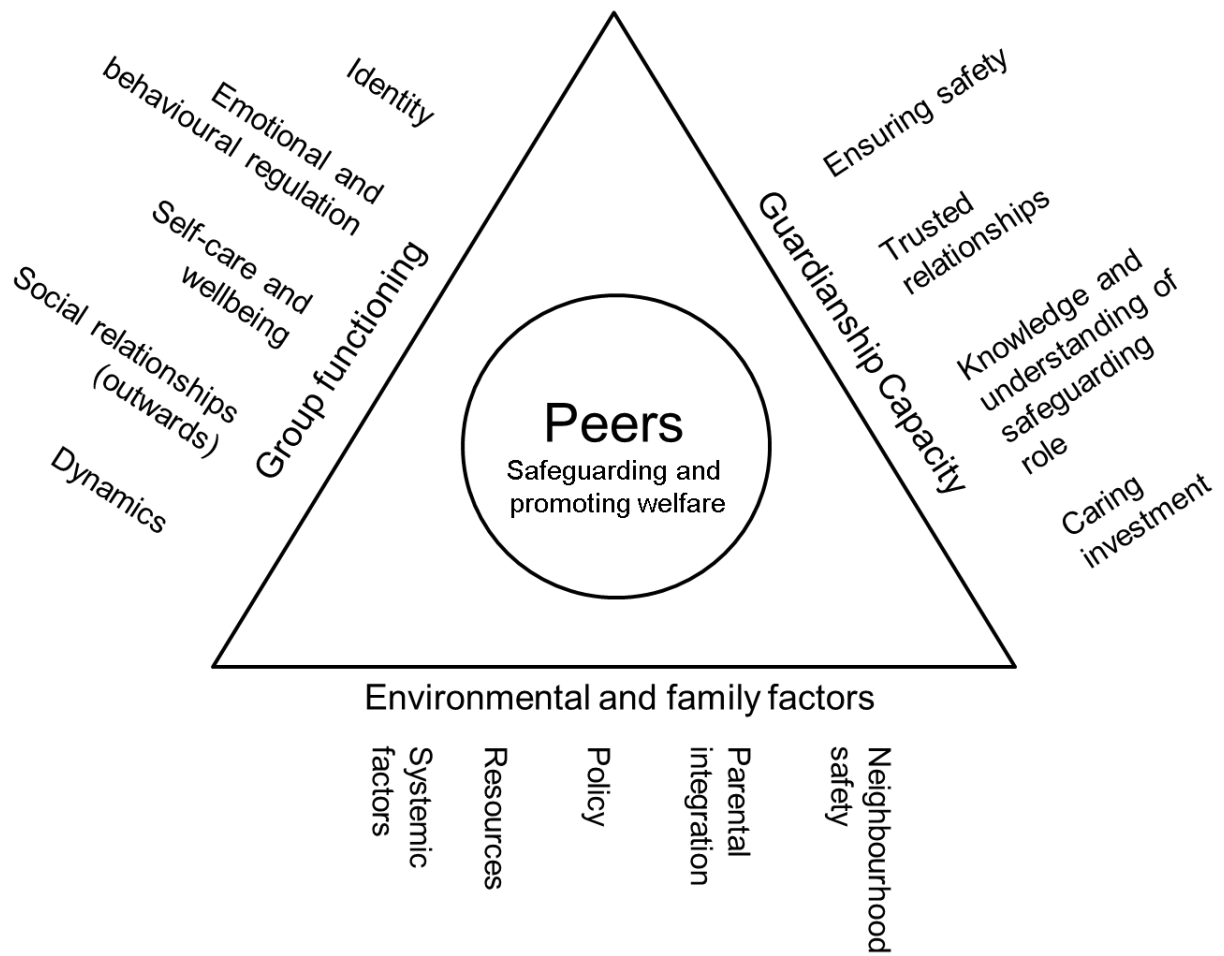|	Systemic factors	**What broader systemic issues may be impacting the area?**
		• Do issues such as racism, poverty, inequality impact young people's access to safe neighbourhoods?
	Recent or recurring incidents	**Have there been any current or recent events?** • Are trends and issues recorded? • What recent issues might affect young people, for example a recent bereavement in the area, or crime.
	Thresholds	**Are there clear thresholds for responding to harm?** • Are those working in the area aware of thresholds for responding to harmful sexual behaviours? • Are agencies aware of thresholds used locally by children's social care?

Peers

Figure three: Peer assessment triangle (Lloyd, Balci, Firmin and Owens, 2019)

Peer assessment (questions for young people)

Group functioning	Identity	**How they view themselves** • Would you say you are a 'group'? Or something else? • How long have you been 'together'? • What things do you have in common? • Tell me about how you became friends and a group? • If your group was an animal, what sort of animal would it be? • What are some of the good things about your group?
	Emotional and behavioural regulation	**The moods and emotional regulation of the group** • What happens when someone is upset in your group? • If you think about the sort of moods a person has (ask for responses)…what kind of moods are in your group – i.e. is it mostly joking and fun, or mostly serious talk, mostly worried talk?
	Self-care and wellbeing	**How the group looks after itself** • How often do you see each other? How much and in what ways are you in contact with each other online? • Do you sometimes need a break from each other? What happens then? • What happens when you fall out? • If you could change something about your group, what would it be? • What would you say you are best at, as a group of friends? What are your best qualities?
	Social relationships (outwards)	**How they are perceived by others** • How do others [teachers/other groups/parents/shop keepers] see you? Behave towards you? • How do they treat you? • Are you part of other groups too? What is the relationship between this one and other groups you're in?
	Dynamics	**The inter-personal dynamics in the group** • Who tends to decide what you do together? • Would you say you have a 'leader'? What other 'roles' do you have? • Who is the most bossy person in your group?
Guardian capacity	Ensuring safety	• Are all the spaces where the group spends time safe? • Do guardians and those with responsibility for the context ensure safety? • If not, do they have the capacity to do so?

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	Caring investment	• Are there trusted adults around the group (other than parents)? • Is there parental oversight of group – i.e. to what extent do they have a relationship with group members, know them, are in contact with their parents, show an interest in the group's activity and well-being, etc.
	Knowledge and understanding of SG role	• Are guardians aware of their responsibility for safeguarding in this context? • How are guardians responding to harm (i.e. online provider reporting monitoring illegal activity; parents reporting to police if missing; professionals making referrals)
Environmental and family factors	Resources	• What is available in the community for this group to access? • What do they access? • What are the barriers and enablers of accessing community resources?
	Neighbourhood safety	• Where does the group spend time? • What times of day are they there? Who else is there? • What is the impact of the location on their safety – consider physical environment (i.e. impact of the park)
	Systemic factors	• What is it like for you growing up in [area name] / [neighbourhood name]? What is the group's experience of discrimination? i.e. impact of harmful gender norms or racism. • Are there any relevant issues in the history of individuals in the group or in the groups' experience which are relevant to the current assessed harm (i.e. intimate partner violence at home, migration, being looked after, etc.)
	Policy framework	• What is the procedure framework (legislation, policy, guidance) relevant to the safeguarding of this group? • Is policy supportive of safety? • Are there gaps?
	Parental integration	• Do the parents of the group know each other? • Are the parents integrated in the contexts the group spend time?