

Solihull All Age Exploitation and Harm Outside the Home Screening Tool Guidance

Some children and adults experience [harm and exploitation outside the home](#). This can also be referred to as 'extra-familial harm' as it occurs outside of the family home and can occur in a range of extra-familial contexts, including school and other educational, employment or training settings, peer groups, or within community/public spaces, and/or online. Children and adults may experience this type of harm from other children and/or from adults. People of all ages can experience harm outside of the home. This guidance document has been created to assist you to complete [the online exploitation and harm outside of the home screening tool](#).

Starting the form

1. Character Restrictions Avoid using /&><? as these can prevent submission.
2. Mandatory Sections: All sections of the form must be filled out.
3. Reference and PIN: Set a unique reference and a memorable PIN for future access.
4. Saving Information: Press the save button to keep your entries. Any unsaved information will only remain for up to one hour.
5. Returning to the Form: Use your PIN to access saved information later.

Child/Young Person and/or Adult information

It's crucial to approach sensitive information with care, especially regarding topics like sexuality and gender identity. Here are some important considerations:

Sensitivity to Disclosure: Recognize that individuals may face risks when disclosing sensitive information, especially if they lack a safe environment.

Vulnerability Factors: Certain characteristics, such as being in care or having disabilities, can increase vulnerability to harm or exploitation.

Cultural Awareness: Professionals should be mindful of cultural stereotypes that might prevent individuals from Global Majority Communities from disclosing experiences of abuse or seeking help.

Intersectionality: Understanding the intersection of various identities and experiences is essential for grasping a person's lived experience. This involves considering how different aspects of identity may interact and affect a person's situation.

Supportive Environment: Creating a safe and supportive atmosphere is key when discussing sensitive topics. This encourages honest communication and helps individuals feel secure in sharing their experiences.

Consent

- Always speak to the individual and explain where their information will be shared and why (e.g., with the exploitation and missing team or social care).
- Ideally, obtain the individual's consent before making any referral or sharing information.
- If there are safeguarding concerns or a legal duty to share information, you may need to make a referral without consent. Discuss this with your manager.
- If the individual cannot consent due to lack of capacity, make a best interest decision regarding the referral.
- Always consider the use of advocacy.
- If the person has an active Lasting Power of Attorney for health and welfare, their Attorney must be consulted. This should be confirmed with the Office of Public Guardian.

Further information is available in the [All Age Exploitation Procedures](#).

Guardian

The voice of parents/carers

- Parents/carers are often the first to notice something is wrong but may not recognise signs of exploitation or harm outside the home.
- Professionals must carefully explore the situation with parents/carers (resources are available [here](#)).
- For screening, it is important to always gather the views and parents/carers.

- You MUST complete this section of the tool for children and young people under 18.
- For adults, this section can be skipped if consent to involve family/carers is not given.
- Professionals should be aware that a calculated strategy of grooming, intimidation and coercion by the perpetrators can strip parents/ carers of their ability to fulfil their parental/ caring responsibility.
- [The Relational Safeguarding Model](#) provides information on the best practice in working with families affected by exploitation.

Other trusted person

If possible, identify a close relative, friend, or professional who is not involved in the exploitation or harm, and who can provide support for the person.

Other professionals

It is important to provide details of any known professionals who have links with the person; if a trusted person has not yet been identified it may be possible one of these professionals could develop that role, following the [Barnardo's Four A's approach](#)

Education

For anyone under 16, ensure you know where and how they are receiving their education, and if there have been any disruptions. This section must be completed for all children, as school exclusion can increase the risk of exploitation. If no information is available for an adult, you may skip this section, but it is still required for children.

Health

People experiencing exploitation or harm outside the home may still access healthcare, even if they have disconnected from other support systems. It's important to ask questions and be aware of any health services they might use. While there is no "typical" victim, certain factors such as substance misuse, disability, mental health issues, or self-harm can indicate vulnerability. If you have no information, you may skip this section, but professional curiosity should prompt you to have conversations and ask questions before deciding not to complete it.

Concerns

When completing the screening tool, remember to:

- Keep an open mind about the type of exploitation or harm the person may be experiencing—it could be more than one type.
- The person may be exploited or harmed even if the activity seems consensual.
- Often, victims don't recognize themselves as being harmed or groomed.
- Exploitation or harm can happen without physical contact, such as through technology, online networks, or gaming sites.

Capturing the Voice of the Child/ Young Person/ Adult

- Be mindful of the language you use with children, young people, and adults. Refer to the [language matters guidance](#) for help.
- Have a dialogue about your concerns with the individual, and where appropriate, their family or carers. This [website](#) provides resources that can be used for children, young people and adults.
- Actively involve the person throughout the process, asking for their input and making sure they feel comfortable to share honest responses.
- Work to build a trusting relationship to make them feel at ease and encourage open communication.
- Use questions that match the individual's ability to communicate. Ask open-ended questions to get detailed information about the situation, including "what," "where," "when," and "who."
- Do not ask leading, suggestive, or yes/no questions. Avoid using emotive words, changing the person's words, or giving opinions before asking questions.
- Document the information shared, clearly separating facts from opinions or hearsay. Pay attention to what is not shared, as this may be important too.
- If you have cause to record any disclosures or further information provided by the child/ young person/ adult, it is important that you also consider recording: the circumstances of the disclosure and what

prompted it, the exact words used by you and the exact words used by the child/ young person/ adult. This is in order to prevent misinterpretation.

The importance of understanding Grooming, Coercion & Control

Grooming is when someone builds a relationship with an individual by slowly gaining their trust and learning personal details. The abuser uses this information to create a deeper emotional connection, making the person feel like the abuser is the only one who understands them. This isolates the individual from their family and support network.

What starts as kindness can quickly turn into threats or intimidation, used to control the person. Abusers are skilled at manipulating their victims and may even control what the person tells professionals. The mix of threats and small gestures of kindness can create a "trauma bond," where the individual feels emotionally tied to the abuser and believes they can't escape. They may even defend the abuser's actions and show hostility towards those offering help.

It's important for professionals to understand that this behavior is a response to trauma, not personal, and to approach the situation with care and a trauma-informed mindset.

Vulnerabilities and protective factors

Abuse happens because someone chooses to take advantage of a person's vulnerability, not because the person is vulnerable. It also occurs when there aren't enough protective systems in place to prevent it. Someone willing to exploit vulnerability, lack of protection, and wider social influences create conditions where abuse can happen. To prevent abuse, we need to focus on reducing these opportunities for harm. Protection is more likely when more people understand exploitation, recognise the trauma it causes, and know how to respond. Support should be available for the individual and their family, and positive social connections should be in place to help protect them.

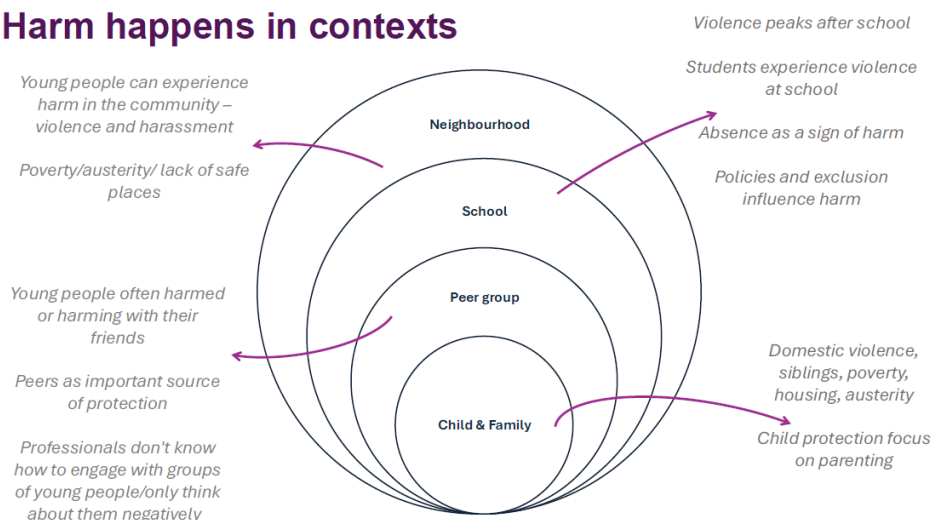
Understanding how a Contextual Safeguarding response can help when exploitation & harm outside of the home occurs

Contextual Safeguarding is about understanding and responding to harm that happens outside of the home, in places like schools, workplaces, peer groups, neighborhoods, and online. It acknowledges that parents and carers have little control over these outside influences, which can lead to abuse and harm, affecting the relationship between the individual and their family.

To keep people safe, practitioners need to gather information about the individual's social circles, education, and online activities. This helps identify where harm might be happening and whether others involved in these spaces need to be engaged in assessments and interventions.

Contextual Safeguarding broadens the focus of traditional safeguarding to recognize that people can be vulnerable to abuse in many different social settings.

Harm happens in contexts



It's important that any details about context that may be linked to the exploitation or harm outside of the home concerns are included in the screening tool.

Peers

Having friends and being part of a group helps people feel valued and connected. Friendships teach important social and emotional skills, like understanding others' feelings. Healthy peer relationships also influence how someone behaves, such as how they dress, speak, and form other relationships.

It's important for professionals to recognize and support healthy peer groups. However, peer relationships can also lead to harmful behaviours, like alcohol or drug use, crime, or abuse. Sometimes, a person's peer group can be both a source of harm and support.

When using the screening tool, include information about the individual's peer relationships, both the risks and the positive aspects. This includes details like their friends' names, group characteristics (e.g., shared interests, clothing, or community involvement), and any dynamics in the group. If you have no information about the person's peers, you can skip this section, but try to gather this information first by asking questions.

Technology and social media

- Technology is an essential part of daily life with many benefits.
- The online world can conceal abusive behaviours that would be obvious in face-to-face interactions. Abusers can create fake online personas that hide their true intentions.
- Banning or limiting access to technology can harm a person's well-being, as the online world is now deeply embedded in daily life and restricting access hampers the individual's ability to engage with society and may transfer risks to others whose devices they may use.
- Professionals should confidently explore how the individual (child, young person, adult) interacts online and include as much information as possible in the screening tool.
- The term "friend" can mislead professionals into assuming a healthy relationship, without consideration of power imbalances or exploitation.
- Professionals should consider if the term "friend" is concealing an unhealthy relationship due to factors like age differences, mental health, additional needs, or past abuse.
- Record the person's own words carefully: instead of saying "a friend they met online," say "the person says they are friends with someone they met online."
- If no information is available, this section can be skipped, but professionals should always ask questions and explore further before deciding not to complete it.

Missing

The term missing is one that children/ young people/ adults will not necessarily relate to, as they will often state they knew exactly where they were, it is one that is used in professionals' guidance to relate to someone who has been reported to the police by their family/ carers when they have been unable to locate their loved ones.

Being missing can increase vulnerability and risk. Understanding push and pull factors and any patterns related to a missing occurrence can help professionals identify harm someone may be experiencing. Any missing occurrence should not be viewed in isolation and should always be treated as a clear indicator that something is not right in the person's life. All absence or missing occurrences should warrant professional attention to help safeguard.

Locations

Everyone navigates a variety of locations in life; where people live, where people go to their education or workplace, where people socialise. There are rules and laws that help to navigate these; for example, we all know that in the UK a car is driven on the left-hand side of the road, and that pavements are there for pedestrians. However, there will be a lot more unwritten rules that people are negotiating in their own journeys through locations. It is therefore important to try and gain an insight into the locations from the person's perspective and include as much information as possible about the locations they navigate. The screening tool asks you to identify the specific Wards where there may be concerns, there are [Ward profiles](#) available that provide a map of the area; it may be possible for you to identify more specific areas with the person by using this map for [safety mapping](#).

There is also the option to provide information on locations outside of Solihull; you may also be able to access maps of those areas online to help the person explain their concerns about the locations.

Premises

Within any location the person may identify premises or specific localities where they feel safe or where there are concerns about harm. Providing as much information as possible about these specific places can help inform assessments, plans, and interventions.

Perpetrator

As people may not always recognise they are being exploited or experiencing harm outside of the home, it is not always easy to identify who may be perpetrating harm. It is important that the smallest bits of information are gathered to help build a picture. This may be a nickname, a description of someone seen from a distance, a car registration, someone's address. These things should be included in the tool as well as a [FIB](#) form (more information about this form can be found [here](#)). It is not unusual for those being exploited and harmed outside of the home to 'recruit' others into the activity; sometimes they will not consciously know this is what is happening and at other times they may have done so to lessen the demand on themselves. This does mean that professionals need to be conscious that those who may appear to be causing harm to others, if children, should always receive a safeguarding response, and this may need to be considered for adults with care and support needs too.

There is an option to skip this section, but this should only be chosen when you have no information linked to perpetrators at all.

Professional Analysis

In this section you need to bring the information together and outline what harm you think is happening, include anything you know that is making someone feel scared threatened or frightened; This may be dynamics of relationships outside the home, places they have to navigate or things that have happened online; what impacts have you seen? Is there an accumulative impact from other things that have happened in the past? What do you think could happen if there is no change to what is happening now?

Also identify any things that are helpful; a positive peer relationship, a safe locality, someone known for providing safety, this could be parents, carers other family members, a reliable website, someone who can be trusted in the community. It's also important to identify what people enjoy doing, their hobbies, interests, hopes and ambitions, and anything identified that has worked well before when difficulties arise.

Submitting & printing a copy of the form

- Once you have completed the form and pressed the final submission, you will receive an email with a link to go back to your form. This enables you to update it, but you can also print a version of the form for your records.
- Press the link and view your form; at the top of the page in the right-hand corner you will see 3 dots ... click on this and scroll down to the print option and select print as a PDF.
- At this stage your form has been submitted to the exploitation team, you can contact them via email cseteam@solihull.gov.uk to arrange to discuss the form.
- You will also need to make a separate safeguarding referral. Tools will only be discussed at exploitation hub with an associated referral
- **For under 18's [threshold guidance](#)** may assist you. If you wish to make a referral to Children's Services call 0121 788 4300 and attach a copy of the screening tool when you complete a [referral](#)
- **For over 18's** call 0121 704 8007 and email a copy of the form to ccadults@solihull.gov.uk

National Referral Mechanism

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support. If you think you have encountered an individual who has been a victim of modern slavery or trafficking in England and Wales, you should ensure that an NRM referral is completed by a first responder or for adults the duty to notify if consent is not given – for more information see [All Age Exploitation Procedures](#).