

**Mid Sussex District Council Peer Group Conference**

**Terms of Reference**

**1 Contextual Safeguarding**

1.1 Whilst children’s safeguarding has traditionally focused on harm and neglect occurring within in the home, contextual safeguarding recognises that adolescents spend more time in a variety of contexts outside the influence of families and can potentially become exposed to additional risk of harm. This is known as extra familial risk/harm.

1.2 Extra familial risks can include youth violence, gangs, involvement in crime, county lines drug dealing, child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation. Contextual safeguarding recognises that children and young people may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from:

* Their peer groups
* The wider community
* Online
* Adults

**2 Purpose of the PGC**

2.1 The Mid Sussex Peer Group Conference (PGC) has been set up to ensure that statutory and voluntary sector partners work together collaboratively where there are concerns around particular groups of young people or locations where young people are known to congregate and to explore any risks and take appropriate safeguarding measures.

**3 Objectives**

* For partners to nominate concerns regarding groups of young people or locations and spaces coming to notice in which they are spending time.
* To share information regarding young people who may be causing anti-social behaviour, participating in drug or alcohol consumption and/or activity or be at risk of experiencing or perpetuating harm.
* To understand the risks to young people including peer group related risks and place-based risks.
* To work together to minimise any risk of harm that young people may be exposed to.
* To tackle any unlawful/inappropriate activity using all tools and powers available.

**4 Functionality and support**

4.1 The governance, management and operational delivery of the PGC will be overseen by the Community Safety team at MSDC.

4.2 The Mid Sussex PGC will meet every two months although consideration will be given to increase the frequency if there are a high number of referrals.

4.3 The meetings will be virtual via Teams and will be administrated by MSDC’s Community Safety team.

4.4 Partners will be invited to submit any nominations of concern in advance of the meeting via a template document.

**5 Membership**

5.1 This group will be overseen by Mid Sussex District Council’s Community Safety team, but all partners have equal ownership of the group.

5.2 The group will be chaired by Mid Sussex District Council’s Community Safety and Safeguarding Manager.

5.3 The group consists of professionals from a range of agencies. These include:

* Mid Sussex District Council
* Sussex Police
* Youth Justice Service
* WSCC Early Help
* WSCC Social Care (MASH/Social Workers)
* WSCC MEOG
* British Transport Police
* Local schools and colleges within Mid Sussex
* Local youth-based charities
* Town and Parish Councils
* Clarion and other RSLs
* NHS and health services

**6 Information Sharing**

6.1 The legal basis for sharing information during this meeting is under Section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, ‘where disclosure is necessary or expedient for the purposes of the Act (reduction and prevention of crime and disorder)’ in an attempt to safeguard and prevent any further crime or ASB.

6.2 The legal frameworks allow for information sharing in relation to children, young people and adults:

* Children Act (1989)
* Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
* Care Act (2014)
* Human Rights Act (1998)
* General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (2018)

6.3 In addition to the above, all attendees at the PGC are required to sign and agree to adhere to the Confidentiality Agreement. Information discussed by the agency representative within this meeting is strictly confidential and must not be disclosed to third parties who have not signed up to this protocol without the agreement of the partners of the meeting. All agencies should ensure that the minutes are retained in a confidential and appropriately restricted manner.

**7 ToR Review**

These terms of reference will be reviewed on an annual basis. Last updated April 2021.