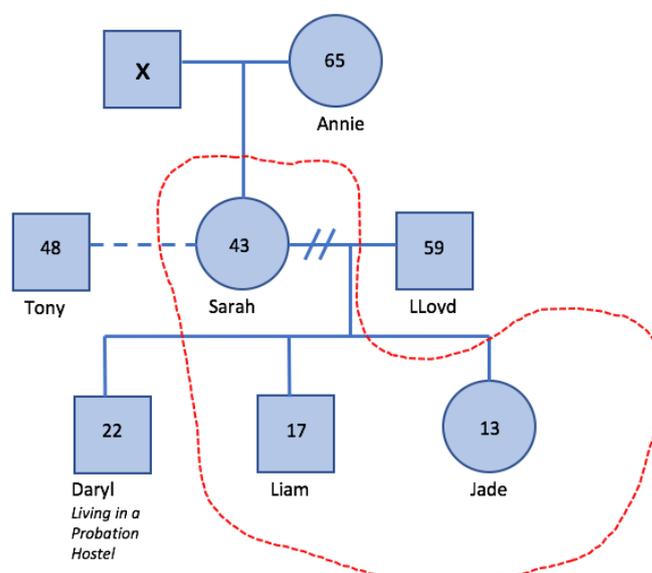


Signs of Safety and Contextual Safeguarding — an example

Liam: extra-familial harm



Worker's role

Esther is a social worker in the City Assessment team and has been working with Liam and his family for 3 weeks. The family are Black British.

Information presented by worker in a Group Supervision (4 minute overview)

Liam is 17 and nearly 2 months ago he was stabbed by some young people outside his house. They came out of nowhere and he didn't know the boys who hurt him. He was seriously injured and spent 2 weeks in hospital. A few months before, he was with his friend (Kyle) when they were attacked by people in a car. Kyle was run over but Liam managed to get away and was not hurt himself.

Liam's brother, Daryl was involved with a local gang when he was younger and there was an incident where a young person was stabbed. He was part of the group involved in this assault and went to prison. Daryl was released about 6 months ago and is now on probation. He lives locally in a hostel but visits the family home.

Mum and Dad separated 10 years ago, but when they were together there were regular reports of domestic violence. There was a significant incident where Liam saw Dad hit Mum: he punched her in the stomach and tried to strangle her. Both Daryl and Liam were there when this happened and they were both affected by what they'd witnessed. None of the family have had any contact with Dad since he left.

When he was younger, Liam had lots of problems in school. He was eventually excluded and went to a Pupil Referral Unit. While he was there he was diagnosed with ADHD.

We don't know if the recent stabbing or the car incident was random, or linked to his brother or maybe related to what's happening within his current peer group. We don't think he's directly involved with drugs or criminal exploitation but some of his friends have been linked to things in the past.

Since the stabbing, the police have put an alert on the house and there's a camera connected to the doorbell. Mum's partner is supportive. They don't live together but he has been around and in Liam's life since he was little and they have a good relationship. Liam was frightened by the stabbing, but says he knows how to keep himself safe; he doesn't go to any unsafe areas, he doesn't go out alone and when he's with friends, they go out in the car or on their mopeds.

Police and Housing have advised Mum that she shouldn't allow Daryl to visit the home but she is worried about how he is managing on his own and wants to support him. They have also offered to relocate the family to a different town to keep them safe but neither Mum or the children want to go. The family have a secure tenancy and have lived in the same area for 20 years; they know everyone. Their neighbours and the local church are also supportive.

As far as we know, his sister, Jade is doing OK. She has friends and is doing well in school. Mum doesn't let her go out on her own and is protective.

Draft Danger Statement

Esther, social worker from City Council knows that Liam is nearly 18 years old and wants to be treated like an adult without the police and social workers telling him what to do or how to live his life.

Esther, Paul from the police, Emma from Housing, and Mum Sarah are worried that Liam was seriously injured when he was stabbed by 2 young men outside his house and had to spend 2 weeks in hospital. A few months before that, he was nearly hit by a car that was deliberately driven at Liam and his friend, Kyle. Kyle was so badly injured that he nearly died.

Esther, Paul, Emma and Sarah are worried that Liam may be being deliberately targeted by people who want to hurt him. They are worried that if nothing changes, the people who attacked Liam, or other people, could try to hurt him again. Liam could be injured perhaps more seriously than before and could even be killed. This would mean he may not have the opportunity to live a full and interesting life or to be able to do everyday things like other young people of his age.

Draft Safety Goal

Esther, Paul and Emma want Liam and his family to be safe and for Liam to be able to live a full, interesting and exciting life, to be able to go to college next year as planned, to go out with his friends, to have fun and spend time with family and the other important people in his life who love and care for him, even though there may be people who could want to hurt him or other people around him.

For Esther, Paul and Emma to no longer have a worry, we would like to see Liam and the important people in his life like Daryl, Sarah, Tony and other family and friends, to come together with them, and to build a safety network around Liam and his family. We would like this network group to come up with an everyday plan that will show everyone how Liam and his family will always be safe and who will do what to support Liam, both at home and when he is goes out, whether he is with friends, family or on his own.

Esther, Paul and Emma would like Liam and his family to think about who he and they trust the most and who are the best people who can help them to develop this safety plan.

Draft Safety Scale

On a scale of 0–10 where 10 is whatever else may be happening around him, there is a tried and tested safety plan in place so that everyone knows who will do what, every day, to keep Liam and his family safe whilst also enabling him to live his life and maintain the relationships that are most important to him, and 0 is no-one knows what to do or how to help Liam in this situation and it's only a matter of time before he will be hurt again or even killed.

Possible questions to explore as part of the assessment and planning process (mapping)

Considering the views and experiences of all involved and the different contexts for safeguarding in this situation:

What's working well?

Existing Strengths

Young Person:

- What would Liam say are the best things about his life right now?
- Who are the people he enjoys spending time with? What does he like most about them?
- What would he say he does to relax, have fun and feel good about his life?
- Who are the people Liam talks to if he has a worry about things at home/in his family/outside home? What is it about them that means he feels safe enough to confide in them and/or that he can trust them? What are the best ways they have helped or supported him?
- What would Liam say are the best ways he has been able to keep in touch with his friends and other important people during lockdowns?

Family/home:

- What would Liam say he likes most about his family — Mum, Dad, Tony, Daryl?
- What would (Mum, Tony, Jade...) say they like most about Liam? What are his best qualities? What do they like most about the times they spend together as a family?
- What would (Mum, Tony, Daryl...) say are the best ways that Liam manages any worries or difficult feelings?
- Who would Mum say are the people who have been supportive of her and her family over the last few years?
- When Liam was stabbed, who were the people who were most helpful? What did they do? What difference did it make?

Peer group:

- Who would Liam say are his closest friends? How do they spend their time together?

- Who would Liam say are the people he feels most safe to be with when he goes out? What is it about them, that helps him to feel safer?
- What would Liam say the best ways he's been able to keep in touch with his friends during lockdown?
- What would (Mum, Tony, Jade, Daryl...) say they like most about Liam's friends? In what way would they say his relationships with those people are good for Liam?
- What are the best ways Liam that manages his relationships and contact with others when he's online?

School/college:

- What would Liam say he enjoys most about school/college?
- Who would (Liam, Mum, Tony...) say have the most important person for Liam in school/college? What have been the best ways they've kept in touch with him whilst he's been out of full-time education?
- What have been the best ways that anyone has supported Liam to stick with his education? And to get a place at college?
- What are the best ways Liam would say he's managed in school since he was diagnosed with ADHD? Who or what has helped him most with this?
- What helps Liam to feel safe in school/college?

Neighbourhood:

- Where are the places that Liam would say he feels most safe? What is about those places that mean he feels safe there? What helps him to feel safe?
- What would (Liam, Mum, Tony, Jade...) say have been the best ways that the workers involved (Police, Housing etc) have helped them deal with their worries? What did they do? How was this helpful? What difference did it make?
- What would (Liam, Jade, Mum Sarah...) say are the best things about living in this house/area? Given everything that's happened, what helps them to feel safe here right now?
- What would Paul (Police) and Emma (Housing) say would be happening differently if Liam and his family were relocated that would mean Liam and his family would be safer than remaining in their current home?

Existing Safety

Young Person:

- Liam — you've said you feel safer outside when you're in a car or on your moped. What difference does this make? How does this help you to feel safe? What other things have you done to help keep yourself safe when you go out? What or who has helped you most to stay safe?
- You said you can keep yourself safe — what are all the other ways you and your friends keep yourselves safe?
- What have you learned to do differently to make yourself safer since you nearly got run over?
- Who have you called when you were out as you felt unsafe and they helped you feel safe? Talk me through how did they help you feel safe?

- What about you Liam, what strategy have you used in the past that managed to help you avoid trouble as things were kicking off, even getting out of hand, how often have you used this strategy?
- What have you learned about how to keep yourself safe from getting attacked and how have you put this learning into practice?

Family/Home

- Liam — give me an example of a time you were in trouble and a family member stepped in and got you away from that trouble? How did they manage to do that?
- When Daryl has visited the family home, what has he or anyone else done to make sure that Liam, Jade and Sarah are safe from anyone who might want to hurt him or his family?
- What would Sarah, Tony, Daryl (and others close to the family) say have been the best things that they, or anyone else, have done to help keep Liam safe since the time when he was nearly run over by the car? And since he came home from hospital after being stabbed? What did they do? What difference has this made — how did this keep Liam safe?
- On a scale from 0 to 10 where 10 is being at home keeps Liam 100% safe from attack and 0 is it's just as dangerous as the street, what number would you give it? Who does what to bring it up to this number?
- Of all the great things that all family members are doing to help keep Liam safe, which are the most important? How come?

Peer Group

- What would (social worker, police, housing worker...) say that Liam, his family, friends or others have done to help make sure that Liam has not been hurt again since he came out of hospital 5 weeks ago?
- Liam — what would your friends say they see you doing to keep yourself safe?
- When you are out with your friends, which ones say or do things which keep you all safe? What do they say? What do they do? What difference does it make?
- Give me an example of the last time you were out and one of your friends noticed trouble was about to kick off and helped you avoid something bad happening to you? Who is your friend? What difference did they make for you?
- Which of your friends would Daryl/Jade/Lloyd/your mum say are best at keeping safe? What would they say they do? How do they know? When have they done these things?
- When you are out with your friends, what are the things you all know to do/not to do — your 'street-smarts' — which lowers your chances of running into danger?
- Out of all your friends, who do you know always has your back? Looks out for you, and helps you avoid getting into arguments big fights when you are out? Tell me the last time this happened?

School/college

- On a scale from 0 to 10 where 10 is school is a place where there's no chance of getting attacked or anyone threatening an attack and 0 is it could easily happen, what number are you? What brings you up to this number?
- What happens in school which keeps you safe from attack or being threatened with it?

- Tell me about a time when things were unsafe in school but something happened, maybe someone did something which made it safe.
- When has someone from school kept you safe in situation where you could have been in danger? What did they do?
- What would your teachers say are the most important things they are doing which keeps you safe?

Neighbourhood

- Where are the safest places to be when you are out with mates? What makes them safer? When do you keep to these places rather than ‘trouble spots’?
- How do you manage to avoid being in unsafe places? Tell me about a time when you could easily have ended up in an iffy place but you didn’t? How did that happen?
- When you are in places which are dodgy, what do you do to stay safe? Tell me about times when you have done stuff like that.
- How do you know when things are starting to become unsafe/feel dodgy — what are the warning signs? What have you — or anyone — done when that’s happened to stay safe?
- What would (Liam, Mum, Tony, Jade...) say have been the best ways that the workers involved (Police, Housing etc) have helped them to stay safe? What did they do? How was this helpful? What difference did it make?
- What would they say anyone else has done to help or support them to keep Liam (and Jade) safe, given what has already happened to Liam? Who has done what? How was that helpful?

What are we worried about?

- What would Liam say are his biggest worries right now?
- What would Sarah, Tony, Daryl say has happened that has led them to be most worried about Liam’s safety? What have they seen or heard? What happened, who did what and how did this impact Liam? How did this affect Jade and/or the family?
- Who else would they say is worried about Liam? What has happened for them to have this worry?
- What are the places that they think are most dangerous for Liam? What has happened there for them to be worried? (*neighbourhood*)
- Who are the people around Liam or their family that they are most worried about? What has happened for them to have a worry? (*neighbourhood/peer group*)
- Some of Liam’s friends are thought to have been exploited and/or involved in drugs, what were they doing, what happened for people to have this worry? What were professionals most worried about? What would Liam say he was most worried about when this was happening? (*peer group*)
- What would Children’s Services, Police, Housing etc. say most worries them now about Liam’s relationship with his brother, Daryl? What do they think could happen to Liam, Jade or his family because he is visiting them at home? What would Sarah, Tony, Daryl say? (*family/home*)
- What would Children’s Services, Police, Housing etc say they are most worried about in the area where Liam and his family are living? Or where Tony/Daryl are living? How might this affect Liam and how he spends his time or his relationships with friends? How might this affect Jade? What would Sarah, Tony, Daryl say? (*neighbourhood*)

Young person (Harm):

- When was the first time anyone had a worry about Liam getting hurt outside the family home? What was happening at that time? How did this impact on Liam?
- What has been the worst incident where Liam got hurt? Who else was involved? Who did what? What was the impact on Liam? And anyone else who was there?
- What has been the most recent incident?
- How have all these things that have happened affected Liam? How do you know?
- How did seeing and hearing their dad, Lloyd, seriously hurting their mum, Sarah, have an impact on Liam and Daryl, both at the time when this happened, but also over the past 10 years as they have been growing up?

Complicating Factors

- What would Sarah, Tony and Daryl say are the things that are happening or have happened in Liam's life, that maybe making things more difficult to deal with right now?
- What else might be making things more difficult or harder to deal with?

What needs to happen?

Young person/family goals

- Liam — imagine a time in the future where you, your family and friends are feeling safe, no-one is getting hurt and you are enjoying your life, what might a typical day look like for you? Who would be around you? What would they be doing?
- What would (Sarah, Tony, Daryl, Jade...) say they would want to see happening for them to feel less worried? And if that was happening, what difference might this make for them/Liam/their family?
- What would (Liam, Sarah, Tony, Daryl...) say they would see social workers and police doing that would mean they could trust them?

Additional tools/resources originally developed by members of the Contextual Safeguarding Network that could be used alongside these questions to support assessment and planning where there are worries about extra-familial harm.

These are available to download from <https://www.csnetwork.org.uk/en/toolkit/assessment>

Safety Mapping Tool — a visual tool for practitioners to explore the areas where young people and groups feel safe or unsafe within their neighbourhood

All Around Me Tool — a visual tool to help practitioners gather information from a young person to build a picture/understanding of the people and places that matter most to that young person in each of the identified contexts

What's Happening Tool — a tool to help practitioners gather information about a parent or carer's understanding of the strengths and vulnerabilities of a young person across each of the identified contexts

Peer Group Mapping — a process to help build a more detailed understanding of the roles and relationships between individual young people and within a peer group and the nature, scale and seriousness of vulnerabilities posed by and to individuals and locations