Developing responses to peer-abuse: *learning from the MSU local site support project*
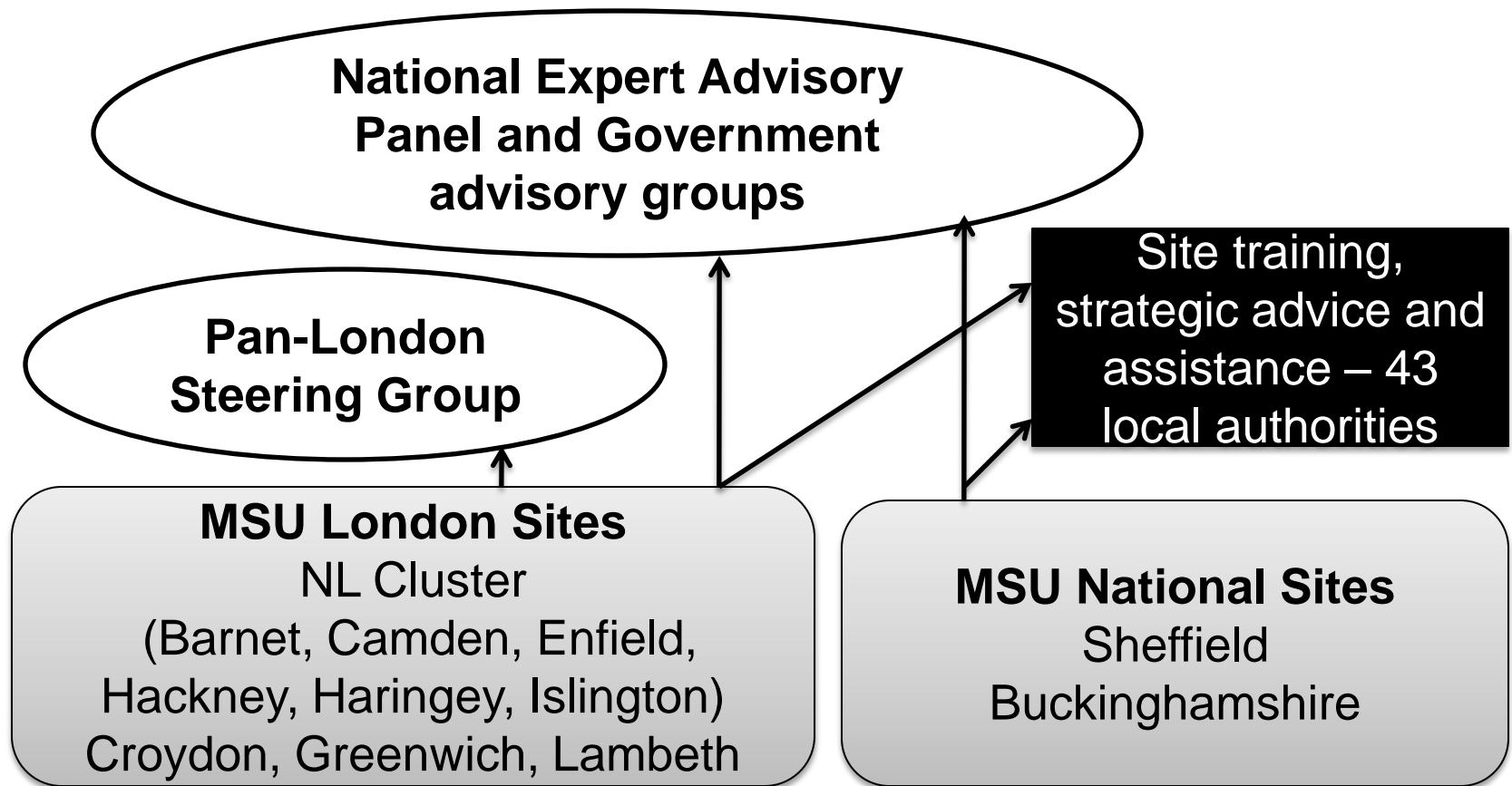
Dr Carlene Firmin MBE, University of Bedfordshire
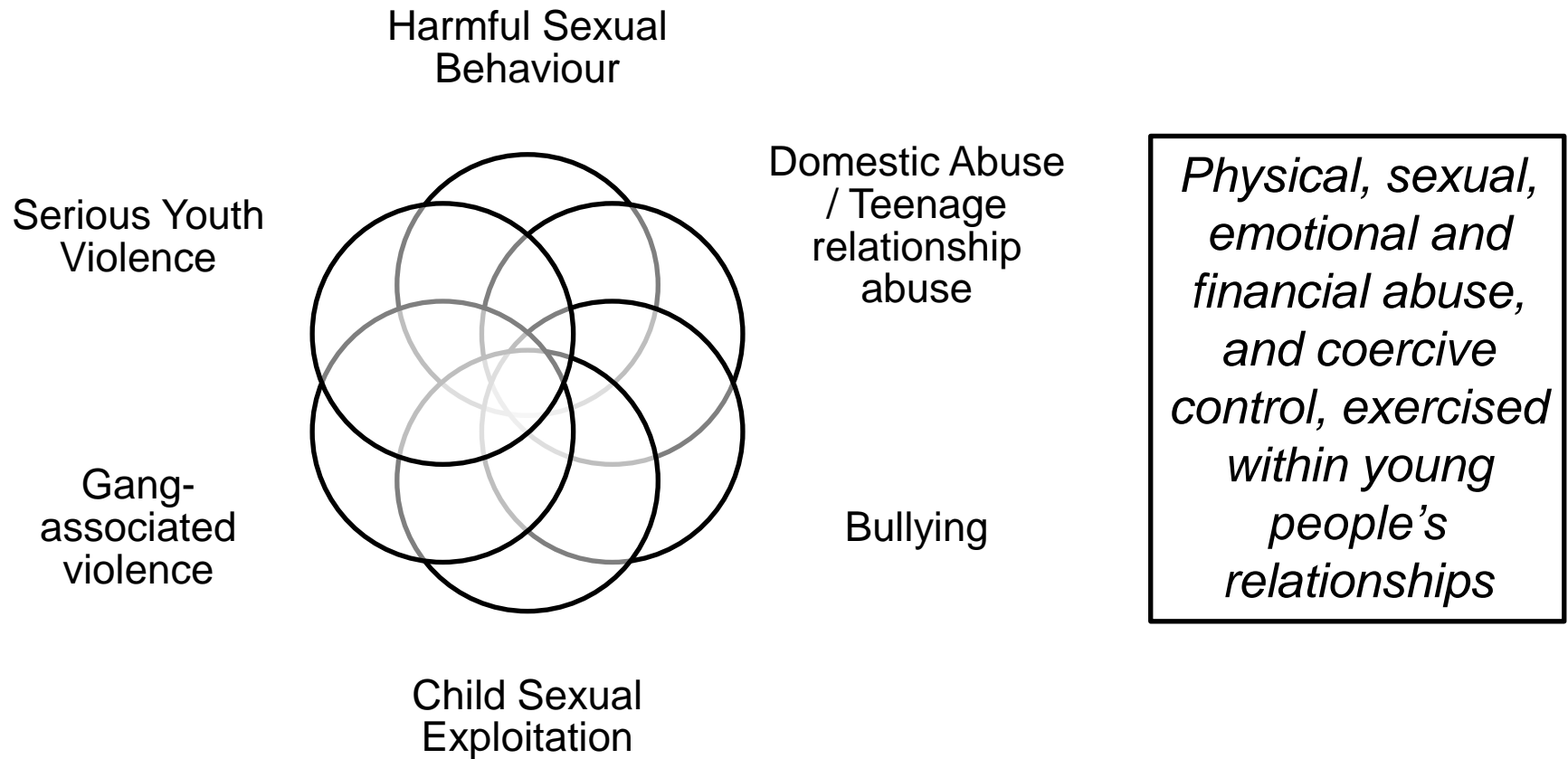Sarah Wright, London Borough of Hackney

MSU Partnership

- Partnership between UoB, Imkaan and Girls against Gangs project

- Funded by Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, Trust for London and Samworth Foundation

- Delivered in-depth support to develop practice in 11 local sites over 2.5 years in addition to internship programme for young people and policy engagement

- Site support comprised two stages:

1) Audit of local practice – 6-9 months
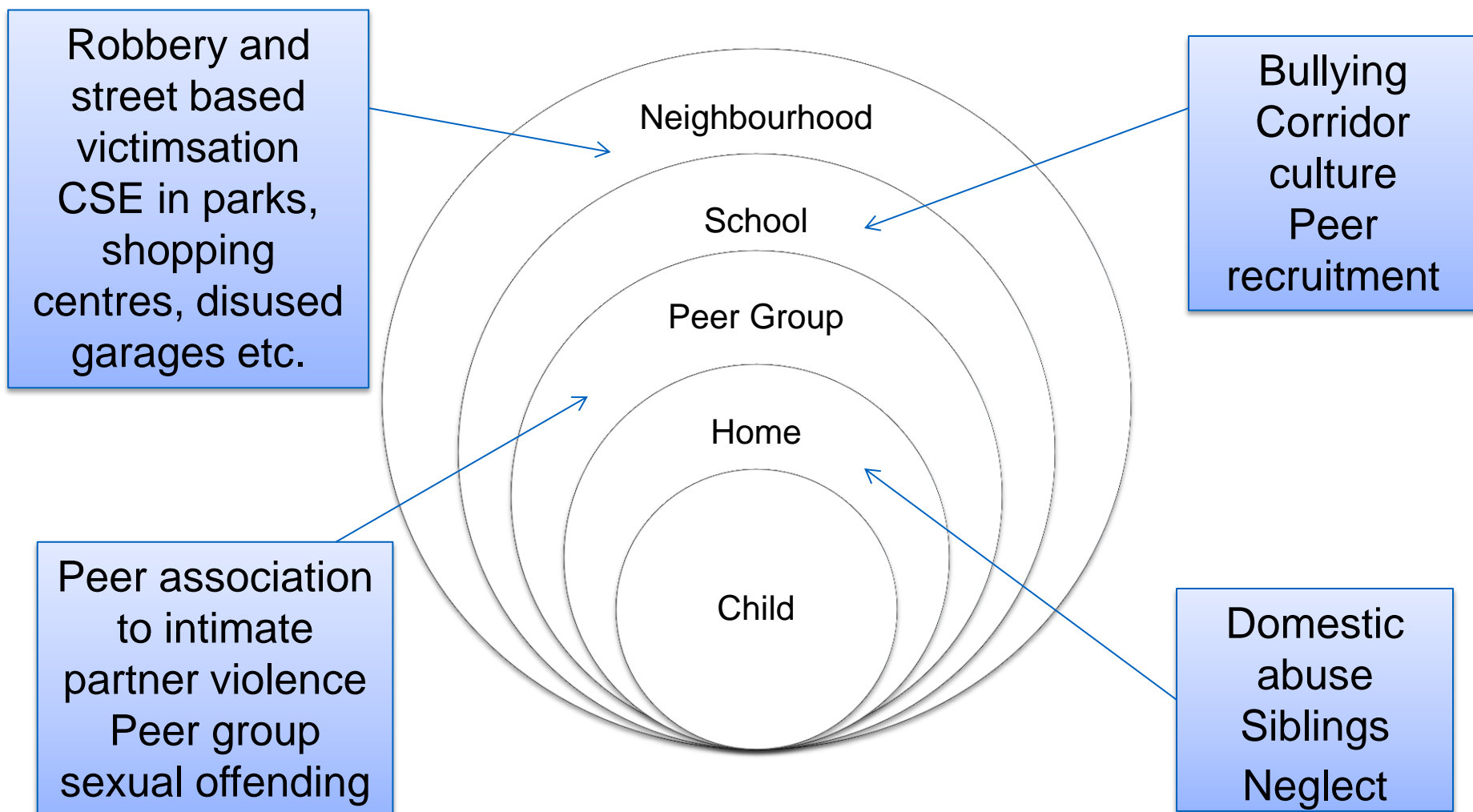
2) Development and delivery of an action plan – 16 months

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Structure of site work

1) Holistic nature of peer-on-peer abuse

Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Serious Youth Violence

Gang-associated violence

Child Sexual Exploitation

Domestic Abuse / Teenage relationship abuse

Bullying

Physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and coercive control, exercised within young people's relationships

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2) Contextual dynamics of peer-on-peer abuse

Robbery and street based victimsation CSE in parks, shopping centres, disused garages etc.

Bullying Corridor culture Peer recruitment

Peer association to intimate partner violence Peer group sexual offending

Domestic abuse Siblings Neglect

Neighbourhood

School

Peer Group

Home

Child

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Learning from across sites

- Majority of responses to peer-on-peer abuse are strategically positioned to engage with individual young people and their families

- There are practical, conceptual and strategic barriers to addressing the contextual dynamics of peer-on-peer abuse

- Within individual sites there are examples of individual services or practitioners who are developing a contextual response to peer-on-peer abuse

- Delivery focused on capturing, scaling-up and amplifying evidence of contextual practice including:

- Developing contextual harmful sexual behaviour meetings
- Working with fair access panels to identify the use of managed moves in response to peer-on-peer abuse
- Developing contextual and holistic problem profiles

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Contextual responses– examples identified during audits

Peer Group Mapping, assessment and intervention

- Social workers and youth offending workers identified links between their individual cases
- Met to map and refined assessment
- Designed complimentary interventions

Protecting vulnerable homes

- Home identified where peer-on-peer abuse occurring
- Lived in by mother with physical and learning disability
- Lighting and CCTV improved
- Engagement with schools officer
- Peer group engaged through youth service and policing
- Home no longer used for abuse

Reclaiming 'vulnerable' contexts

- Data used to identify environments where young people are being groomed i.e. shopping centre
- Specialist workers, social workers and police visit those environments on a regular basis
- Young people expect to see them there and begin to talk to them
- Slowly this becomes a space where exploitation can't occur

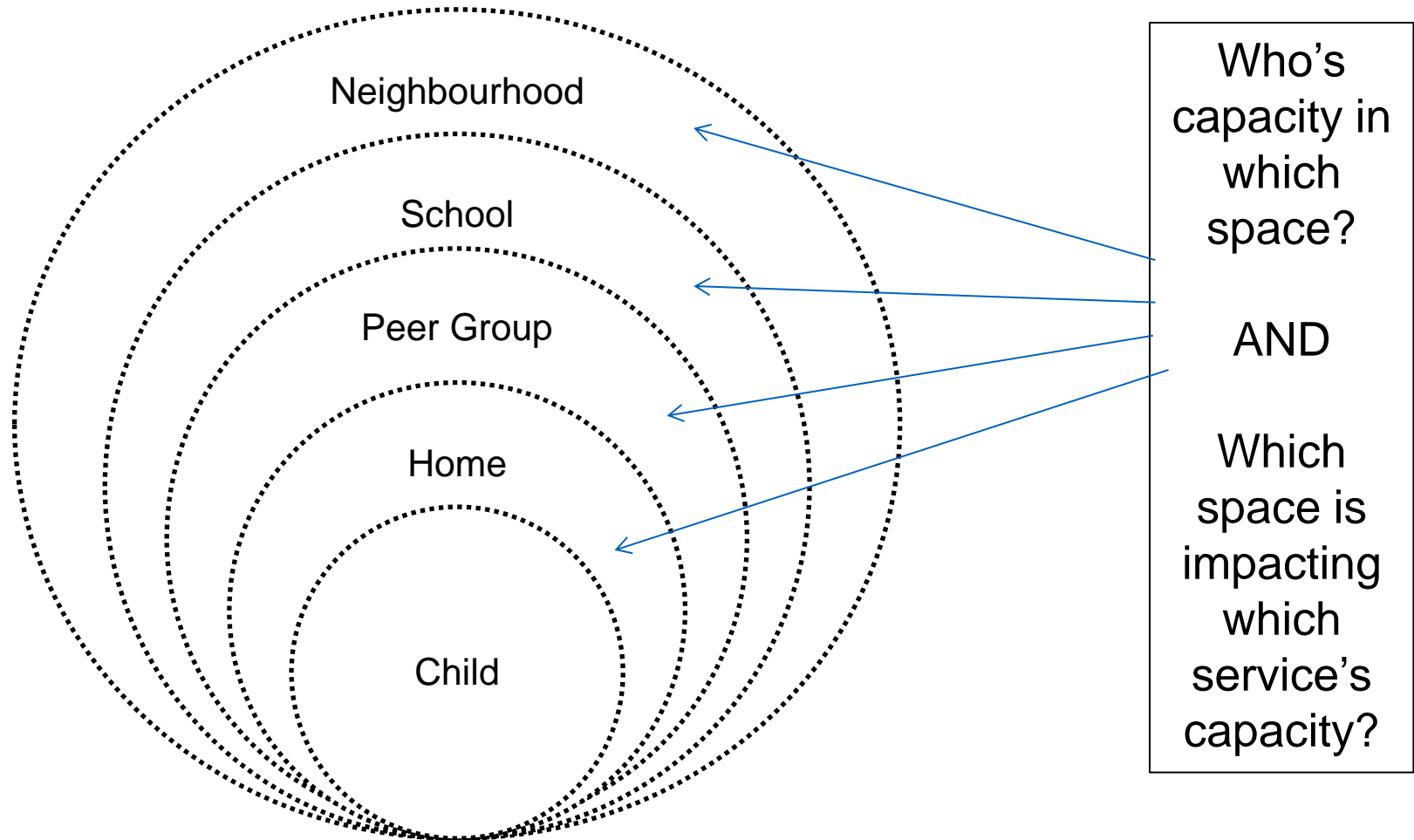# Extending Child Concepts of Child Protection (1)
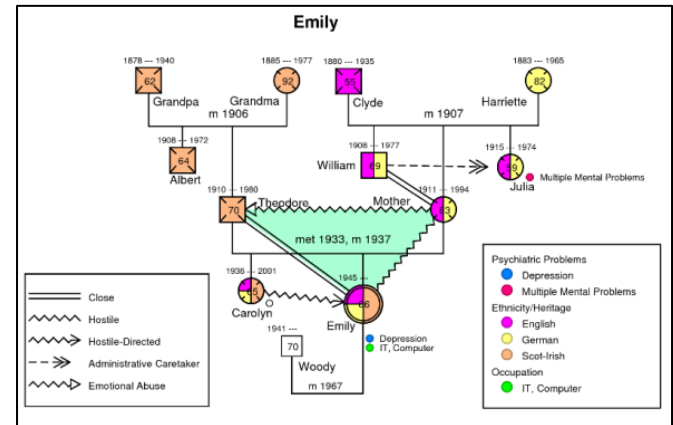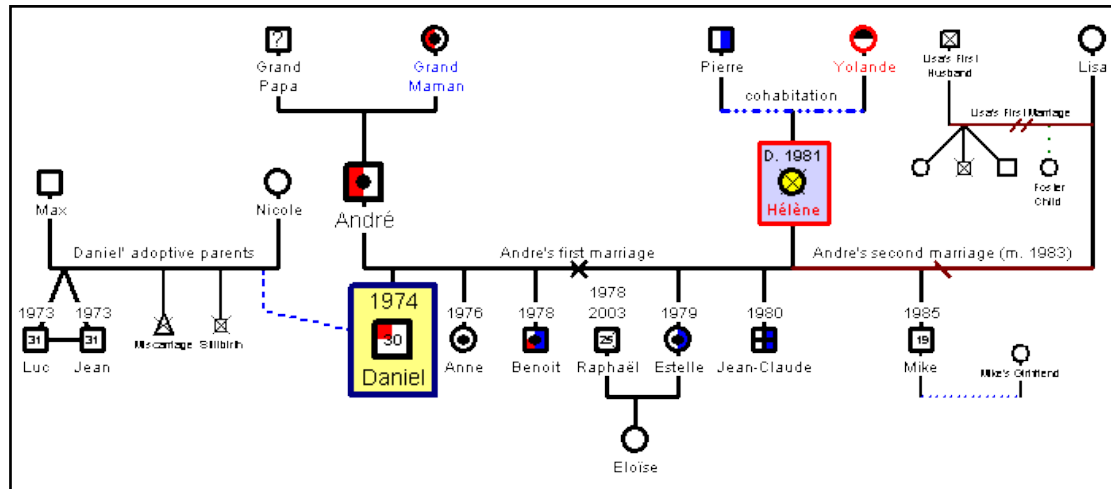
- Harm caused by the parent/carer

OR

- **Capacity of parents to safeguard young people from significant harm**

- Processes in place to respond – S.17 (Child in Need), S.47 (Child Protection)

- Case conferencing and child protection plan

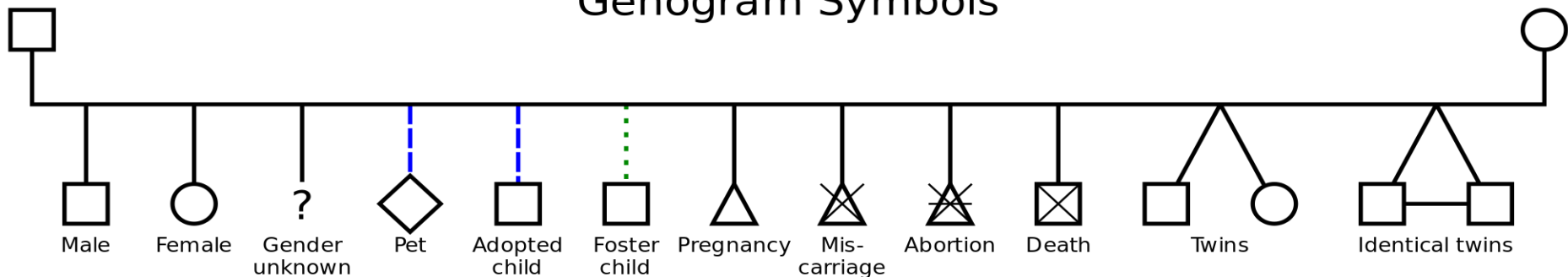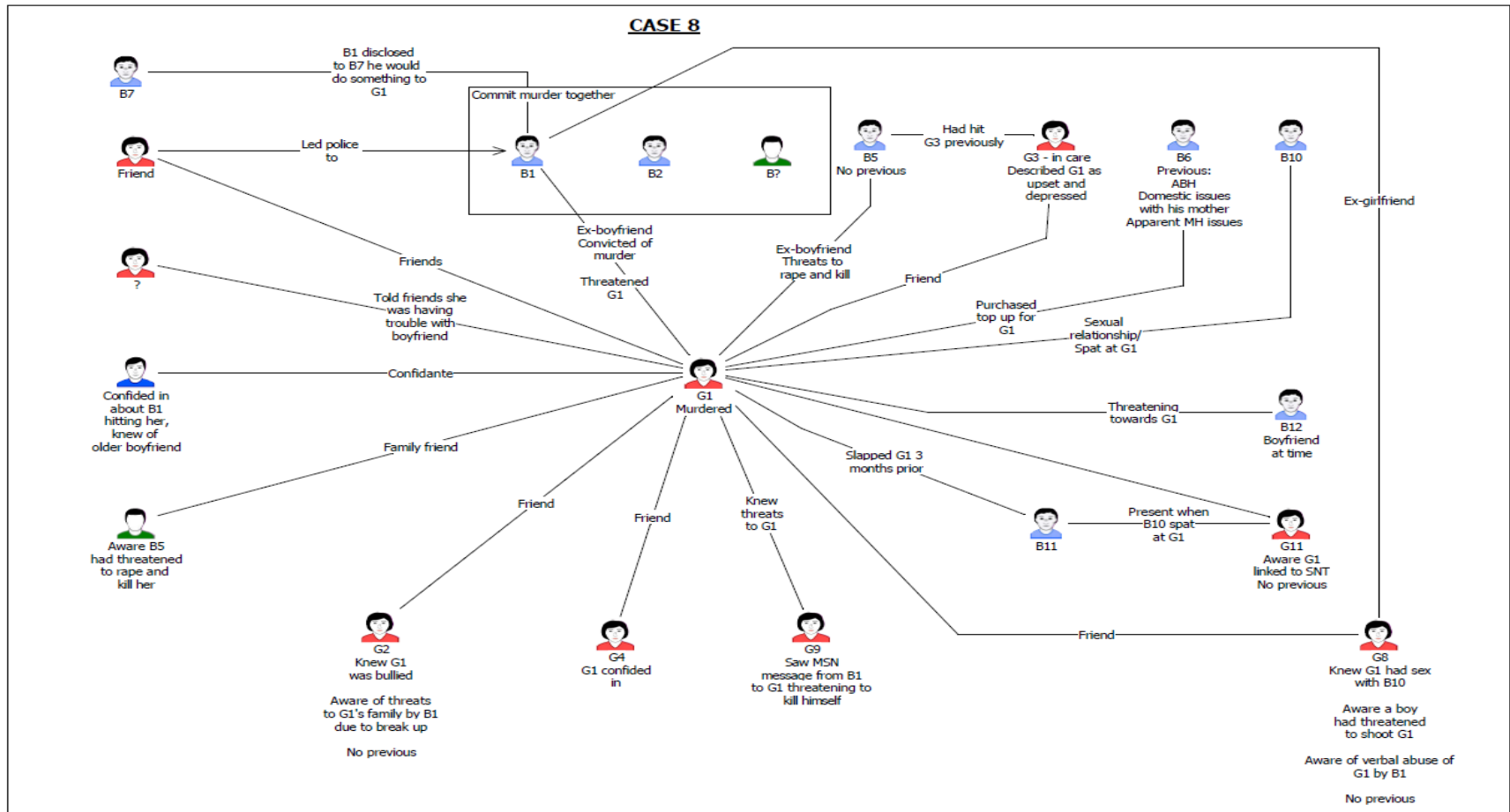- Legal removal of the child or placement on voluntary agreement

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Transfer (1) – Capacity to Safeguard

Neighbourhood

School

Peer Group

Home

Child

Who's capacity in which space?

AND

Which space is impacting which service's capacity?

Extending Child Concepts of Child Protection (2) Genograms

Genogram Symbols

| Male | Female | Gender unknown | Pet | Adopted child | Foster child | Pregnancy | Mis-carriage | Abortion | Death | Twins | Identical twins |

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Transfer (2) – Genos to Peers Associations and Co-Case Management
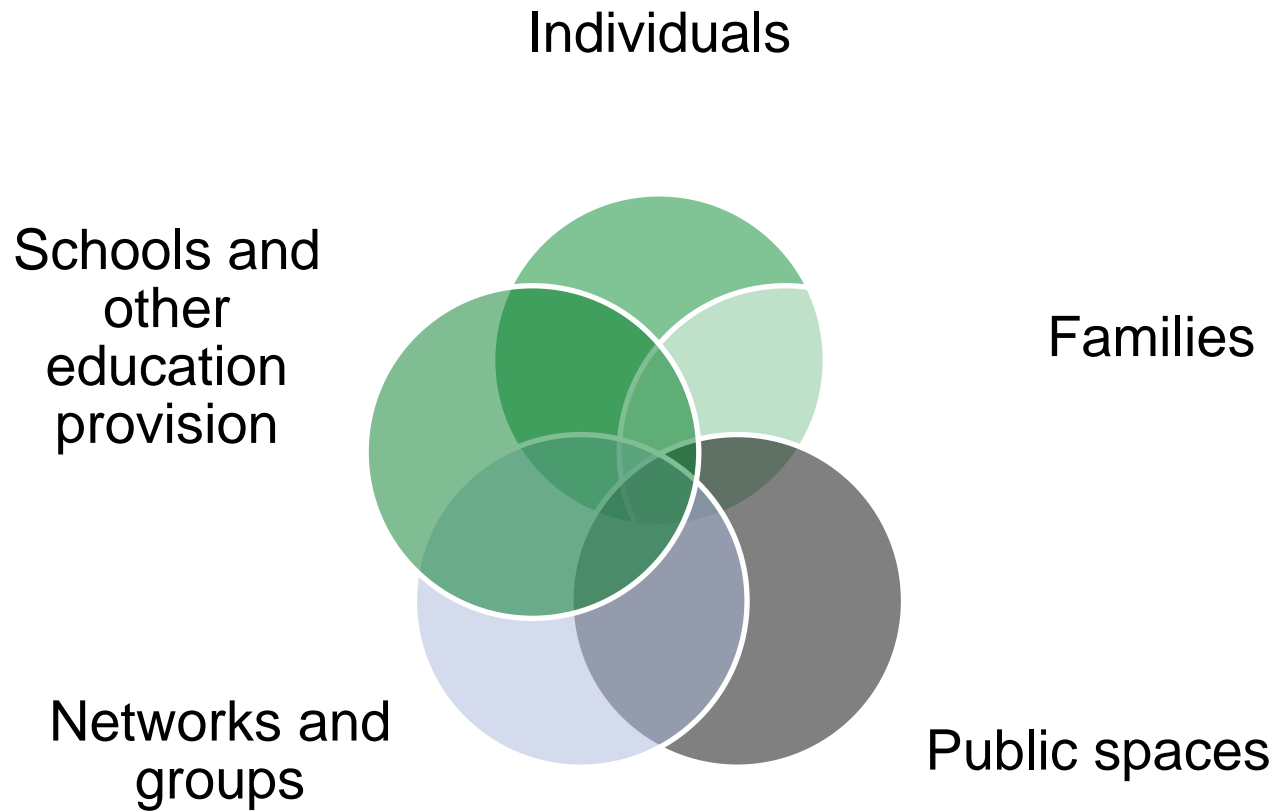
Peer group information capture form

Workshop to identify current use:

- For early intervention

- For assessments

- To task interventions into contexts

Capture form used to aid social care and youth justice assessment

- Nature of peer relationships (protective or presenting risk)

- Role within the group

- Open to social care or youth justice

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Aspirational Profiling

Individuals

Families

Public spaces

Networks and groups

Schools and other education provision

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Contextual safeguarding (Firmin et al 2016):

- Seeks to prevent, identify, assess and intervene with the social conditions of abuse

- Incorporate extra-familial contexts into traditional child protection and safeguarding frameworks

- Develop partnerships with sectors/individuals who are responsible for the nature of extra-familial contexts

- Monitor outcomes of success in relation to contextual, as well as individual, change
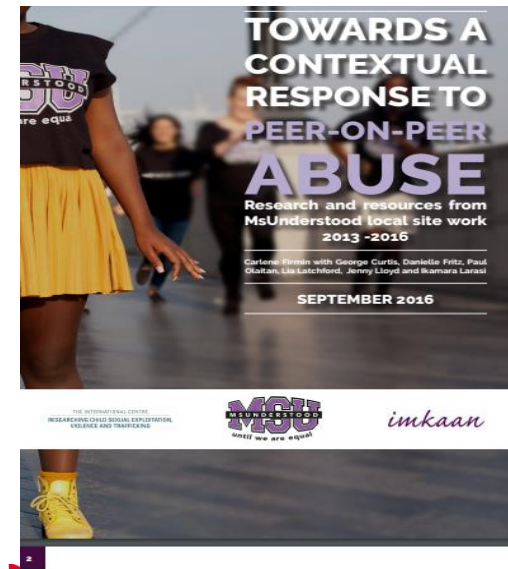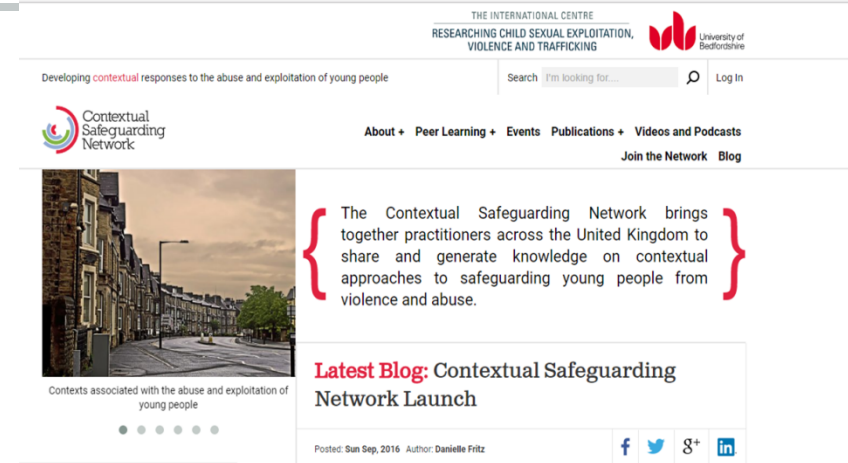
Implications for local practice – a view from Hackney

For more information and resources visit our website www.beds.ac.uk/ic

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