Key Questions on Appropriate Usage of Family Context

Introduction

Local authorities should give social workers clear guidance on how Family Context should be used and under what circumstances. The questions outlined in this document aim to support local authorities to structure their thinking around the appropriate usage of the tool.

We have organised the questions into sections, starting with consent, then mirroring the user workflow:

A. Consent
B. Searching and selecting individuals
C. Linking relevant individuals in the Case Management System and viewing those individuals on Family Context (only applicable to user journey 2)
D. Viewing individuals' service involvement flags
E. Viewing individuals' service involvement details
F. Using service involvement information
G. Other

Service and Information Governance teams from each local authority should answer the questions from each section.

Key questions

A. Consent

On consent, from our experience working with different local authorities, we have learnt that 'consent' carries different meanings to social workers and information governance professionals:

- *To information governance professionals, consent is one of several possible lawful bases for processing personal data. Consent is **not** the lawful basis for the usage of Family Context when conducting a child and family assessment. Rather, the lawful basis for usage of Family Context is legal obligation and public task.*

- *However, to social workers, consent is important to have before starting a child and family assessment under section 17 of the Children's Act and is an important consideration when they think about appropriate usage of Family Context. This is important as we create guidelines.*

We suggest considering the following questions on consent, so that both the service and information governance leads can build a common understanding and consensus:

- What is the current practice on consent?
  - How do social workers obtain consent?
  - Who do social workers obtain consent from?
  - What does consent cover (e.g. consent to conduct a social work assessment)?
  - What are parents/carers told regarding what they are consenting to?
- At what point, if any, should consent be required for a social worker to use Family Context in section 47 cases?
- At what point should consent be required for a social worker to use Family context in section 17 cases?

B. Searching and selecting individuals

- Is it ok for social workers to search for any child / individual they judge relevant to a case?
- Is there a concern if a social worker selects the wrong individual from the search results and views their details?

C. Linking relevant individuals in the Case Management System and viewing those individuals on Family Context (only applicable to user journey 2)

- What is the current decision-making process to link someone to the child in the Case Management System?
  - Who decides, and are there criteria to decide whether the individual is relevant to the case?
- Should Family Context to show the service involvement information for every person that is linked to the child in the Case Management System?
  - Are there any individuals linked to the child in the Case Management System that it would be inappropriate to show information on in Family Context?

D. Viewing individuals' service involvement <u>flags</u>

- When should social workers be able to see the screen with service involvement <u>flags</u>?
  - Before/after visit family
  - With or without consent from parent/caregiver [to conduct an assessment]
  - With or without consent from the specific individual being viewed

E. Viewing individuals' service involvement <u>details</u>

- When should social workers be able to see the screen with service involvement <u>details</u>?
  - Before/after visit family
  - With or without consent from parent/caregiver [to conduct an assessment]
  - With or without consent from the specific individual being viewed

F. Using service involvement information

- Which of the following activities do you expect social workers to do once they have viewed service involvement information in the tool:
  - Call services
  - Call relevant individuals (e.g. those they have searched for or are linked to the child)
  - Share information with other services working with family
  - Record service involvement information in the Case Management System

G. Other

- What access restrictions do you think are necessary for the tool?
- Are there specific circumstances where it would be inappropriate for social workers to use the tool? (e.g. adoption cases, cases where an individual is related to a social worker, once the assessment has been completed etc)

- On what device do you expect Social Workers to be able to access the tool? Where do you expect social workers to be able to access the tool? (e.g. from their tablet at home, from their mobile devices in the car park of the school etc)