

We are very grateful to the Global Centre for Contextual Safeguarding for developing these reflective questions to help MACE Chairs in London.

They are deliberately wide-ranging, covering areas including impact for children, child-centred practice, multi-agency working, disruption, disproportionality, decision-making, strategic influence, and the culture and leadership of meetings. They provide an opportunity to step back from the day-to-day business of meetings to consider how effectively our arrangements are working and, most importantly, the difference they are making for children and young people.

There are a number of ways they could be used. For example, a partnership might:

- **Choose one question as the focus of a discussion**, using it to explore practice in greater depth rather than trying to cover the whole framework.
- : • **Ask members to identify the two or three questions they think would be most valuable to explore**. Comparing people's choices could itself be revealing as different agencies or individuals may have quite different views about where MACE is strongest, where there are gaps, or what matters most.
- **Select a theme** and use the questions within it to structure a periodic reflective session.
- **Use a question to test assumptions against evidence**. For example, asking "How confident are we that the young people discussed at MACE are safer because of the actions agreed at the panel?" can move discussion beyond whether actions were completed towards what difference those actions actually made.



Purpose and Impact

- How confident are we that the young people discussed at MACE are safer because of the actions agreed at the panel?
- Do our meetings focus primarily on protecting children, or are we at risk of prioritising risk management, information sharing, or criminal justice responses?
- What evidence do we use to assess whether MACE interventions have reduced harm or exploitation?
- How often do we review whether agreed actions have led to meaningful change for children and young people?

Child-Centred Practice

- How are children's lived experiences, wishes, and perspectives informing discussion and decision-making?
- Would a young person recognise themselves as being supported and protected by the plans we develop?
- How do we avoid defining young people primarily through risk, vulnerability, missing episodes, or exploitation indicators?
- Are we sufficiently recognising children's strengths, relationships, and sources of safety?



Multi-Agency Contribution

- Are all agencies attending with the authority, information, and resources needed to take effective action?
- Which partners contribute most effectively to protection planning, and where is engagement inconsistent?
- Do agencies leave meetings with clear accountability for agreed actions?
- How well are we coordinating with other safeguarding arrangements to avoid duplication and confusion?

Disruption and Contextual Safeguarding

- How much of our activity focuses on changing harmful environments rather than changing young people's behaviour?
- What disruption activity is being undertaken against perpetrators, locations, businesses, networks, or online spaces associated with harm?
- Are we identifying patterns across cases that require a contextual or place-based response?
- How effectively are we responding to peer, school, neighbourhood, transport, and online contexts where harm occurs?



Equality, Diversity and Disproportionality

- Do we understand who is being referred into MACE and who is not?
- Are there disparities in how children from different ethnic, cultural, or social backgrounds experience our processes and outcomes?
- How do we challenge assumptions, stereotypes, and bias during discussions?
- Could any of our responses unintentionally contribute to children feeling criminalised rather than protected?

Quality of Decision-Making

- What gives us confidence that the right children are being referred to MACE at the right time?
- Are referral thresholds facilitating protection or creating barriers to support?
- How consistently are risks, decisions, actions, and outcomes recorded?
- What are we learning from audits, reviews, and feedback about the quality of our decision-making?



Strategic Influence

- What themes emerging from MACE are regularly escalated to strategic leaders and safeguarding partners?
- Are recurring issues leading to changes in policy, commissioning, training, or local services?
- How effectively does MACE contribute to the wider safeguarding partnership's response to extra-familial harm?
- What barriers repeatedly arise that require resolution beyond the operational level?

Chairing and Culture

- Does the culture of the meeting encourage professional curiosity, challenge, and shared responsibility?
- Am I creating enough space for reflection and analysis, or are meetings becoming overly focused on processes and case updates?
- How do I ensure all agencies have an equal voice and that dominant perspectives do not drive decision-making?
- What would children, families, and practitioners say about the effectiveness of our panel if they observed our work?

