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Spring Newsletter

Welcome to our Spring 2021 Newsletter

As the most unwelcome milestone in history has recently passed—the one year anniversary of the first lockdown, we are fortunate the days are beginning to get longer and we can be comforted to know that at last, life may start to return to some form of normality in the months ahead.

Vaccination programmes across the borough are progressing well, as huge numbers receive their immunisations. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our partners who are involved in successfully rolling this out which has demonstrated Partnership working at its very best.



The past year was full of the unexpected, no-one could have predicted the challenges that have been thrown at us. We have all learnt to adapt services to working remotely. Covid has emphasised the fact that anyone can be at risk of harm and has reminded us that abuse and neglect can be increased by a whole range of factors such as mental health, poverty, domestic abuse as well as loneliness and isolation—and is not always easy to tell who might be at risk.

We would like to thank you all for your continued dedication during these unprecedented times, in helping to keep children, young people and vulnerable adults across Darlington safe.

This newsletter is available on the DSP website;

<https://darlington-safeguarding-partnership.co.uk/>



Darlington’s Statutory Safeguarding Partners;

- | | |
|--|--|
| Ann Baxter, Independent Chair/Scrutineer | James Stroyan, Director of Children and Adult Services |
| Adrian Green, Detective Chief Superintendent | Jean Golightly, Director of Nursing |



Department of Health & Social Care



White Paper—Health & Social Care

On 11 February 2021, the Department of Health and Social Care published the legislative proposals for a Health and Social Care Bill. The proposals in the White Paper are a combination of:

- Proposals developed by NHSE England to support the implementation of the NHS Long Term Plan (and which are the main focus of the document);
- Additional proposals that relate to public health, social care and quality and safety matters, which require primary legislation.

The White Paper emphasises that the legislative proposals should be seen in the context of broader current and planned reforms to the NHS, social care, public health and mental health. It provides a promising base on which to build a more collaborative culture, setting out a clear direction of travel for enabling NHS

organisations to work more effectively together, and for the NHS to work as an equal partner with local government.

The White Paper groups the proposals under the following themes:

- working together and supporting integration;
- stripping out needless bureaucracy;
- enhancing public confidence and accountability;
- additional proposals to support public health, social care, and quality and safety.

The Government plans to introduce the Health and Social Care Bill to Parliament in 2021, so the measures can start to be implemented in 2022.

Additional information on the proposals is provided in [LGA briefing – Health and Social Care Bill White Paper](#).

Legal Duty

The Government has concluded a consultation on a new legal duty to support a multi-agency approach to preventing and tackling serious violence covering;

- Government approach
- Background to the consultation
- Summary of the consultation responses
- Next steps following this consultation
- Detailed response to specific questions raised in the consultation

Serious Violence: New Legal Duty to Support Multi-Agency Approach

The Serious Violence Duty is set to be introduced as part of the new Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill 2021. Following a successful passage through Parliament, it is expected that the Duty will come into force no sooner than 2022.

Alongside the Bill, the Home Office are developing statutory guidance, which is being prepared in collaboration with representatives of the sectors, which will be subject to the Duty.

The Duty will require local authorities, the police, fire and rescue authorities, specified criminal justice agencies and health authorities to work together to formulate an evidence based analysis of the problems associated with serious violence in a local area, and then produce and implement a strategy detailing how they will respond to those particular issues. Prisons, youth custody agencies and educational authorities may also need to work with these core partners. The purpose is to reduce violent crime and address the root causes of serious violence, by making sure public bodies work together to stop serious violence.

Further information on the new legal duty is available [here](#);



Home Office

National Panel Findings on Coronavirus

The **Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel** undertook a thematic analysis of rapid reviews reported to the Panel during the initial Covid Outbreak between March and September 2020 and developed a Practice Briefing on the findings: Supporting Vulnerable Children and Families during COVID-19.

[Read Supporting Vulnerable Children and Families during COVID-19 here](#)

The briefing sets out the key findings and recommendations from the analysis, which highlighted COVID-19 presents a situational risk for vulnerable children and families, a summary of these findings is provided in the briefing document.



Children's Experience of Lockdown and Safeguarding Issues

- Practitioner working
- Parental and family stressors
- Harm to babies under 12 months old
- Young people's mental health
- School closures

Working Together to Safeguard Children

In December 2020, Working Together to Safeguard Children was updated. The update includes changes to information sharing, contextual safeguarding, the homelessness duty and domestic abuse. To view the summary of changes, [click here](#).

Safeguarding Adults During COVID-19

The Covid Pandemic has thrown up numerous challenges, not least in relation how to safeguard adults with care and support needs when so many people are behind closed doors and out of sight from family, friends and professionals, who might otherwise raise concerns about them or for them.

Nationally, two successes have been the housing of those previously sleeping on the streets and the growth of 'community action groups', who reached out to so many isolated people who had previously not been known to social services and who clearly now had care and support needs.

Darlington contributed to the Insight Project into Safeguarding Adults During COVID-19, which invited councils to participate in a voluntary data collection exercise to understand the nature of the impact of COVID-19 at a national level, both during the lockdown and as the restrictions were eased, comparing safeguarding activity against the previous year. A report was published in December 2020 into their findings covering the period up to June 2020.

The report identified the following patterns and issues:

- in general, reports of safeguarding 'concerns' fell during the initial weeks of lockdown, before rising and then exceeding expected levels by June 2020;
- Similarly, the numbers of cases requiring an s42 safeguarding enquiry fell, before starting to rise again through June 2020;
- Patterns of concern were very localised, (possibly exacerbated by the very 'local' nature of lockdown and 'tiered' restrictions);
- Rates of domestic abuse in some areas increased significantly, as did reports of psychological abuse and self-harm;
- The location of abuse changed markedly, with fewer enquires in care/nursing homes (most likely because of lack of access by family members and professionals) and increases in the community, including individual's own homes. This has raised professional concerns about what we are not hearing about, in relation to 'closed' care/nursing home environments.

[Read the findings of the Insight Project into Safeguarding Adults During COVID-19 here](#)

4KIDS Project



How it works

"4KIDS work on alerts rather than referrals, to enable a dynamic, more timely response.

Only cases where children fall into the specific age range of 6 to 8 years are targeted, based on research suggesting that this age group will benefit most from engagement and enrichment activities to build resilience, and reduce the impact of adverse childhood experiences in the home, most specifically."

The **4KIDS** Project was launched in December 2020 by Darlington Borough Council, in Partnership with Durham Constabulary and the Durham Police Crime and Victim Commissioner, in response to a concerning rise in numbers of children becoming Looked After. The three main causal factors for children coming into care were; Parental Domestic Abuse; Parental Substance Misuse and Parental Mental Health.

The team is made up of two practitioner leads; Dave Collingwood who has an Early Help background and Neighbourhood Police Officer, Chris Horner. Their role is to assess multi-agency alerts relating to domestic abuse, in a bid to prevent long-term harm being caused where children witness events or are involved. The new Domestic Abuse Bill of 2019-2021 gives a similar directive reinforcing this approach, recognising children as vulnerable victims of parental conflict and abuse.

Since its launch there has been over 60 alerts which are all risk assessed and screened with many cases being signposted to appropriate agencies for support. The current case-load consists of 19 families. Parents have an intensive assessment to highlight areas of need and triggers for negative behaviours that lead to incidents, subjecting their children to adverse childhood experiences. The assessments lead to support pathways with actions for them to follow, designed to address problems, change attitudes, thinking and behaviours, as well as building on strengths identified.

Parents enter into an agreement with the practitioner leads, supporting their passage to partner agencies such as Harbour, We Are With You (Drug and Alcohol Service), Tees Esk and Wear Valley Mental Health Trust, Housing Support, Voluntary Sector, employability support such as Routes to Work and Department of Work and Pensions. A key link within each case has proved to be the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) within the child's education setting.

Parental engagement is subject to rigorous monitoring and review and failure to make progress, or repeat incidents of domestic abuse being reported, could result in more enforcement action by police and/or social services.

Children following assessment and in consultation with DSLs, are introduced to support with child-centred services, through activities or therapeutic interventions, building resilience, protective factors and aimed at improving their life chances.

The project is already having a positive impact on mental health and well-being and are seeing results with improvements in school attendance, parents accepting support in managing children with challenging behaviours or illness, parents working with agencies and employment opportunities opened up for some. Feedback from families subject to interventions has been encouraging, and feedback from partners who have been involved in cases has been positive.

The project is still in its infancy, however further development is expected once Covid restrictions have been lifted, which will include access to children's activities and Durham Agency Against Crime team await opportunities to get involved with children and their families and school groups across Darlington, with mini-police initiatives and enrichment activities.

If you would like further details on the project, please contact **Lorraine Joyce, Pathway Lead**, by email : Lorraine.joyce@darlington.gov.uk



SAR Quality Markers

Five years on from the implementation of the Care Act 2014, evidence is being gathered from practice along with learning from SAR's, to inform a refresh of the Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) Quality Markers. This includes completing the final Quality Markers that have remained unfinished covering areas of publication, dissemination and engagement with the learning and implementation of actions and evaluation of impact.

The SAR Quality Markers are based on the Serious Case Review Quality Markers developed for learning from children's safeguarding cases and adapted for adult safeguarding.

The Quality Markers are tools to support people involved in commissioning, conducting and quality assuring SAR's to know what good looks like. The Quality Markers assume the principles of Making Safeguarding Personal, as well as the Six Principles of Safeguarding that underpin all adult safeguarding work (Empowerment; Prevention; Proportionate; Protection; Partnership; Accountable).

Details of the SAR Quality Markers can be found by clicking link [here](#)

What are we doing:

- Supporting quality
- Sharing learning
- Sharing analysis



“ Supporting dialogue about the principles of good practice in case reviews and how to achieve them.”

Help new Children's Commissioner Improve Lives of Children

The new Children's Commissioner for England, **Dame Rachel de Souza** is asking for your support. Her role is to speak up for children and young people across England and Dame de Souza needs help to gather children's views and priorities for the future, so that she can make sure the government takes them into account. Dame de Souza has just launched the Childhood Commission, a once-in-a-generation review of the future of childhood. This review will identify the barriers preventing children from reaching their full potential, put forward solutions and set ambitious goals for the country to achieve.

The first stage of this work is gathering the views, opinions and experiences of all children and will carry out the largest ever consultation with children in England, called **The Big Ask**, to find out what children's concerns and aspirations about the future are.

The Big Ask will be launched on **Monday 19 April 2021** as an online questionnaire, and further information will be forwarded when it is launched. Dame de Souza is hoping to reach as many children as possible and your cooperation will be crucial to ensure that vulnerable and 'hard to reach' children have their voices heard.

If you have any questions, please get in touch with a member of her team at;

big.ask@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk



Training



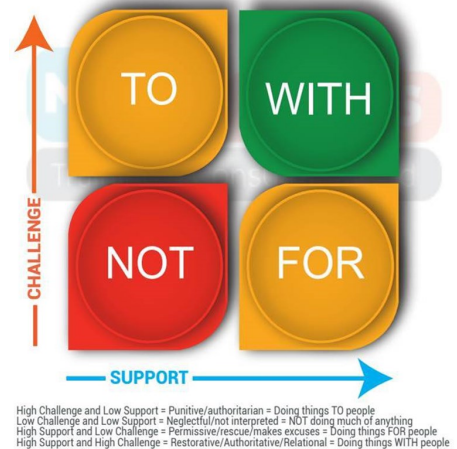
Multi-Agency Training

The Partnership is committed to delivering a high quality inter-agency training programme. The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted on the ability to provide face to face safeguarding training in respect of Children and Adults at risk of abuse, so during the course of 2020-2021, the multi-agency training has evolved and all training is now delivered virtually, or through the provision of eLearning opportunities.

The full safeguarding programme has been converted to virtual sessions which are very well attended. A total of almost 1200 new delegates have now accessed the training delivered via TEAMS across all organisations. There has been a significant increase in people accessing the eLearning modules, and the Level 1 Awareness courses for children and adults has been completed by almost 600 people from all agencies.

Relational Practice / Strength Based Working

In Darlington, Relational Practice (Children’s Services) / Strength Based Working (Adult Services) are based on the premise of working ‘WITH’ children, young people, adults and families. We utilise and use tools and techniques that best suit the situation in order to promote **OWNERSHIP** and develop positive outcomes that promote **INDEPENDENCE**. Understanding Relational Practice has been incorporated into all our multi-agency training courses for 2021/2022.



Prevent Training

Durham Constabulary is offering an *Introduction to Prevent* as an online training event. The training is tailored to a practitioner’s level and will show what the current threats are, in line with Durham Constabulary’s priorities for counter-terrorism policing and how to refer someone to the Prevent programme. The training will also highlight what actions Prevent can take to address the issues.

Prevent is a community safety programme which aims to safeguard and support those individuals that are vulnerable to radicalisation. Prevent is one of four elements of *Contest*, the Government’s counter-terrorism strategy and aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

The training is planned for late April / early May – dates will be confirmed shortly – anyone interested in attending is asked to contact Samantha Level at Samantha.level@durham.police.uk

Ask for ANI



The Government has launched a new initiative, **Ask for ANI** (Action Needed Immediately), which is a codeword scheme to enable victims of domestic abuse to access immediate help from the police or other support services, from the safety of their local pharmacy. The codeword will alert members of staff that a victim is seeking immediate, urgent help.

The pharmacy environment lends itself well to this scheme, as most pharmacies will have consultation rooms available and staff will have undergone safeguarding training. Boots stores are taking part and other participating local pharmacies will display posters to show they are also available to help. Staff can offer a safe space at the branch and a phone to call for help or information on what support is out there. Find out more [here](#).

Safeguarding Radio Campaign

The North East Association of Directors of Adult Social Services is launching a safeguarding radio campaign which went live on Monday 29 March 2021. The purpose of the campaign is to reinforce awareness of safeguarding issues amongst the general public and to empower them to feel confident in reporting a concern and to reassure vulnerable adults, their relatives and carers that social services are concentrating on abuse and have not let it slip as a priority during the Coronavirus Pandemic.

The campaign will receive six weeks air time across the region on Hits Radio (North East), which includes Metro Radio, Greatest Hits Radio (Tyne and Wear) and TFM, Greatest Hits Radio (Teesside).

Airtime

Covering types and indicators of abuse;

- Financial or material abuse (specifically scamming)
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Physical abuse



Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy

Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy

2021

HM Government

The Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy was published by the Home Office on 22 January 2021 and is the first of its kind, setting out the government's vision for preventing, tackling and responding to child sexual abuse in all its forms, whether it is committed in person or online, in families or communities, in this country or overseas.

The strategy is based on the following three objectives:

- tackling all forms of child sexual abuse and bringing offenders to justice;
- preventing offending and re-offending;
- protecting and safeguarding children and young people, supporting all victims and survivors.

The strategy captures the Government's long-term ambition to tackle this crime and provides a robust framework to drive action across all agencies, sectors and society as a whole, to carry on strengthening the response to all forms of child sexual abuse. [Read it here.](#)

The **NSPCC** has launched a dedicated helpline for children and young people who have experienced abuse at school and for worried adults and professionals that need support and guidance. The new helpline will provide appropriate support and advice to victims of abuse and concerned adults, including onward action, such as contacting the police if they wish to. Details about the helpline are available on the [NSPCC website](#).

Online Harms White Paper—Online Safety Bill

In April 2019, the Government published its Online Harms White Paper for consultation and in December 2020, it published its final legislative proposals to protect children from online abuse.

The Online Harms Bill sets out a new duty of care to make companies take responsibility for the safety of their users, including children and young people.

The new regulatory framework will require companies to prevent the proliferation of illegal content and activity online and ensure that children who use their services are not exposed to harmful content.

The legislation will tackle illegal activity taking place online and prevent children from being exposed to inappropriate material, as well as addressing other types of harm that spread online. It will hold technical giants to account for the way in which they address this content on their platforms.

The Online Harms Bill will be ready later this year, information on the government's response to the consultation is available [here](#);

Partnership Working Behind the Scenes during COVID-19



Partnership meetings continue to take place and challenges continue for organisations to ensure children and adults are safeguarded during this latest lockdown period.

The Statutory Safeguarding Partners meet monthly to have oversight on safeguarding arrangements and continue to invite key leads from wider partner agencies on a rotational basis, to obtain an understanding of current issues about safeguarding and challenges they may be facing. Quarterly Performance reports are presented which are highlighting the changing landscape due to the Pandemic. Measures are in place to address themes and trends to further understand these changes which will shape what needs to be taken forward.

The sub group Chairs recently provided an update to Safeguarding Partners on current working arrangements and activity that has taken place within their groups. The groups continue to review how they can align more closely to ensure the learning is embedded into practice. Due to the changes to groups that were implemented as a result of the Pandemic, it has been highlighted how beneficial it is to have the Operational Groups who have that oversight of the most vulnerable within our community, and discussions are taking place on how this should be taken forward on a permanent basis.

The sub groups continue to meet and develop key pieces of work, some of which are highlighted within this newsletter. The Learning and Development sub group were introduced to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Senior Safeguarding Leader for Durham, Darlington and the Tees Valley, whose role is to ensure claimants in the area are supported and to develop relationships with partner organisations, who also provide support to their vulnerable customers.

Professional Challenge

Practitioners have a professional responsibility when working with children, young people, adults with needs for care and support and their families, to ensure appropriate action is being taken in their best interests. Professional disagreements can arise in a number of areas of multi-agency working and is an area often highlighted in Safeguarding Adult Reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews nationally. There have been examples identified in reviews and audits undertaken by the Partnership where practitioners have described occasions where they felt there should have been professional challenge, however often felt uncomfortable or lacking in confidence to challenge.

Professional Challenge is a positive activity and a sign of effective multi-agency working. Practitioners need to be open to being questioned about how decisions are reached, or a particular course of action taken and be supported in raising a professional challenge.

In light of this, the Partnership agreed to review the Professional Challenge protocol to incorporate guidance to ensure it is more robust in supporting front line practitioners to understand the process to know how and when to apply. [Read the Protocol here.](#)

The Protocol highlights when it should be applied and to support the Protocol, there is a Professional Challenge Training video on YouTube, which discusses what is meant by the term 'Professional Challenge' and potential areas of disagreement. [Listen to it here.](#)

Child Death Review—Annual Report

This year's report contains the summary of activity carried out by the County Durham and Darlington Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP), which seeks to drive improvements for the health, safety and wellbeing of children and young people in County Durham and Darlington. The purpose of the Child Death Overview Panel is to review the deaths of all children normally resident in County Durham and Darlington, in order to learn lessons and share any findings for the prevention of future deaths. [Read the annual report here:](#)

Key Safeguarding Campaigns

To view a full list of all key campaigns, [click here:](#)

| | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 3-9 May 2021 | Maternal Mental Health Week |
| 11-24 May 2021 | Foster Care Fortnight |
| 18-24 May 2021 | Mental Health Awareness Week |
| 21-27 June 2021 | Learning Disability Week |

Policy, Procedure & Practice Guidance

The following Policy, Procedure and Practice guidance documents have recently been revised, you can view a copy by visiting the Safeguarding Partnership's website, or clicking the links below;

- [Forced Marriage Practice Guidance](#)
- [Honour Based Abuse Practice Guidance](#)
- [Safeguarding Adult Review \(SAR\) Protocol](#)
- [Child Protection—glossary of terms](#)



How to contact the Safeguarding Partnership

We would love to hear your suggestions on communications and engagement with our partners. If you wish to share any articles, good news stories or have any comments for the next publication, please drop the Business Unit an email; DSP@darlington.gov.uk

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Marian Garland
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01325 406451

Chris Ashford
Multi-Agency Trainer
chris.ashford@darlington.gov.uk
01325 406453

Joyce Bowler
Business Support Officer
joyce.bowler@darlington.gov.uk
01325 406452

Are you concerned about a child?

Contact the Children's Initial Advice Team

Professionals on 01325 406252, Public on 01325 406222 or Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team on 01642 524552.

Are you concerned about an adult?

Contact the First Point of Contact Team

on 01325 406111 or the Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team on 01642 524552.