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Welcome to our July 2025 Newsletter

In this newsletter, we bring together information which we hope you will find useful and we highlight how the Partnership continues to communicate and keep in touch with all our agencies and provide guidance to support you in your role working with children and adults. In this edition, we bring you information in the spotlight about Domestic Abuse, updates and also information about Partnership work, important safeguarding updates and new training dates.

Me Learning

Don't forget to log in to your Me Learning account and see our new e-learning courses on a range of safeguarding topics



In the Spotlight..... Domestic Abuse



What is Domestic Abuse?

Domestic Abuse describes negative behaviours that one person exhibits over another within families or relationships. These patterns of behaviour can include threats, put-downs, isolation, violence and control. Sometimes domestic abuse can be called domestic violence.

Domestic abuse can take different forms, including:

- **Coercion and Control:** repeatedly making someone feel bad or scared, stalking, blackmailing, constantly checking up on someone, playing mind games. Coercive control is now a criminal offence under the Serious Crime Act 2015
- **Physical abuse:** pushing, hitting, punching, kicking, choking and using weapons
- **Sexual abuse:** forcing or pressuring someone to have sex (rape), unwanted sexual activity, touching, groping someone or making them watch pornography
- **Financial abuse:** taking money, controlling finances, not letting someone work
- **Emotional abuse**
- **Digital / online abuse:** using technology to further isolate, humiliate or control someone
- **Honour-Based Violence and Forced Marriage.**

Everyone has the right to live in safety free from the fear of abuse. If you or someone you know is affected see the [Refuge website](#) for more information about domestic abuse and how to access help and support.

[The Domestic Abuse Offender Disclosure Scheme \(DAODS\)](#) (also known as Clare's Law) was established following the inquest of the murder of Clare Wood when it was highlighted she would not have been in a relationship with her killer if she had known about his abusive past with previous partners. The scheme allows people to make inquiries about their partner if you are worried that they may have been abusive in the past. Further details are available on the [Durham Constabulary website](#).

The Darlington Community Safety Partnership has produced a leaflet [Domestic Violence and your Workplace](#) providing advice to employers on how to respond if an employee is experiencing Domestic Abuse with useful contacts and helplines.

Useful Contacts:

[Harbour Support Services](#)

Telephone - 03000 202 525 (24hrs)

[National Domestic Violence helpline](#)

Telephone- 0808 2000 247

[Rape and Sexual Abuse Counselling Centre](#)

Telephone-01325 369 933

[Family Help Darlington](#)

Telephone - 01325 364 486

[HALO Project](#) - Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage and FGM

Telephone 01642 683 045



Male Victims of Domestic Abuse: advice and support for men who experience abuse

We recognise that men can also be victims of Domestic Abuse, both in heterosexual and gay relationships. Everyone has the right to live in safety, free from fear, regardless of their gender but unfortunately it can be more difficult for men to access help and support services.

[Refuge](#) runs a number of services for male victims of domestic violence across the country. These are primarily independent domestic violence advocacy and outreach services, which provide practical and emotional support for men who are experiencing domestic violence.

You can also call the [ManKind Initiative](#) on 01823 334244 for specialist support or contact the [Freephone National Domestic Violence Helpline](#) on 0808 2000 247 (24hr helpline).





Children's Social Care Reforms

Multi-Agency Staff Consultation Sessions

Chris Bell, Assistant Director for Children's Services is hosting a number of staff consultation sessions to share the key messages on what the Children's Social Care reforms mean for multi-agency collaboration in Darlington.

There are four sessions available to enable practitioners to access from all partner agencies in the Darlington locality, two will be face to face.

Tuesday 8th July @ 2pm - 4pm (Microsoft Teams)

Monday 28th July @ 2pm – 4pm (Microsoft Teams)

Wednesday 6 August @ 3pm - 5pm (Microsoft Teams)

Thursday 14 August @ 1pm—3pm - Dolphin Centre Studio, Darlington

Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill

[The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill](#) published in December 2024 is making provisions about the safeguarding and welfare of children and introduces a wide variety of measures and important changes to protect children and improve education.

Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive

In November 2024, the Department for Education published a policy paper called '[Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive](#)' which sets out aims to strengthen safeguarding. Key partnership measures include prioritising and making statutory Family Group Decision Making, strengthening the role of Education in Safeguarding, establishing multi-agency child protection units, improving information sharing and virtual school changes.

These reforms will take a whole system approach to rebalancing children's social care and there will be key practice changes resulting in a new approach to the way children and families access and receive help and support. These services will operate within communities, uniting local services through a multi-disciplinary approach with an aim to improve outcomes for children and families.

To book your place on any of the four sessions, log into your Me Learning account and you will find the sessions in the 'browse courses' section. The course is called Children's Social Care Reforms Consultations and all four sessions are available to book now. If you do not already have an account on Me Learning, please use the link below to register.

<https://app.melearning.co.uk/auth/self-registration/KXRZPWSG>

OUR PLEDGE

To have open, honest, bold conversations with each other as multi-agency partners in order to do the very best we can for adults and children in Darlington.

For many families across Darlington, multi-agency working is vital to maintain a focus on children and adults while also keeping them at the heart of all decisions.

Our Pledge is an opportunity to:

- Seek out professional conversations with each other at the earliest opportunity
- Have a shared understanding of the strengths and risks within a family
- Actively listen to each other and share important information
- Respect each other's expertise
- Be open and empathetic to the professional views of others
- Be professionally curious and evidence what we say
- Use common language that everyone understands



Concerned about a child?

Contact the Children's Initial
Advice Team
Professionals on **01325 406252**
Public on **01325 406222**

**Concerned about an
adult?**

Contact the Adult
Contact Team
on **01325 406111**



PARTNER SHIPS

Statutory Safeguarding Partners

James Stroyan, Executive Director of People

Nicola Lawrence, Detective Chief Superintendent

Hilary Lloyd, Chief Nurse