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## Welcome to our June 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 the children's social care reforms consultations, 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.....**



### **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 three sessions available to enable practitioners to access from all partner agencies in the Darlington locality, one will be face to face.

**Wednesday 2 July @ 1pm – 3pm (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 measure and important changes to protect children and improve education. Read the document [here](#)

### **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. Read the document [here](#)

**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/validate-key?registerKey=KXRZPWSG>

## Welcome to the start of the 11<sup>th</sup> #LookCloser campaign!

### What is #LookCloser?

#LookCloser is The Children's Society's award-winning campaign supported by the British Transport Police and the National County Lines Coordination Centre, aiming to raise awareness about the exploitation of children and young people and the vital role that everyone can play in helping stop it.

**This latest campaign will run from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> June**

### Why is the focus on 'building positive relationships'?

Over the past year young people have told us that they feel judged by adults, that people won't choose to take action to protect them and that exploited young people are more likely to be seen as troublemakers than as someone that needs help and support. One young person, who was only 12 years old told us that "people don't care as much as they used to".

We also hear time and time again that professionals, parents and carers want more guidance and support around how to build positive relationships with children at risk of or experiencing exploitation, including when their interaction with that child might be one off or in difficult circumstances such as when police are questioning or interviewing a child.

We all have a role to play in recognising that victims and survivors are more than their abuse, to make efforts to understand their full identity and to take a strengths-based approach in working with them which fosters trust and can help them rebuild their self-esteem after experiencing abuse. As a young person told The Children's Society some years ago "treat a young person as a human being, not a case you are working on".

Through doing so we can better protect children and young people from harm and ensure they receive the right support.

### What's new?

- Our new resource for professionals on building positive relationships. Download it in English and Welsh [here](#).
- Our key resources for the public newly available in 11 languages. Download [here](#).
- New social media assets to support the campaign this week and across the year. Download [here](#).

### How can you join the #LookCloser campaign?

**Everyone has a role to play in protecting children from exploitation. By supporting our campaign, you can spread the word to ensure children get help when they need it most.**

- Visit and share our LookCloser webpage to spot the signs of exploitation including specific signs for a range of industries. View [here](#).
- Read and share our new resource on building positive relationships. Access it [here](#).
- Use our appropriate language guide to challenge victim blaming language. Access it [here](#).
- Use our #LookCloser assets, such as posters, email signatures and social media pack, to help raise awareness of child exploitation across your networks and communities. Access [here](#).



# Domestic Abuse Commissioner Report - Victims in their own right?

In April 2025, the Domestic Abuse Commissioner has published a report 'Victims in their own right'? Babies, children and young peoples experience of domestic abuse.

In 2021, children were, for the first time, recognised in law as victims of domestic abuse in their own right in England and Wales. Section 3 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 defines a child victim as any child who “sees or hears, or experiences the effects of, the abuse.” Despite this, it is still unclear what this means in practice.

This new report ‘Victims in their own right?’ examines the current response to children and young people who experience domestic abuse at home or in their family across both the statutory and non-statutory response. It draws on extensive engagement and comprehensive insights to support recommendations across seven key themes.

Read full report [here](#)



# 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