



## **Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership**

**Independent Chair – Guy Collings**

**Independent Scrutineer - Sarah Lawrence**

**Delivered via Email**

**Worried about a child? Call 020 8545 4226**

**Email: [mash@merton.gov.uk](mailto:mash@merton.gov.uk)**

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Date: 01 April 2020

Dear Partners

We are writing to firstly wish you and your colleagues well during the current times and to send our thanks for all that you are doing to continue to protect children and young people in Merton.

Please let us also take this opportunity to introduce ourselves as the new Independent Person and Independent Scrutineer for Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership as well as give you an overview of our work at the current time and to support the Partnership going forward. Guy has lived and worked in the Borough for a number of years and Merton holds a very special place in his heart. Sarah has worked in the local safeguarding partnership environment for over 20 years and is looking forward to developing the scrutiny role and getting to know you and the borough.

These unprecedented times were certainly not the environment in which we envisaged writing our introduction to you and please be assured that we will properly introduce ourselves at a more pertinent time.

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected us all in some way shape or form and no one knows for sure when we will be able to return to normality. What has struck us both in the short time we have been in post is the incredible commitment, dedication, professionalism and sheer bravery of colleagues in each and every agency, be they statutory or otherwise as they work to safeguard children and young people across the Borough.

We would like to offer a reassurance that the Partnership will remain active throughout these troubled times and we will offer the support that we can to this. Of course some things will be different, it is inevitable that some aspects may have to be prioritised and we will not be able to deliver everything that business as usual would allow. We have

begun our efforts as critical friends of MSCP to ensuring agencies' plans for this crisis are both robust and deliverable and will continue to support this approach. We are for example holding regular virtual meetings with the statutory partners to hear how they are adapting and of the extraordinary work they are carrying out to ensure that our children and young people are as safe as possible.

We'd like to take this opportunity reiterate that practitioners and partners who have a concern about a child or young person should continue to refer safeguarding concerns through the Multiagency Safeguarding Hub [MASH] or make contact with the allocated social worker for children open to Children's Social Care. Referrers should ensure that phone and email details for yourself and the child's parents are included when you do so.

Communication in this current situation remains key in ensuring we protect children, young people and families and so we ask that partners continue to call and email the MASH or the allocated social worker as usual if they have any concerns about vulnerable children.

Please feel free to contact either of us using the details at the head of this letter if you have any questions or would like to know more about our approach. We will endeavour to update you regularly and to keep information updated during this time and in future using the MSCP website [www.mertonscp.org.uk](http://www.mertonscp.org.uk)

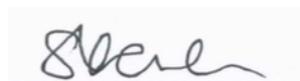
With all our best wishes to you, your teams and families as you continue in your key roles during this time.

Kind regards

*Guy Collings*

**Guy Collings**

Independent Person, Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership



**Sarah Lawrence**

Independent Scrutineer, Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership

Cc: Rachael Wardell Director of Children, Schools and Families, Julie Hesketh, Director of Quality & Governance at NHS Wandsworth & Merton CCGs, Superintendent Owain Richards, Head of Safeguarding, South West London Basic Command Unit, Metropolitan Police