



Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership Bulletin

1. Welcome

Welcome to the new Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership bulletin to help keep all of us across the partnership informed of key information and recent developments in policy and practice. If you have anything to include in future bulletins, please contact the Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership's Business Unit at MertonLSCB@merton.gov.uk.

This month we welcome a new Policy and Partnerships Manager – Maisie Davies who takes over management of the Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership Business Unit from Una McCarthy. A big thank you to Una for all her fantastic support over the last few months and wishing her all the best in her future endeavors.

We are also pleased to share that Jane McSherry takes over as Merton's Director of Children, Schools and Families from 26th April.

2. Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report

This month we published [Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership's annual report for 2019/20](#). 2019-20 has been a time of considerable change for Merton's safeguarding arrangements, formally ratifying the new partnership agreements. You can read more about this in the report, as well as the partnership's work on early help, domestic abuse and neglect, and contextual safeguarding – our three priority areas for 2019-20.

3. Early Help Strategy

Last month we consulted on our draft Early Help Strategy and Effective Support Model with associated tools including a new Early Help Plan and Assessment, which have been developed with input from partners across the multi-agency children's workforce and designed to aid work with families. We are currently reviewing your feedback and are looking forward to further developing this work. This will include a refresh of our threshold document (the 'Merton Wellbeing Model') as well as considerations of improving the way in which you can get in touch with the council when you are concerned about a child. Watch this space!

4. Everyone's Invited

The Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership is concerned by the recent testimonials on the Everyone's Invited website. If you are concerned about a child who lives or attends an education setting in Merton you can refer to Merton's Children's Services in the usual way. Concerns should be referred to

the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), Merton's single point of contact for all safeguarding concerns regarding children and young people in Merton. MASH on 020 8545 4226 or 020 8545 4227 (Out of hours: 020 8770 5000) or mash@merton.gov.uk

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) has overall responsibility for the management of allegations of abuse by adults who work with Children. Should a LADO consultation be required please call John Shelley: 0208 545 3187 or 07814 642 728. If you are sending a LADO referral or your query is LADO related please forward to: lado@merton.gov.uk or securely: lado@merton.gov.uk.cjism.net

Children and young people can make an anonymous report to the police about any crime via a young person friendly version of Crime Stoppers Fearless - Fearless@crimestoppers-uk.org. We would encourage children and young people to come forward with their experiences so that we can take the appropriate steps to safeguard and support them.

The NSPCC has set up a dedicated helpline from 1 April 2021 and the number is 0800 136 663. The helpline is free and anonymous and will be open Monday to Friday 8am – 10pm and Saturday to Sunday 9am – 6pm.

5. Section 11 Audit

Section 11 (S.11) of the Children Act 2004 places duties on a range of organisations, agencies and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Merton will be holding a S.11 audit this year to help organisations in Merton undertake their own quality assurance processes in regard to safeguarding and child protection. This year the Merton Safeguarding Children's Partnership will be undertaking a Section 11 audit. We will be in touch with organisations in the coming months about how you are expected to be involved.

6. London Multi-Agency Safeguarding Data Sharing Agreement

For the first time, a multi-agency working group has developed one [Multi-Agency Safeguarding Data Sharing Agreement](#) which partners across London are encouraged to sign. This has reduced the pressure on national or London wide groups to agree multiple different data sharing agreements for the same purposes. The working group had representation from local authorities, health and police, who have engaged with front line practitioners and other local agencies, like the voluntary sector. The agreement has been endorsed by the Information Governance for London group (IGfL), and the London Child Safeguarding Partnership.

7. MVSC becomes Merton Connected

As of 14th April, MVSC will operate under a new name and will be known as Merton Connected, with a new website mertonconnected.co.uk. Please note that no data held in the MVSC database will be transferred.

8. Training and Resources

The Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership (MSCP) training programme is available to all MSCP member agencies, the voluntary sector and independent sector agencies working with children, young people and their families in Merton.

The training courses aim to improve knowledge, skills and competencies within safeguarding practice in accordance with the [London Competency Framework \(PDF\)](#). Training modules coming up in the next couple of months include: effective support for families (early help), substance misuse, online safety and domestic violence and abuse.

You can find a full list of available courses and sign up here: [Training - Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership \(mertonscp.org.uk\)](#)

9. National Legislation, Resources, Policy and Research

- Last year the Government confirmed that the Domestic Abuse Bill would officially recognise children as victims. Last month, [Baroness Williams confirmed in Parliament](#) that the Government will be consulting on the provision of community-based domestic abuse services in the upcoming Victims' Law consultation.
- March saw the publication of the 'Start for Life' report following the Andrea Leadsom review into support for babies 0-2 years and [recommended that all parents should be able to access a 'Start for Life' package](#).
- The new Children's Commissioner is looking to undertake the 'largest ever survey of children in England' in [The Big Ask](#).
- Barnardo's [Nightwatch](#) provides free training for professionals in London who work in or with the night time economy. The training teaches participants to recognise and respond to concerns of child exploitation with a focus on child sexual exploitation.
- This [Tedx talk](#) by Carlene Firmin explores contextual safeguarding: re-writing the rules of child protection.

10. Key contacts

- Merton Safeguarding Children's Partnership Business Unit - MertonLSCB@merton.gov.uk
- Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 020 8545 4226 or 020 8545 4227 (Out of hours: 020 8770 5000) or mash@merton.gov.uk.