

Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership Bulletin - September 2021

Welcomes and Goodbyes

Independent Person

In our last news bulletin, we welcomed our new Independent Person, Aileen Buckton. Aileen is looking forward to chairing her first Full Partnership this month (Wednesday 29th September) and we look forward to hearing more about her first few months in the post in our next edition –watch this space!

Young Scrutineer

We are delighted to announce the long-awaited arrival of our new Young Scrutineer, Halima Mehmood. After graduating from Southampton with a BSc Hons in Physical Geography, Halima is now undertaking a Masters in Disability Studies and has a particular interest in inclusive participation and disability inclusive disaster risk reduction. Alongside her role as Young Scrutineer, she is also a Young Inspector for the London Borough of Merton, supporting the local authority with various projects such as the Young Residents survey, Covid-recovery response and SEND service improvement. She is excited to work with the Safeguarding Partnership.



We asked Halima a few questions about her new role as Young Scrutineer.

- Q. *Congratulations on your appointment to the Young Scrutineer role for Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership. What are you most looking forward to in this role?*
- A. ***I'm looking forward to working with partners to ensure that young people's voices and experiences are really heard and accounted for.***
- Q. *In your view, what makes an effective local safeguarding children partnership?*
- A. ***Communication, teamwork, and community liaison.***
- Q. *How do you think safeguarding children partnerships can put children and young people's voices and lived experience at the heart of what they do?*
- A. ***Children and young people's voices and lived experiences need to be heard in an inclusive and appropriate manner, and so having space for children and young people to express themselves is an effective way to ensure this.***
- Q. *What do you think might be your biggest challenges as Young Scrutineer and how will you overcome these?*
- A. ***My biggest challenges may be learning and adapting processes to allow for the diverse nature of the work and groups of people I will be working with, however I'm sure that this will become easier as I continue to familiarise myself with the team and processes!***

Executive

At the end of July, we said goodbye to our Executive member for Health, Julie Hesketh, Director of Quality at South West London CCG. We want to thank Julie for all of her valuable contributions to the Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership and wish her all the best for her future endeavors. We are delighted to welcome Gloria Rowland, Chief Nurse for South West London CCG (Gloria.Rowland@swlondon.nhs.uk) as our Executive member for health and look forward to working with her.

Sub-Group Chairs

In July we also welcomed Clive Vale, Detective Chief Inspector at the South West London Borough Command Unit (Clive.Vale@met.police.uk) into the Chair role for the Promote and Protect Young People Sub-Group. A big thank you for Amanda Mawhinney who chaired the group in the interim.

For more information on the work of our Sub-groups, please visit our website: [About Us - Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership \(mertonscp.org.uk\)](http://mertonscp.org.uk)

Local News

Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Serious Case Reviews

Publication of Baby Grace

In August, we published our [LCSPR Baby Grace report](#) and [7 minute learning for Baby Grace](#). The Baby Grace review highlighted some learning around how the Partnership supports new parents with crying babies, involvement of fathers, and understanding and confidence using routine enquiry for domestic abuse and Clare's Law.

One of the recommendations from the Baby Grace report was to share resources used by the local provider trust for Health Visiting to the partnership around supporting new parents. A big thank you to our health partners, in particular Central London Community Healthcare, for sharing their [antenatal video about what they offer to new parents](#). Our health partners use ICON, a programme that helps people who care for babies to cope with crying. ICON stands for:

I – Infant crying is normal

C – Comforting methods can help

O – It's OK to walk away

N – Never, ever shake a baby

You can find out more about the [ICON programme on their website](#) and we would welcome feedback from partners on this approach.

The Baby Grace review also highlighted issues around domestic abuse and practitioners' confidence in undertaking routine enquiry and having difficult conversations. It also highlighted possible gaps in knowledge around the use of Clare's Law. We may be speaking to partners more about what would support them to improve in these areas and would welcome your feedback. Clare's Law, often known officially as a Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme or similar, designates several ways for police officers to disclose a person's history of abusive behaviour to those who may be at risk from such behaviour. It is intended to reduce intimate partner violence. There are clear protocols for professionals being able to share the criminal history of perpetrators.

Please join us for our Lunch and Learn on Non-Accidental Injury in November to hear more from our Scrutineer about non-accidental injury:

- Lunch and Learn Non-Accidental Injury – 17th November 1pm-2pm – [Sign up here](#)

Jason – Lunch and Learn Contextual Safeguarding

Following publication of the Jason report earlier this year, we held our first ‘lunch and learn’ session on contextual safeguarding. We shared the learning from local learning reviews – not just Jason – but from learning reviews across London where contextual safeguarding, and child criminal exploitation in particular, was a theme. Following positive feedback from the event, we have decided to hold two further sessions this year so don’t miss out! Sign up below:

- Lunch and Learn Contextual Safeguarding – 1st November 12.30 - 13.30 - [Sign up here](#)
- Lunch and Learn Contextual Safeguarding – 2nd February 12.30 - 13.30 - [Sign up here](#)

Child D – Key theme reminders

You will remember that we published our Serious Case Review into Child D last year in February. Following some recent learning around use of interpreters and disguised compliance arising from our multi-agency audits and learning reviews, we would like to re-share the following resources and materials with the Partnership.

- [Use of Interpreters Guidance](#)
- [Presentation on Coercive Control](#)

Section 11 and school safeguarding audits

We have contacted agencies this month to request they complete a Section 11 audit during September and October; named contacts should have already heard from us. Please ensure you complete this assessment following the instructions provided, and contact us straight away if you are having any difficulties. More information is available [on our website](#). Schools will not be expected to take part in the Section 11, but will be expected to complete their annual safeguarding audit returns.

Thematic Scrutiny on Sexual Violence in Schools

In July, the Executive asked our Independent Scrutineer and Young Scrutineer – Sarah and Halima – to undertake a piece of thematic scrutiny work on sexual violence in schools. This will help the partnership to understand how effective we are in responding to sexual violence in schools. This work has yet to commence, and we are still developing the methodology.

You may be asked to participate in this work, and we would really encourage you to speak openly with Sarah and Halima about what you think is currently working well and what needs improving in this area. If you have any questions or would like to support this important piece of work, please get in touch with the Business Support Unit.

YOT Inspection Update

In August, [Merton’s report by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation \(HMIP\)](#) was published, rating Merton’s Youth Justice Service ‘Good’ overall with many ‘Outstanding’ areas, including for ‘Partnerships and Services’ and ‘Joint Working’. We’d like to thank the collective efforts across all of our partner agencies in contributing to this well-deserved inspection outcome. This includes recognition of the Youth Crime Prevention Executive Board’s work and resources committed, meaning that *“children can swiftly access a range of services and support, and there are good pathways for universal, targeted and specialist provision.”*

Adolescent Neglect Survey

Last month we asked you to participate in our Adolescent Neglect survey and 46 of you replied to tell us about how you are working with young people at risk of neglect. We want to thank everybody who responded – we are currently analyzing the findings, which will go to the Promote and Protect Young People group in September. We’ll update you on what we’re doing in response in the next bulletin.

Early Help Summit

We are pleased to announce that we will be hosting an Early Help Summit this Autumn, on 15th November, focusing on the importance of early help in response to Covid-19. This will be a fantastic event with keynote speakers and opportunities to explore with your multi-agency colleagues our early help priorities. We would encourage you to sign up and secure your place. You can sign up here: [Event : Early-Help-Summit - 12449 \(safeguardingmerton.org.uk\)](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/early-help-summit-12449)

Upcoming MSCP Training

To book any of the training below, please go to our [events and courses page](#).

Effective Support for Families – 5th October, 10th November

Impact of parental illness on children and young people – 7th October

Online Safety – 7th October

Female Genital Mutilation – 14th October

Multi-agency safeguarding training – 19th October

Race, culture and faith belief systems in safeguarding children – 2nd November

Understanding Eating Disorders – 10th November

Substance Misuse Part 1 – 11th November

Reducing Parental Conflict - Virtual session to be done at your own convenience.

Policy Update

Policy Review

The Policy and Training sub-group have been working with other sub-groups across the partnership to update our multi-agency policies. Partners are reminded that the MSCP and its member agencies are signatories to the pan-London child protection procedures as our local procedures, which can be accessed [from our website](#).

Information Sharing Agreement

In January, the pan-London Information Sharing Agreement was updated and the Quality Assurance Sub-Group recently considered its content and confirmed its use here in Merton. Please can we ask that all agencies ensure they are adhering to the policies and procedures in the Information Sharing Agreement, which is now available on our [website](#).

Escalation Policy

In response to learning from our recent learning reviews, we would like to remind partners of the Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership escalation policy, which is available [on our website](#).

Regional News

Pan-London Training Opportunities

We are pleased to inform you that there are now pan-London training opportunities available to all staff and practitioners working across Merton. These are free and you can sign up below:

15 October - Child Exploitation, 9.30-12.30

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/child-exploitation-pan-london-training-tickets-166670141881>

9 November -Infant Mental Health, 11.00-12.30

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/infant-mental-health-pan-london-training-tickets-166805988201>

9 December - Mental Health and Parenting, 9.30-16.30

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/mental-health-and-parenting-pan-london-training-tickets-166806786589>

National News

"This Myth of Invisible Men" published

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel has published its [third national review](#). The new report, published in September, provides important learning and recommendations regarding non-accidental injury of babies under 1 year old.

Since July 2018, the Panel has been notified of the death or serious harm of 257 babies under 1 year old through non-accidental injury. Rapid reviews for these babies often identify the father or male carer as un-assessed or 'invisible' within the risk assessment process. This means the ability of the male carer to be a safe parent, or the risk they presented, was not explored. Therefore, the Panel's third national review, published last week, is titled 'the myth of invisible men' because it seeks to understand why service design and practice tends to render fathers invisible and generally 'out of sight'.

If you are interested in finding out more about non-accidental injury and the learning from our recent Baby Grace learning review, please [join our Lunch and Learn on 17th November](#).

Important contacts

To contact us with any queries, questions or items to add to future news bulletins:

Email: MertonLSCB@merton.gov.uk

Telephone: 020 8545 4866

To contact Merton MASH:

Email: MASH@merton.gov.uk

Telephone: 020 8545 4226 or 020 8545 4227 (out of hours 020 8770 5000)

[Home - Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership \(mertonscp.org.uk\)](http://mertonscp.org.uk)

Forward Look

29th September 2021 – Full Partnership Meeting

6th October 2021 – Early Help & Neglect Subgroup

20th October 2021 – Policy and Training Subgroup

21st October 2021 – DA and Think Family Subgroup

29th October 2021 – Sub-Group Chairs Meeting

3rd November 2021 – QA Subgroup

9th November 2021 – PPYP Subgroup

24th November 2021 – Executive Meeting