



# Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership

## Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership Bulletin - November 2021

### Welcome

Welcome to the November issue of the Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership news bulletin. There are lots of recent developments in policy and practice so please have a browse in our local, regional, and national news sections. There are also lots of training opportunities available in the coming months; details of these can be found in our local news section along with information regarding two recently published Local Safeguarding Children Partnership reviews.

As always, if you have anything to include in future bulletins, please contact us using our new email address below.

### Change of Email

Our email address has now changed to [MertonSCP@merton.gov.uk](mailto:MertonSCP@merton.gov.uk). Please do make a note of this in your address books.

### Hellos and Goodbyes

#### **New Assistant Director Children's Social Care and Youth Inclusion, and Chair of Quality Assurance and Practice Review Sub-Group**

This edition we welcome London Borough of Merton's new Assistant Director of Children's Social Care and Youth Inclusion, Dheeraj Chibber. Dheeraj will be taking over from Sue Myers as the Chair of the Quality Assurance and Practice Review Sub-Group. A big thank you to Sue Myers for her support in the interim.

#### **Steve Langley retiring**

We are sad to say goodbye to Steve Langley, Head of Housing Needs, who is retiring in December. Steve has worked for Merton Council since 1974 and has held numerous and varying roles within the housing department, including rent rebates assistant, administration support officer, senior housing adviser, and chief lettings officer, to name but a few! Steve has been involved in many high-profile pieces of work over the years, including being part of the response to the Grenfell fire in 2017. He will be sorely missed in Merton, and we wish him well in his retirement.

#### **Elliot Brunton taking over as Head of Housing Needs**

Elliot Brunton, currently Housing Options Manager at Merton, will be taking over from Steve as Head of Housing Needs on 21<sup>st</sup> December. Best wishes and a warm welcome to Elliot as he prepares to transition to this role.

## Local News

### Early Help Summit

The MSCP hosted an Early Help Summit on 15<sup>th</sup> November. The theme of the summit was the impact of Covid-19 on early help services. Aileen Buckton, our Independent Chair, has written a blog, reflecting in more detail the themes of the summit. You can find a link to our blog page [here](#).

### Section 11 Audit Update

In September we asked agencies to complete their Section 11 audits and we know lots of you have completed them during the submission period. We would like to thank you for taking the time to complete and return these important audits that are designed to help organisations in Merton undertake their own quality assurance processes in regard to safeguarding and child protection. We are currently analysing the findings and we will be in touch soon with agencies to meet you and discuss the results and next steps.

### MSCP Website

The Business Support team has been working hard to bring forward some content updates and visitor experience improvements to the [MSCP website](#) over recent weeks and months.

What is new?

- The pages aimed at professionals working with children have all been reviewed and updated. Here you will now find information on the [MSCP Contextual Safeguarding Strategy](#), the [Effective Support for Families in Merton](#) model and information on the new [Children and Families Hub](#).
- There have also been updates under our Guidance section
- A [News section](#) has been created, providing both national and local updates (including back-issues of the MSCP Bulletin)
- There is now access to our [“7 Minute Learning”](#) resources
- The multi-agency training section is now more easily found.

There are elements that are still to be refreshed and the Business Support team would really value your feedback on how to improve the website further. Please do take a minute to have a browse and contact us with any thoughts and feedback you may have.

### Local Safeguarding Children Partnership Reviews

This month we published two new child safeguarding reviews on our website.

[Eddie - Child E](#) highlighted learning around the partnership’s understanding of self-harm and suicide prevention, racism and low expectations, and contextual safeguarding.

One of the recommendations from the review was to ensure that all service staff were made aware of the [Stay Alive](#) app, a platform for those at risk of suicide as well as those who are worried about someone. It also advised that Contextual Harm tools and guidance need to be linked to updated health guidance and disseminated throughout the MSCP.

[Ananthi - Child H](#) focused on learning around the impact of pain on a person’s mental health, the voice of the mother, the impact of Covid-19 on specialist services, and the dynamics of being a woman in the Southeast Asian community (in particular, the barriers to accessing services for this community).

The review advised that the MSCP be provided with information on what learning has been taken forward within the health system regarding the impact of Covid-19 and what actions are being taken to minimise long term impact on health provision. It also emphasised the further embedding of interpreters within health settings and made a recommendation to promote awareness of ESOL adult learning opportunities (please see ESOL adult learning opportunities in the training section below).

### Upcoming Training

#### **MSCP Training**

The table below shows up-and-coming training sessions for multi-agency partners. Please visit the dedicated MSCP [training page](#) to book places.

<b>Training</b>	<b>Date and Time</b>
<b><i>Effective Support for Families in Merton</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>To understand Merton’s effective support model, a tool used to support the assessment of needs of children, young people and families</i></li> </ul>	Thursday 2 December 2021 (14.00 - 16.00)
	Wednesday 12 January 2022 (10.00 - 12.00)
	Thursday 3 <sup>rd</sup> February 2022(14:00 - 16:00)
<b><i>Online Safety</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Understanding risks that children are exposed to online, including grooming</i></li> </ul>	Thursday 20 January 2022 (9.30 - 12.30)
<b><i>Key Principles in Responding to Young People’s lived experiences of Sexual Violence</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Social and Educational Context of Sexual Violence and Young People; key principles of sexual violence reduction; and responding to sexual violence with a whole organisation approach</i></li> </ul>	Thursday 27 January 2022 (10:00 - 14:00)
	Tuesday 22 February 2022 (10:00 – 14:00)
<b><i>Lunch and Learn - Contextual Safeguarding: Learning from Local Child Safeguarding Reviews in Merton and Across London</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1 hour interactive session exploring themes from local practice reviews in Merton and London on theme of contextual safeguarding</i></li> </ul>	Wednesday 2 February 2022 (12:30 - 13:30)
<b><i>Substance Misuse (Part 1 and 2)</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>To understand the context of young people’s substance use; identifying psychoactive substances; how substances affect young people and identifying risks.</i></li> </ul>	Part 1 - Thursday 10 February 2022 (10:00 – 13:00)

	Part 2 – Thursday 17 February 2022 (10:00 – 13:00)
<b>Female Genital Mutilation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Awareness and understanding in identifying and responding to harmful practices</i></li> </ul>	Monday 21 <sup>st</sup> February (10:00 – 13:00)
<b>Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) training: managing allegations against staff</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Merton process and procedures for managing allegations and serious concerns about professional practice and standards of care, help and support available to staff/volunteers and carers in relation to allegations, and implementation of policies and strategies to minimise risk of allegations</i></li> </ul>	Wednesday 16 March (10:00 – 12:30)
<b>Reducing Parental Conflict</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>E-learning – 4 modules to complete in your own time on parental conflict, impact on child outcomes, having challenging conversations and reducing parental conflict.</i></li> </ul>	E-learning – available to complete in your own time

### Domestic Abuse - Resources and Training

Domestic violence showed alarming rises during the Covid-19 lockdown. The one-stop-shop launched in 2010 had to stop face-to-face operations during the pandemic. The [relaunched service](#) will be open every Monday (except bank holidays) from 22 November between 9.30am - 12.00pm at Morden Baptist Church, Crown Lane. It will provide advice from different agencies including victim support and solicitors.

The Domestic Abuse and Think Family sub-group would also like to share the below domestic abuse training video from Greater Manchester with the Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership. It has some useful advice that is applicable to colleagues in Merton – please have a watch.

[GMMH Domestic Abuse Safeguarding Training - Subtitled](#)

### ESOL Courses

Merton College and the Merton Home Tutoring service are offering free ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) adult education classes. More information on the courses can be found following this [link](#). Please circulate this amongst your agencies.

### Suicide Prevention Training

Papyrus, a well-known national charity dedicated to preventing suicides among children and young people, is delivering training on behalf of the Southwest London CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group). The training on offer is their SP-EAK course (Suicide Prevention – Explore, Ask, Keep Safe), which is a 3.5-hour session. This training workshop aims to prepare participants to identify those with thoughts of suicide, respond effectively and connect them to support. Please refer to the table below for dates and booking information.

Date	Time	Booking Link
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Friday 3 December 2021	9:30 – 13:00	<a href="https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/sp-eak-suicide-prevention-explore-ask-keep-safe-tickets-187760987167">https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/sp-eak-suicide-prevention-explore-ask-keep-safe-tickets-187760987167</a>
Tuesday 7 December 2021	9:30 – 13:00	<a href="https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/sp-eak-suicide-prevention-explore-ask-keep-safe-tickets-187762882837">https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/sp-eak-suicide-prevention-explore-ask-keep-safe-tickets-187762882837</a>
Friday 10 December 2021	9:30 – 13:00	<a href="https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/sp-eak-suicide-prevention-explore-ask-keep-safe-tickets-187766975077">https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/sp-eak-suicide-prevention-explore-ask-keep-safe-tickets-187766975077</a>

## Parenting Programmes

The Merton Early Years and Family Wellbeing Service aims to enable those working in children’s social care to identify appropriate parenting programmes for families they are working with. The table below shows the list of courses available to families and who, specifically, they are aimed at:

Programme	Age	Description
<i>English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)</i>	Under 1 year	Parents with a child in age range with little or no English Language
<i>Baby Early Learning Together (ELT) 5 weeks</i>	0-8 months	Baby Massage with key messages covering the importance of early brain development, communication, and bonding – for new, first-time parents
<i>Baby Incredible years (IY) 10 weeks</i>	0-12 months	Understanding and responding to baby’s cues, the importance of communication and interactions with baby, how and where to go for support and advice.
<i>Toddler Early Learning Together (ELT) 6 weeks</i>	8-36 months	Understanding a child’s development. The importance of play and communication and providing ideas to enhance the home learning environment.
<i>Preschool Early Learning Together (ELT) 6 weeks</i>	19-36 months	Understanding a child’s development and developing school readiness in preparation for nursery or preschool.
<i>Attentive Parenting Incredible years (IY) 6 weeks</i>	2-5 years	Support to understand child’s development, the importance of communication and strategies to manage challenging behaviour.
<i>Empowering Parents, Empowering Communities (EPEC) 6 weeks</i>	5-11 years	Practical support to manage emotional and behavioral development

## Domestic Abuse and Think Family Survey

The MSCP Domestic Abuse and Think Family Sub-Group is undertaking a piece of work to ensure all professionals across the Partnership understand the Domestic Abuse thresholds and referral pathways for both child and adult victims of domestic abuse. It is also seeking some further information on confidence using routine enquiry and awareness of Clare’s Law in response to the recent Baby Grace

Practice Review. Please do take some time to complete the survey below. It will ask for your agency and role so that the subgroup can identify any issues for particular agencies – however, all findings will be anonymous so please be as open and as honest as you can.

[Domestic Abuse Thresholds and Referral Pathways Survey](#)

## Regional News

### Notification of changes to the London Child Protection Procedures

At the beginning of October 2021, a number of changes were made to the London Child Protection Procedures as part of the usual twice-yearly updates. This includes new definitions of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as set out in Working Together 2018. A complete list of all the changes can be found [here](#).

### LSCP Training Needs Surveys – Intra-familial Child Sexual Abuse

The London Safeguarding Children Partnership is looking to find out the training needs professionals have had in relation to intra-familial child sexual abuse and how confident they feel in their ability to identify and support children who are victims of sexual abuse within the family. The partnership has circulated two surveys to help with this work:

1. [Survey for Social Workers](#)
2. [Survey for School Staff, Youth Workers, Health Workers and Police.](#)

It is the hope of the LSCP that these surveys will inform local training programmes. The findings and accompanying resources will also be circulated amongst local SCPs. Please do take the time to complete the survey relevant to your agency.

### Engagement at virtual or hybrid Child Protection Conferences

Following a recent meeting, London Councils Child Protection Managers want to reinforce expectations of professionals attending Child Protection Conferences virtually and have highlighted the following:

- Professionals need to attend the whole meeting.
- Everyone needs to follow the instructions of the Chair regarding when they should have their camera on.
- The chat function should not be used unless specified by the Chair.
- Punctuality is important.

Conferences are hugely significant for families, and everyone needs to ensure that this is reflected in the way in which they engage in the meetings whether they are there in person or virtually.

## National News

### Reports and Consultations

[Positive Environments Where Children Can Flourish](#)

Ofsted guidance on Positive Environments Where Children Can Flourish was updated in October for inspectors. It is particularly focused on settings that provide care or education for children who have neuro-disability, communication support needs or special educational needs. You can find a link to the guidance [here](#).

#### Report: Suicide in Children and Young People

The National Child Mortality Database (NCMD) has published a report on suicide in children and young people. The report identifies common characteristics of children and young people who die by suicide, investigates factors associated with these deaths and pulls out recommendations for service providers and policymakers. You can find a link to the report [here](#).

#### HMIP Inspection: Black and Mixed Heritage Boys in YJS (Youth Justice Service)

A thematic inspection of the experiences of black and mixed heritage boys in the youth justice system was published on 21<sup>st</sup> October. National statistics show that 41% of children in youth custody last year were black or mixed heritage. Of the cases that were inspected where black or mixed heritage boys were sentenced to court orders, 60% had been excluded from school, almost a third had been victims of criminal exploitation, and 50% had experienced racial discrimination. Further details of the inspection, including interactive resources, can be found [here](#).

#### OFSTED Consultation on Children's Homes and Holiday Schemes

Ofsted has launched a consultation for children's homes and residential holiday schemes. The consultation contains proposals on new inspection arrangements, which include the repurposing of interim inspections in children's homes and using a combination of on and offsite inspection activities for residential holiday schemes. Anyone with an interest in children's homes and/or RHSDCs – including professionals, providers, families, children, and volunteers – is invited to share their views on the proposals [here](#).

#### Work and Pensions Committee Inquiry on Children in Poverty: No Recourse to Public Funds

Recently, the Association of Directors of Children's Services, jointly with the Local Government Association and the No Recourse to Public Funds Network, submitted to the Work and Pensions Committee inquiry on children in poverty.

Their key arguments are that support is only reaching the tip of iceberg as many families with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) have not been entitled to support (e.g., those without leave to remain) or may not approach Local Authorities for support due to fears around their immigration status. In addition, where costly support is provided to those with NRPF, local authorities are not being fully reimbursed for this.

For further information and learning surrounding NRPF, please head to the [NRPF Network website](#).

For further information regarding the inquiry itself please head to [UK Parliament's dedicated committee page](#).

#### **Legislation**

##### Liberty Protection Safeguards

The Liberty Protection Safeguards are planned to come into force in April 2022. They will provide protection for people aged 16 and above who are, or who need to be, deprived of their liberty to enable their care or treatment (and lack the mental capacity to consent to their arrangements). They have been designed to put the rights and wishes of those people at the centre of all decision-making on deprivation of liberty. Please read further details [here](#).

## Events

### Sign Health - 16 Days of Activism

Sign Health, a charity aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of the deaf community, is launching its “16 Days of Activism” campaign on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> November. The aim of the campaign is to raise awareness of violence against women and girls. There are a number of workshops available to practitioners throughout the campaign, further details of which can be found using this [link](#).

## Important contacts

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

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

Telephone: 020 8545 4866

To contact the Children and Families Hub:

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

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

## Forward Look

Monday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2021 – Subgroup Chairs Meeting

Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2021 – Executive Meeting

Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> December – Subgroup Chairs Meeting

*\*\*We are currently planning dates for next year’s meetings so please keep an eye out for these coming into your diary. Provisional dates for the Full Partnership are:*

*Monday 14<sup>th</sup> February – 14:00 – 17:00*

*Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> June 14:00 – 17:00*

*Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> October 14:00 – 17:00*



