



Merton
Safeguarding
Children Partnership

Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership News Bulletin – December 2023

Welcome and PIP Team News

Welcome to the December's edition of the MSCP News Bulletin! It has been a busy time for us all, we hope you are looking forward to the well-deserved break. We wish you a warm festive season and a very happy New Year!

Please do have a browse of our personal training courses that we have on offer, over the next couple of months as well as a range of local publications and national news. As always, please let us know of anything that can be included in the bulletins via emailing mertonscp@merton.gov.uk.

Welcome and Goodbyes

Head of Service, PIP: A big welcome to Tim Wallder, who has started as our interim Head of Service for Performance, Improvement, and Partnerships. Tim comes with a wealth of experience and insight, and we look forward to working with him in the coming months.

Local News

Joint Targeted Area Inspection

A huge thank you to all partners, staff, and agencies for all the hard work and cooperation in delivering on requests, sharing information, and working tirelessly to respond to the Joint Targeted Area Inspection of our partnership in November and early December.

The inspectors are reported to have seen a strong and effective partnership working to safeguard and support children affected by serious youth violence in Merton, and felt agencies were able to evidence the impact this is having for our young people. They have also highlighted some areas for improvement to help us strengthen this further and ensure a consistent multi-agency response to some of our most vulnerable children through their journey. Our letter of findings will be published on 30th January 2024, after which we will respond with a plan of action on how we will keep working to improve our offer.

We truly appreciate how many of you have helped us to share the dedicated and creative partnership practice going on that supports our children and young people affected by serious youth violence in Merton.

Joint MSCP/MSAB Conference

We will be holding our annual Joint Conference for Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership and Merton Safeguarding Adults Board on Thursday 21st March. More information will be shared early in the new year, including a link to register.

For now, **PLEASE SAVE THE DATE!** We'd love to see as many of you there as possible.

Babies cry, you can cope! ICON Evaluation

We have come to the end of the implementation of the ICON message across the MSCP and we are very grateful to all partners for being so committed in delivering the message. We are now entering our evaluation phase, so please do take some time to complete our evaluation questionnaires for [Staff/Practitioners](#) and [Parents/Carers](#) if possible.

Please contact mertonscp@merton.gov.uk for information regarding training and resources, and visit our website for updates and information: [Coping with Crying Babies](#).

The following 7-minute brief provides a quick overview and insight into the key ICON messages.

WHAT IS (A)BT ABUSIVE HEAD TRAUMA?
previously "Shaken Baby Syndrome", usually sustained via shaking and/or impact of an infant head.
causes of:
• sub-dural haemorrhages,
• parenchymal brain injuries,
• retinal haemorrhages,
• Can have associated upper spinal, long bone and organ trauma.

RISK OF ABUSIVE HEAD TRAUMA
Certain conditions can increase risk of babies crying and therefore a risk of AHT. conditions include:
• SIDS
• Colic
• Erythema
• Sepsis
• MAS
• Feeding difficulties
• High frequency crying

HOW AHT PRESENTS
• Collapsing
• Severe/Refractory jaundice
• Mild/Recurrent Abnormalities/Symptoms
• Breathing difficulties/apnoea
• Inconsistently responsive, cold and limp

WHAT ARE THE KEY MESSAGES OF ICON?
• Crying is a normal part of child development
• All babies will cry a lot from the ages of 2 weeks to 4 months, but this can vary from baby to baby
• Crying means to pick up the baby often and early morning - but this can vary between babies
• Crying is normal - all parents can feel stressed, but babies are not doing this on purpose
• Making a baby cry causes significant injury and even death - better to put the baby down safely and walk away for a few minutes if you are struggling

WHAT CAN PARENTS/CARERS DO TO HELP?
A baby may cry to cry more frequently at about 2 months of age. The crying may get more frequent and last longer during the next few weeks, lasting a total of about 30 minutes.

KEY INFORMATION
A crying episode can sometimes soothe the baby and the crying will stop as the baby, hungry, tired or in need of a nappy change.
The important message to share with parents/carers is to focus on the baby, not the crying.

WHAT ARE THE KEY MESSAGES OF ICON?
• Eliminate abusive head trauma in the above presentations
• Check parents/carers know about ICON
• Reassure parents/carers (bring) towards their crying baby
• Advise fathers/male carers are aware of ICON messaging
• Inform child's GP & HV
• Give medical treatment of any injuries or illnesses in parallel to considering, understanding and delivering ICON.

Right Care, Right Person – 1 month review

The Metropolitan Police Service is one month on following the roll out of the RCRP strategy, and have shared some information as to how this is going. Headlines include: since 1 November, Met deployment to RCRP related calls has reduced from 40% to 26% (a decrease of 14%) compared to the same period in 2022. To find out more, please click on the embedded PowerPoint below.



Neglect Toolkit

Please have a look at our website for updates and information on neglect and affluent neglect, a theme we are coming across in many areas of work: [Neglect and Affluent Neglect - Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership \(mertonscp.org.uk\)](#). Our website also has links to the [Neglect Toolkit](#), which can be shared and used widely.

Criminal Exploitation Training Information

The St Giles Trust has developed sessions for professionals and parents with speakers who have lived experience, to explore the realities and consequences of criminal exploitation as well as identifying signs and triggers that a child or young person may be involved in county lines. More information can be found on their website: [Child Criminal Exploitation - St Giles \(stgilestrust.org.uk\)](#).

Please click on the poster to find out more information.



Upcoming Training

The table below shows up-and-coming training sessions for multi-agency partners. Please visit the dedicated MSCP [training page](#) to book places. Some training sessions are in-person only. We will also be setting up our 2024-25 training over the next few weeks, so watch this space!

Training	Date and Time
January 2024	
Domestic Violence and Abuse - Virtual Session	WEDNESDAY 17 JANUARY 2024 (9:30 - 12:00)
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) training: Managing allegations against staff - Virtual session	TUESDAY 23 JANUARY 2024 (10:00 - 13:00)

February 2024	
Trauma-Informed Practice Training	THURSDAY 1 FEBRUARY 2024 (09.30 - 16.30) THURSDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2024 (09.30 - 16.30)
Evidence Based Interventions to support Parents experiencing conflict in their relationships	TUESDAY 6 FEBRUARY 2024 (09:30 - 12:30)

March 2024	
Substance Misuse/Exploitation Training	TUESDAY 19 MARCH 2024 (09:30 - 15.30)
Effective Support for Families In Merton	WEDNESDAY 20 MARCH 2024 (10:00 - 12:00)

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. Professionals can contact us for further advice/referrals via email at fsd@merton.gov.uk or alternatively visit our website for more information at www.merton.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/family-support-and-parenting

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.

Programme	Age	Description
<i>Preschool Early Learning Together (ELT)</i> 6 weeks	19-36 months	Understanding a child's development and developing school readiness in preparation for nursery or preschool.
<i>Attentive Parenting Incredible Years (IY)</i> 6 weeks	2-5 years	Support to understand child's development, the importance of communication and strategies to manage challenging behavior.
<i>Empowering Parents, Empowering Communities (EPEC)</i> 6 weeks	5-11 years	Practical support to manage emotional and behavioral development

ESOL Courses

The Learn English in Merton (LEiM) project is a referral service for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses in the borough. Potential learners can come to one of LEiM's referral and advice sessions where their level of English can be assessed, and they can then be signposted to the most relevant class. The advice sessions take place at the following times and places:

Date and Time	Place
Mondays – 1:00pm – 2:00pm	New Horizons Centre, Pollard's Hill
Mondays – 3:30pm – 4:30pm	Vestry Hall, Mitcham
Wednesdays – 1:00pm – 2:00pm	Wimbledon Library

For more information regarding this service, please contact advice@learnenglishmerton.org, or visit www.learnenglishinmerton.org

Merton Hate Crime Advice Surgeries

Merton Hate Crime Advice Surgeries are a safe space to discuss hate crime and how to report it anonymously. Members of the public can get free advice with no appointment necessary. Surgeries are currently being run over the phone on the second Tuesday of every month, from 12pm to 1pm. Please call 020 8545 4146. Upcoming dates for this year are as follows:

London SCP Training Sessions

London Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) provide free training advertised [here on their website](#).

Thursday 29 February 2024, 9:30am – 5:00pm

- **Intra-familial Child Sexual Abuse**, delivered by Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse, www.csacentre.org.uk. Please book using this link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/734337371847?aff=oddtcreator>

Thursday 29 February 2024, 2:00pm – 4:00pm

- **Threshold Document Workshop**, delivered by LSCP Training Sub-Group: <https://www.londonsafeguardingchildrenprocedures.co.uk/files/threshold.pdf>. Please book

using this link: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/threshold-document-tickets-719428579247?aff=oddtcreator>

Friday 1 March 2024, 12:00pm – 2:00pm

- **Information Sharing Guidance** – Safeguarding Children, delivered by the LSCP Training Sub-Group. Please book using this link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/734285797587?aff=oddtcreator>

Tuesday 21 May 2024, 9:30am – 5:00pm

- **Intra-familial Child Sexual Abuse**, delivered by Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse, www.csacentre.org.uk. Please book using this link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/734360701627?aff=oddtcreator>

Free online training

Partnership for Young London is running a series of courses on trauma-informed practice, which can be accessed through this link: [Events | PYL \(partnershipforyounglondon.org.uk\)](https://partnershipforyounglondon.org.uk/events)

Thrive LDN has developed a couple of free, concise, online training modules to support individuals and organisations:

- [Trauma-Informed Practice training – Thrive LDN](#) - The training supports an understanding of how trauma influences and shapes the lives of those it touches regardless of previous knowledge or role.
- [#ZeroSuicideLDN – Thrive LDN](#) -The training takes around 20 minutes to complete and is designed to help people identify warning signs and feel comfortable having conversations about suicide with friends and family.

The National FGM Centre are offering a free short e-learning on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). This tool will enable you to think holistically about FGM and will take you through key information about the practice, its context within harmful practices, and will also test you along the way.

- [FGM E-Learning Course – National FGM Centre](#)

Regional / National News

Working Together to Safeguard Children

An update to '[working together to safeguard children](#)' has been published. Key changes include the introduction of “lead safeguarding partners” (LSPs), who are responsible for strategy in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, and “delegated safeguarding partners” (DSPs) who are responsible for delivery. One of the DSPs must be appointed as “partnership chair” to act as a conduit between LSPs and DSPs. There is also clarification that a broader range of practitioners can be the lead practitioner for children and families under section 17. [Funding has been announced](#) for all multi-agency safeguarding arrangements to support changes.

Training	Date and Time
<i>January 2024</i>	
<u>Implementing changes to Working Together to Safeguard Children event</u>	TUESDAY 30 JANUARY 2024 (11:00 - 12:30)
<u>Introduction to the Children's Social Care National Framework and Dashboard event</u>	THURSDAY 1 FEBRUARY 2024 (13:00 - 14:30)

Mayor's VAWG Campaign

City Hall has launched the "Say Maaate to a Mate" campaign tackling problematic behavior and misogyny. More information can be found here: [Say Maaate to a Mate | London City Hall](#)



Families Missing out on Social Work

Families are missing out on social work support because early help staff given overly complex cases. A lack of workforce capacity in early help services likely to hinder full implementation of government social care reforms, say Ofsted, CQC and police inspectorate, in report on joint inspections. For more information: [Families missing out on social work support because early help staff given overly complex cases - report - Community Care](#)

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel announced a national review into child sexual abuse within the family environment on 7th December 2023. The review will explore the challenges in identifying, assessing, and responding to this type of abuse, while making recommendations on how children can be better protected from it. Follow this link to see the letter to the Secretary of State for Education from Annie Hudson, Chair of the Child

Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, announcing the review: [National review into child sexual abuse within the family environment: terms of reference - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-review-into-child-sexual-abuse-within-the-family-environment).

Merton Young Person's Risk and Resilience – Catch-22

Catch-22 have created some posters that can be printed and shared within your practices, surgeries, centres, schools for young people to access free, confidential services for support around alcohol and drug use. Please visit [Merton Young Person's Risk and Resilience | Catch22 \(catch-22.org.uk\)](https://catch-22.org.uk) for more information.



The poster is titled "Catch22 - Merton Young Person's Risk and Resilience". It features a yellow border and a white background. The text is as follows:

Catch22 - Merton Young Person's Risk and Resilience

Aged between 11 and 24 and would like some support around your alcohol or drug use?

Want to know more about the risks and effects of what you are using?

Whether you want to stop, make changes or keep yourself safer... We offer free, confidential, advice and support based on your needs.

catch 22

msm@catch-22.org.uk

[@Catch22Merton](https://www.instagram.com/Catch22Merton)

0203 701 8641

Scan this QR code to go to our referral form!

Three speech bubbles contain testimonials:

- "You don't realise what a difference you have made to me, you have literally saved my life!"
- "Catch22 is really beneficial. I've stopped smoking everyday and I've got down happy!"
- "Catch22 allowed me to get help and support. I didn't think I would get it, but they did!"

Joint thematic inspection of children on remand

Ofsted, the Inspectorate for Prisons and the Inspectorate for Probation [undertook a thematic review into remand](#), following the MOJ review into custodial remand in 2022. A series of recommendations are made, including to local authority children's services departments that they review their provision of support to children in police custody so that as many children as possible are released on police bail and into the care of local authority children's services.

Early years education and childcare entitlements announcements

Early years [entitlements funding rates to each council have been announced](#). The national average hourly rates paid by the government will be £11.22 for under twos, £8.28 for two year olds, and £5.88 for three and four year olds from April. An [explainer on the funding rates](#) provides the breakdown. The announcements come at the same time as the launch of the [childminder registration grant](#) and the response to the [early years funding – extension of entitlements consultation](#). We understand some local areas are struggling to use the delivery grant for local authority recruitment due to council-wide recruitment freezes. If this is an issue impacting your local area, please contact flora.wilkie@local.gov.uk.

Kinship care

The Department for Education has launched the first ever national kinship care strategy, “[championing kinship care](#)” along with £20 million of investment. Eight areas will trial matching kinship allowances to foster carer allowances, and the Virtual School Head role will be extended to children in kinship care. [Guidance for employers](#) in relation to kinship carers in the workplace has also been published.

Safeguarding children with disabilities and complex health needs in residential settings

The [Government has responded](#) to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel’s report on safeguarding children with disabilities and complex health needs in residential settings, which was carried out after children living in homes and residential special schools owned by the Hesley Group in Doncaster were found to have been abused. Work will now be undertaken to improve the safeguarding of disabled children living in regulated children’s homes.

Children’s social care national framework

The Department for Education (DfE) has published a [national framework](#) outlining the purpose of children’s social care, including principles, enablers and outcomes. A [dashboard](#) will be published next year with a dataset to inform understanding of how well those outcomes are being delivered, and work is underway to identify how to fill data gaps. A [data and digital strategy](#) has also been published. [Advice for local areas](#) has been published to support the embedding of the framework and the update to 'working together'.

Important contacts

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

Email: MertonSCP@merton.gov.uk

Telephone: 020 8545 4866

To contact the Children and Families Hub:

Email: candfhub@merton.gov.uk

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

Forward Look – MSCP Meetings

January 2024

Thursday 11th January 2024 15:00-15:45

Executive Group Meeting

Monday 22nd January 2024 10:30-12:00

Subgroup Chairs

Tuesday 23rd January 2024 09:30-11:30

Policy and Training Subgroup

February 2024

Thursday 1st February 2024 12:00-13:00

Executive Group Meeting

Monday 5th February 2024 14:00-17:00
Tuesday 6th February 2024 13:30-15:30
Monday 26th February 2024 10:30-12:00
Tuesday 27th February 2024 14:00-16:00

Merton Safeguarding Children Full Partnership
Prevention and Early Intervention Subgroup
Subgroup Chairs
Promote and Protect Young People Subgroup

March 2024

Wednesday 6th March 2024 14:00-16:00
Thursday 7th March 2024 12:30-13:15
Wednesday 13th March 2024 09:30-11:30
Thursday 21st March –
PLEASE SAVE THE DATE!

Quality Assurance & Practice Assurance Subgroup
Executive Group Meeting
Effective Safeguarding and Support Subgroup
Joint MSCP and MSAB Conference – more info to come –