



## Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership News Bulletin – February 2024

### Welcome and PIP Team News

Welcome to the February edition of the MSCP News Bulletin, the first of 2024! 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](mailto:mertonscp@merton.gov.uk).

### Welcome and Goodbyes

Charlene Norman has moved on from the MSCP to undertake a secondment in child protection business support over the next year. She'll be very missed from our team. Thank you, Charlene, for all your support to keep our partnership business running smoothly!

## Headline News

An updated [Working together to safeguard children](#) was published in December 2023. This is statutory guidance on multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children. The NSPCC has pulled together a useful [summary of the changes](#) and the MSCP has begun exploring what this means for the partnership locally, including via the Full Partnership in early February.

Alongside this, the Department for Education has published the new [Children's social care: national framework](#) - statutory guidance on the principles behind children's social care, its purpose, factors enabling good practice and what it should achieve.

### Learning events

The Department for Education are running a series of learning events to support the sector to understand and engage in the publications made in December 2023 on children's social care reform. The below sessions will focus on the changes made to the multi-agency statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children and are open to all those working with children and their families. You can use the links below to sign up to one of the sessions. Please note these sessions are all the same. The slides from 30 January event are below:



Implementing  
changes to Working T

- Thursday 22nd February 10:30 – 12:00: [register here](#)
- Wednesday 20th March 14:00 – 15:30: [register here](#)
- Thursday 25th April 10:30 – 12:30: [register here](#)
- Tuesday 21st May 10:30 – 12:00: [register here](#)

## Local News

### **Merton Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) – published findings**

*A message from Jane McSherry, MSCP Executive Member and Executive Director for Children, Lifelong Learning & Families at LB of Merton, regarding the recent JTAI inspection:*

*“We are pleased they recognised that “Most vulnerable children in Merton affected by serious youth violence and/or criminal exploitation benefit from effective strategically aligned and integrated partnership arrangements” and that partners in Merton “respond swiftly together to ameliorate emerging risks to children in local communities”.*

There are lots of examples of brilliant practice across the partnership outlined in the report, so please do give it a full read. It can be accessed here: [Merton JTAI findings](#)

As shared during the inspection, a few areas for improvement were identified. In response, the inspectorates have requested a multi-agency written statement of proposed action. The Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership has been determined as the lead for this and will be working to finalise this in the upcoming weeks before the deadline of 23 May 2024. If you have activity underway that might be relevant to include, please do contact the MSCP via [MertonSCP@merton.gov.uk](mailto:MertonSCP@merton.gov.uk).

Thank you again for all your hard work supporting children and families, especially in this particularly complex area of practice. We know there is always more we can do learn and strengthen our services, but thankfully in Merton we have a really strong foundation for this within our existing partnership.”

### **Joint Annual Conference with the Adult Safeguarding Board**

The MSCP will be joining the Merton Safeguarding Adults Board for our Annual Conference on Thursday 21 March. The areas of focus will include equality, diversity and inclusion. The conference will give you an opportunity to hear from keynote speakers with expertise in this area, alongside contributing to the discussion and networking with your colleagues across the Merton partnership.

**Please sign up here:** [Event : Joint-Annual-Conference---MSCPMSAB---Theme-TBC - 23650 \(safeguardinginmerton.org.uk\)](#)

### **Independent Scrutiny Update**

Our scrutineers support and challenge the local safeguarding partners in Merton to ensure that children are kept as safe as possible, and their wellbeing is promoted. One of the ways they do that is by carrying out scrutiny of key safeguarding themes that are of concern to the MSCP (Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership) and the community.

The current theme is investigating **neglect of children and young people** within safeguarding practice, specifically to look at current practice, what national learning there has been and to identify recommendations for future work. Please do keep a look out for invites to roundtable discussions and opportunities for children to participate in focus groups.

### **Private Fostering Awareness Campaign**

The London Borough of Merton has a legal duty to ensure that any child or young person is safe, well looked after and does not come to any harm in a private fostering arrangement, by making sure that he/she and their carer are visited regularly and offered advice and guidance when needed.

Please watch this clip on private fostering and visit our [website](#) for more information and printable resource posters to be shared in centre's, schools, surgeries/practices etc.



### **Somebody Else's Child: A film about private fostering**

### **ICON Update**

The ICON eLearning website is now updated. The new training is web-based and includes a certificate upon completion. If you have access to the members portal, you can use this link: <https://training.iconcope.org>



### **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. All training listed below is virtual.

<b>Training</b>	<b>Date and Time</b>
<a href="#">Adultification Workshop</a>	Thursday 22 February 2024 (10:00 – 12:00)
<a href="#">Adultification Workshop</a>	Tuesday 12 March 2024 (10:00 – 12:00)
<a href="#">Relationship-Based Practice In Merton</a>	Thursday 14 March 2024 (09:30 – 13:00)
<a href="#">Multi-Agency-Safeguarding-Training</a>	Monday 18 March 2024 (9.30 - 15.00)
<a href="#">Substance Misuse/Exploitation Training</a>	Tuesday 19 March 2024 (09:30 – 15:30)
<a href="#">Effective Support for Families In Merton</a>	Wednesday 20 March (10:00 – 12:00)
<a href="#">Joint Annual Conference – MSCP/MSAB</a>	Thursday 21 March (11.30 – 17:00)
<a href="#">Domestic Violence and Abuse</a>	Tuesday 9 April (09:30 – 12:00)
<a href="#">Mental-Capacity-Act-and-deprivation-of-liberty-for-children-and-young-people</a>	Wednesday 17 April 2024 (09.30 - 12.30)
Introduction to Neglect <i>Booking link will be shared in due course but please save the date!</i>	Monday 22 April 2024 (half-day session – AM/PM TBC)
Introduction to MSCP Neglect Toolkit <i>Booking link will be shared in due course but please save the date!</i>	Friday 24 May 2024 (09.30 - 16.30)

## 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](mailto:fsd@merton.gov.uk) or alternatively visit our website for more information at [www.merton.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/family-support-and-parenting](http://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
<a href="#"><u>Early Learning Together Baby Programme</u></a>	0-6 months	First time parents with a baby under eight months old at the time of taking the course which will run for 5 weeks
<a href="#"><u>Early Learning Together Toddler Programme</u></a>	8-35 months	For parents of children aged from 12 months to the child's third birthday who would benefit from support to understand their child's development.
<a href="#"><u>Early Learning Together Preschool Programme</u></a>	20-35 months	Offers children, parents and carers the chance to experience what it's like to spend time at nursery or preschool.
<a href="#"><u>Incredible Years Attentive Parenting Programme</u></a>	2-5 years	Group based parenting course for families with children aged 2 to 5. Focusing on how parents can promote their children's emotional regulation, social skills, problem-solving abilities, reading and school readiness.
<a href="#"><u>Incredible Years Baby Programme</u></a>	0-11 months	information about how babies grow and develop and how they can support their baby in the early months of their life, including communicating with baby, safety and where to get advice and support.
<a href="#"><u>Early Learning Together Stepping Stones English (ESOL)</u></a>	Under 1 year	12 week course for parents to start to learn basic English. The course is for mums-to-be and mums with their babies who are aged under one year old.
<a href="#"><u>Freedom Programmes</u></a>		For women who have or are experiencing domestic abuse, children of primary school age who have or are experiencing domestic abuse and perpetrators of domestic abuse who are parents of children and wish to change their behaviour
<a href="#"><u>Tripple P Parenting Programmes</u></a>	4-16 years	Triple P is a parenting programme, but it doesn't tell you how to be a parent. It's more like a toolbox of ideas. The three Ps in 'Triple P' stand for 'Positive Parenting Program'
<a href="#"><u>Empowering Parents, Empowering Communities Programme</u></a>	4-11 years	For Merton parents of of children of primary school age. Provides parents with practical skills for parenting and managing behaviour and emotions
<a href="#"><u>Social Communication Group</u></a>	2-3 years	The Social Communication Group programme provides support for children with ASD or social communication difficulty.
<a href="#"><u>The Incredible Years Autism and Language Delay Programme</u></a>	2-5 years	The 11 week programme focuses on developing language and social skills and promoting children's emotional and self-regulation, so helping them to develop positive relationships with others
<a href="#"><u>Portage Parenting Service</u></a>	0-2 years	An educational support service for children with significant additional needs and disabilities and their families.

## **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:

<b>Date and Time</b>	<b>Place</b>
Mondays – 12:00pm – 1:30pm	New Horizons Centre, Pollard's Hill
Mondays – 3:30pm – 4:30pm	Vestry Hall, Mitcham
Wednesdays – 12:30pm – 2:00pm	Wimbledon Library

For more information regarding this service, please contact [advice@learnenglishmerton.org](mailto:advice@learnenglishmerton.org), or visit [www.learnenglishinmerton.org](http://www.learnenglishinmerton.org)

## **Merton Hate Crime Advice Surgeries - [Hate incidents and hate crime](#) | [Merton Council](#)**

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 every second Wednesday of the month 12:00 – 1:00pm at The Civic Centre.

## **London SCP Training Sessions**

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

## **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 \(partnershipforyounglondon.org.uk\)](#)

**MindEd** offers free multi-professional eLearning, and can be used by teachers, health and mental health professionals, police and judiciary staff, social workers, youth service volunteers, school counsellors among others to support their professional development. Take a look through their eLearning catalogue here:

- Professionals and carers: [MindEd For professionals and Volunteers](#)
- MindEd resources for families: [MindEd For Families](#)

## **Regional / National News**

### **The Metropolitan Police Service's handling of the sexual and criminal exploitation of children**

The HMICFRS has published the recent inspection of the London Metropolitan Police Service with recommendations to improving service delivery under the theme of sexual and criminal exploitation of children in London. The MSCP will be supporting the South West Basic Command Unit to respond to the identified learning.

The full report can be found here: [The Metropolitan Police Service's handling of the sexual and criminal exploitation of children - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services \(justiceinspectors.gov.uk\)](#)

### **Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel Annual Report**

The independent annual [report](#) for serious child safeguarding incidents, 2022 to 2023 was published at the end of January. The report reflects in some depth on six key themes:

- Effective leadership and culture supporting critical thinking and professional challenge.
- Giving central consideration to racial, ethnic, and cultural identity and the impact on the lived experiences of children and families
- The importance of a whole family approach to risk assessment and support
- Recognising and responding to the vulnerability of babies
- Domestic abuse and harm to children
- Keeping a focus on risks outside the family

### **Boys, Childhood Domestic Abuse, and Gang Involvement Briefing**

Bristol University has released a fascinating [policy briefing](#) based on the book “*Boys, Childhood Domestic Abuse, and Gang Involvement*” by Author Dr Jade Levell, a senior lecturer in criminology at the University of Bristol and part of the Gender and Violence Research Centre. The briefing includes some policy recommendations to be considered. Dr Levell also published this interesting [Blog](#) on her website just last month focusing on her thoughts on codependency in the context of childhood DVA.



### **Children's Mental Health Week**



The MSCP are happy to promote children's mental health week which ran from 5<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> February. This year's theme is 'My Voice Matters'. Here are some useful resources from [Stormbreak mental health week 2024 resource pack](#), [childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk](http://childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk) and the [Mental Health & Wellbeing Resource Hub - BBC Children in Need](#)

### **Fatal domestic abuse reviews renamed to better recognise suicide cases**

Following amendments in the Victims and Prisoners Bill, Domestic Homicide Reviews will be renamed to Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews following calls to better recognise deaths from domestic abuse related suicide. More information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/fatal-domestic-abuse-reviews>

## 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

- *MSCP Subgroup Chairs Meeting – Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February (10:30am-12:00pm)*
- *MSCP Promote & Protect Young People Subgroup - Tuesday 27 February (2:00-4:00pm)*
- *MSCP Quality Assurance and Practice Review Subgroup - Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> March (2:00-4:00pm)*
- *MSCP Executive Meeting - Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March (12:30-1:15pm)*
- *MSCP Effective Safeguarding & Support Subgroup - Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March (9:30-11:30am)*
- *MSCP Prevention & Early Intervention Subgroup - Friday 19<sup>th</sup> April (2:00-4:00pm)*