



Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership

Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership News Bulletin – May 2024

Welcome to the May edition of the MSCP News Bulletin! We hope you have been enjoying the brighter days of Spring so far! 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

After 25 years of dedicated service in local government, and 9 years working in Merton, including most recently as our Executive Director of Children, Lifelong Learning and Families and a part of our MSCP Executive Group, we said a heartfelt goodbye and happy retirement to Jane McSherry this month. Merton Council has appointed Beverley Hendricks as its new Executive Director for Children, Lifelong Learning and Families. Beverley moves from Haringey Council where she is Assistant Director for Safeguarding and Social Care. Elizabeth Fitzpatrick (Director for Education & Early Help) will be providing interim cover before Beverley starts later in the year.

We also said goodbye to DCI Clive Vale, who retired in March this year, and welcomed DCI Laura Semple as the new chair and lead of Promote and Protect Young People Sub-Group. We also welcome DI Husna Nessa who now represents the Police in our Effective Safeguarding and Support Subgroup.

Catherine O'Reilly was also brought on-board to PIP; she is now working alongside Chloe in our MSCP Admin team as Partnership Administrator! Catherine will be with us over the next year.

Headline News

Revised information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners

The Department for Education has updated their guidance on information sharing for professionals providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers. The guidance is to issue further education on sharing confidential information and data protection, as well as explaining the relevancies of lawful basis, consent and responsibilities different professionals are to possess.

Please take note of the updated guidance here: [DfE non statutory information sharing advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers](#)

MSCP/MSAB joint conference

The third Annual Joint Conference between the MSCP and Merton Safeguarding Adults Board was held on Thursday 21st March and was attended by approximately 90 people. The focus of the day was the theme of Recognising and Respecting Diversity. We were delighted to hold the event at the Baitul Futuh Mosque in Morden, and we would like to extend our thanks to all of the staff who helped the event run successfully on the day.



The event provided a wonderful opportunity to raise awareness and discuss important issues such as adultification and learning from reviews, and how these matters impact safeguarding processes. We would also like to extend our thanks to Jahnine Davis (National Child Safeguarding Review Panel member & Director of Listen Up) and Dr. Antant Professor of Social Work, East Anglia) for their thought-provoking and engaging keynote sessions.

Publication of MSCP Online Safety Strategy

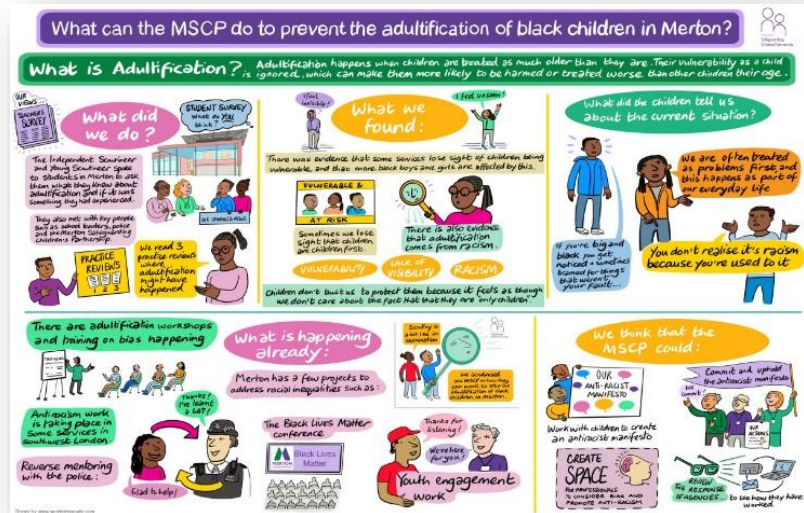
In March 2024 the refreshed [Merton Online Safety Strategy](#) was published. This Online Safety Strategy aims to outline our commitment to supporting young people in staying safe online and mitigating the potential risks associated with internet use. **Please share with colleagues and sign up to the MSCP Online Safety training** if you'd like to develop your knowledge on this theme (see details under upcoming training below).

The NSPCC recently published an article discussing language and why it matters specifically in relation to staying safe online. Case reviews carried out by the NSPCC have highlighted the importance of language in recording conversations with children, what was said in the child's words, along with their own professional views, so that no detail is missed, and records are child-focused. So, when considering someone a child has met online, professionals should acknowledge that the child considers the person as a friend, but it's important that they explore further to understand why the child is using that word and the dynamics of the relationship. The full article can be found using the following link: [Why language matters: how referring to online 'friends' can mask safeguarding concerns | NSPCC Learning](#)

Local News

MSCP Adulthood scrutiny visual summary

We are pleased to share the newly created MSCP easy-read visual tool describing adulthood; this has been **developed to highlight the prominence of adulthood within Merton**. The summary can allow professionals and parents to become conscious of their bias and how it impacts their language when interacting with children; it also informs readers on the findings the Young Scrutineers developed what Merton is.



To access the tools and relevant information, visit: [MSCP – Independent Scrutiny - Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership \(mertonscp.org.uk\)](https://mertonscp.org.uk)

Please share widely with your networks to support the MSCP in driving forward our strategy to prevent the adulthood of children in Merton.

Family Hub bitesize - new MSCP webpage and guidance

We are excited to announce that a **new webpage has been recently published on our MSCP website regarding Family Hubs**. This page contains useful information on what the Hubs are, the services they provide, and how to get in touch.

Also included are **24 `bitesize learning` presentations** that contain key information and resources for professionals and families on a variety of topics – from mental health to Youth Justice services. The aim of these bitesize presentations is to support all family hub partners to:

- Develop an understanding of each service area.
- Have knowledge of the tools and services available in Merton (including referral pathways).
- Understand the resources available locally and nationally when supporting families.

Managers from all organisations are encouraged to promote the Bitesize Overview Modules within their teams and include them in staff inductions, staff meetings, supervisions, and other staff forums. Practitioners from across the children's workforce are encouraged to share additional services or changes to service delivery.

To view the webpage, please follow this link: [Family Hub - Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership \(mertonscp.org.uk\)](https://mertonscp.org.uk)

If you have any queries, please contact familyhubs@merton.gov.uk.

Workforce Development and Early Help Tools

MSCP have developed a **summary of guidance to support practitioners working alongside families to appropriately consider needs and identify the most appropriate support**, ultimately empowering families to make positive, sustainable changes, and reducing risks from escalating.

Within [Effective Support for Families in Merton](#), professionals can access tools to provide to families seeking extra support, as well as access upcoming staff trainings, assessment templates, and direct referrals to aid next-step planning. We ask professionals to kindly circulate widely with your networks.

Carers First launches new service to support adult carers in Merton

As of this April, **Merton have joined up with the charity Carers First to provide a network of support for carers in the borough**. Carers First aims to raise awareness and deliver programmes designed by carers on health, wellbeing, practical help and financial issues, whilst supporting carers to balance their caring role with time for themselves.

With an estimate of 16,000 carers in the Merton area alone, this key partnership offers an accessible way to receive support through services online, by phone, and in-person. Those providing unpaid care in the borough are to benefit from these new support services and can find out more about the available support here [Online, Phone & In Person Support for Unpaid Carers - Merton | Carers First](#)

Social Prescriber Service for Young People in Merton

Professionals in Merton can now **promote the Social Prescribing service to support young people with their wellbeing**. The aim of Social Prescribers is to guide and help young people with managing stress, loneliness, meeting new people, learning new skills, exercising, or learning more about employment, benefits, housing and legal advice. Young people can self-refer to the service or can be connected via talking with their GP, school nurse, Talk Off the Record, or their youth worker. Six free sessions are available per client with a Social Prescribing link worker, at an easy-access venue such as their GP surgery, school or youth club, Off The Record, or by phone. Translators are also available on request. *To note: the young person referred must be aged 13 – 19, or up to 25 if they have additional support needs, to access the service.*

For any additional information or to refer, please visit: [Social Prescribing for Young People in East Merton, Morden and North Merton : Enable \(enablelc.org\)](#) or email cypmerton@enablelc.org.uk

DBS outreach service & new MSCP training offer

Kiran Rehal, Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Regional Outreach Adviser for Greater London and a first point of contact for DBS enquiries, will be **delivering a training session to staff explaining the purpose of the DBS, as well as the services and products it provides, and the part it plays in safer recruitment**. The session will cover many different subtopics including the different levels of DBS checks and when an employee is eligible for a check, and there will be a Q&A provided at the end of the session for staff.

To book onto the MSCP event please visit: [Event : Disclosure--Barring-Service-DBS-Briefing-Session---Playing-a-part-in-safer-recruitment - 25088 \(safeguardinginmerton.org.uk\)](#)

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 of our training is now in person so please check the details before signing up.**

Training	Date and Time
Multi-Agency Safeguarding Training	Tuesday 4 th June 2024 (9.30-12.30)
Children Adolescent to Parent Harmful Behaviour (CAPHB) Awareness Training	Tuesday 4 th June 2024 (10.00-13.00)
Effective Support for Families in Merton	Wednesday 12 th June 2024 (10:00-12:00)
Substance Misuse/Exploitation Training	Tuesday 25 th June 2024 (9:30-15:30)
Evidence Based Interventions to support Parents experiencing conflict in their relationships	Wednesday 26 th June 2024 (10:00-13:00)
Domestic Violence and Abuse	Thursday 27 th June 2024 (9:30-12:00)
Online Safety	Monday 1st July 2024 (10.00-11.30)
Trauma-Informed Practice Training	Wednesday 10 th July 2024 (9:30-16:30) Wednesday 17 th July 2024 (9:30-16:30)

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](#)

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.

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)</i> 5 weeks	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)</i> 10 weeks	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)</i> 6 weeks	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)</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

Regional / National News

[Safeguarding Children in Schools and Colleges: A Call for Evidence - Department for Education](#)

The Department for Education has announced their **12-week call for evidence to take a variety of professionals' views on safeguarding practice development and direction**, in advance of the Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) policy launch in 2025. Keeping children safe in education is being developed to help schools and colleges identify safeguarding concerns early, develop the right relationships with other professionals, and support children to put appropriate processes and procedures in place, as safeguarding practice continues to grow and develop.

If you wish to share your knowledge, please visit: [Safeguarding Children in Schools and Colleges: A Call for Evidence - Department for Education - Citizen Space](#)

[Asylum and safeguarding survey](#)

London Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) has created and circulated **two short surveys** for professionals to confidentially share their experience and viewpoints in **addressing safeguarding concerns amongst people seeking asylum**. Please read below to determine which survey is appropriate.

VCS Participants: If you work or volunteer with a voluntary & community sector organisation working with people seeking asylum (national/local charities, NGOs, faith-based groups, social clubs, voluntary organisations, cultural networks, or social enterprises), please access the survey here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LRCZG8X>

Other Participants: If you work for an organisation involved in safeguarding for people seeking asylum that is not a VCS (London accommodation provider, local authority, health or education providers, Migrant Help, Home Office, or statutory partners), please access the survey here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FGSN77T>

LSCP are also conducting interviews and focus groups as a part of this research. If you would be interested in taking part or have questions or concerns about this survey, please contact Mallory Carlson at mcarlson.consulting@gmail.com

[Damp and Mould Checklist for practitioners visiting families within the home](#)

London's public health system partners have designed a **'Damp and Mould Checklist'** for **frontline health and social care professionals to use when they visit residential properties** in London.

This checklist includes:

- Support with identifying damp and mould concerns
- Support with identifying households most at risk
- Support with acting on concerns

To find the in-depth checklist and more information about this development, visit: [MECC Link](#)

White Ribbon: building gender equality

White Ribbon UK, the UK's leading charity engaging with men and boys to end men's violence against women and girls (VAWG), have **developed a learning resource to give education practitioners the knowledge and tools to introduce the concept of gender and inequality to their students safely**. The resource explores the issues of gender inequality in a child-centred and age-appropriate way; through practical learning experience, educators can support young people to recognise the impact of gendered norms on their everyday lived experience.

The resource includes a teaching guide that outlines the issue, White Ribbon's education approach, and how to facilitate the sessions provided; two learning sessions for each of the following age groups: Key Stage 1 and Lower Key Stage 2; Upper Key Stage 2; Key Stage 3 onwards, and a fact file for teachers and students with useful information and learning for each session.

To access the resource and other relevant information, please visit: [Our Resources — White Ribbon UK](#)

Assessments - learning from case reviews

Case reviews conducted by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (CSPRP) this year have **emphasised the concerns surrounding assessments and how they're carried out within children's safeguarding practice**. This research has highlighted prominent aspects professionals are to embody in all assessments they perform - the voice and needs of the child and understanding their lived experience; involving all significant people in the child's life; gathering and sharing information between agencies and local areas, and critically evaluating the information collected and acting on it.

More information can be found here [Assessments: learning from case reviews \(nspcc.org.uk\)](#)

Review published with recommendations on how to improve NHS gender identity services

Dr Hilary Cass, Chair of Independent Review of gender identity services for children and young people, has submitted her **final report and recommendations to NHS England on how to improve gender identity services** across the board. The review was conducted to provide appropriate clinical care recommendations to the NHS and ensure children and young people questioning their gender identity or experiencing gender dysphoria receive a high standard of care that meets their needs, is safe, and holistically and effectively approached.

To find out more information and download the final report, please visit: [Final Report – Cass Review](#)

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

June 2024

Monday 3rd June 2024 11:00 – 13:00

Effective Safeguarding and Support Subgroup

Thursday 6th June 2024 12:30 – 13:30

Executive Group Meeting

Tuesday 11th June 2024 14:00 – 16:00

Quality Assurance Subgroup

July 2024

Wednesday 3rd July 2024 14:00 – 17:00

Full Partnership Meeting

Thursday 4th July 2024 12:30 – 13:30

Executive Group Meeting

Wednesday 10th July 2024 09:30 – 11:30

Policy & Training Subgroup

Tuesday 16th July 2024 10:00 – 12:00

Promote and Protect Young People Subgroup

Monday 22nd July 2024 10:30 – 12:00

Subgroup Chairs Meeting

Tuesday 23rd July 2024 11:00 – 13:00

Prevention & Early Intervention Subgroup