

**Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership
News Bulletin – August 2024**



Welcome to the August edition of the MSCP News Bulletin! We hope you are enjoying the lovely sunshine and the hot weather. Please do have a browse of our training courses 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.

We welcomed Beverley Hendricks, who has joined as the Executive Director of Children, Lifelong Learning and Families as well as the MSCP Executive Group member for the local authority. We would like to thank Elizabeth Fitzpatrick for providing interim cover as part of our MSCP Executive.



Sarah Slater will be on maternity leave with her estimated last day on the 20th September; Julie Mlambo will be covering as Interim Policy & Partnerships Manager from mid-September.

Julia is an experienced interim and has undertaken various policy and partnership roles, including Children's Safeguarding Partnership Manager, across local authorities and community and voluntary sectors. We are excited to welcome Julia to our team!

Headline News

Vamp (Child M) - Publication of LCSPR Report & 7 minute learning

Following the tragic death of Child M/'Vamp' in 2022, the MSCP have now published the full final report, with much contribution from professionals and Vamp's family. Vamp was a British teenage girl who tragically died by misadventure following an episode of drug

use in July 2022. Vamp was subject to a child protection plan under the category of neglect from March 2022, and increasingly came to the attention of services for missing episodes, self-harm, and allegations of rape. It is crucial as a partnership we learn together from Vamp's case, to improve outcomes for other young people and their families in Merton.

Alongside the report, a 7 minute learning has been created to support colleagues with the dissemination of key points.

- [Child M 'Vamp' LCSPR report – July 2024](#)
- ['Vamp' Child M 7-minute learning](#)

We urge professionals to use the 7 minute learning in order to raise awareness as well as circulating and discussing the report in more detail with colleagues.

Please distribute both linked documents widely.

A lunch & learn event has been created to share this learning across the partnership; this will be led by Nicky Brownjohn, our independent reviewer. **Please join our Lunch & Learn event, and share the registration widely with your colleagues:** [Event : Lunch-and-Learn-Vamp-Learning-Review - 26677 \(safeguardinginmerton.org.uk\)](#)

News: CAPHB Project updates

The Children Adolescent to Parent Harmful Behaviour (CAPHB) programme was created following research conducted by the Mayor of London in April 2022 that highlighted a national underreporting of Child and Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (CAPVA). The programme aims to deliver comprehensive support and intervention for families affected in Merton, as well as enhancing multi-agency collaboration and ensuring best practices across the borough.

So far, two CAPHB Awareness training sessions have been delivered, with much positive feedback reported. The 3-hour training sessions are designed to educate practitioners on the definition, prevalence, and underlying causes of CAPHB.

If you are interested in attending the next CAPHB awareness training day will be on Thursday 5th September 10-1pm at the Civic Offices; to sign up please click the link here: [Event : Children-Adolescent-to-Parent-Harmful-Behaviour-CAPHB-Awareness-Training - 25927 \(safeguardinginmerton.org.uk\)](#)

Vamp – Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review
Summary July 2024 (Vamp was also referred to as Child M)

Vamp was a white British teenage girl who tragically died following an episode of drug use in July 2022


- Vamp's mother described her as 'Artistic, sporty, so talented at gymnastics. She was a popular girl who is remembered by her friends'
- Vamp was subject to a child protection plan under the category of neglect since March 2022, at the time of her death by misadventure. Vamp increasingly came to the attention of services during 2022 – for missing episodes, self-harm, allegations of rape.
- Vamp was seen as hard to reach. There were numerous accounts of her being described as 'not engaging'.
- Vamp told a professional that 'talking makes things worse' and she felt overwhelmed by the number of professionals involved. She indicated during return home interviews that she was unhappy at home.

What worked well

- Agencies reflected that, although Vamp was hard to reach, they managed to work well with the family. Vamp's mother was positive about agencies.
- Considerable efforts were made to reach Vamp before she died. Vamp's social worker persevered, and just days before Vamp's death had managed to get her to agree to do a joint activity.
- Vamp was referred to CAMHS following reports of self-harm, but it was reported she made it clear she did not want engagement with any services. Positively, she remained open to CAMHS, with work targeted at supporting her family network.
- Although school attendance was a concern, Vamp's school made persistent efforts to support her. At the time of her death, there were plans in place for the Children Missing Education panel to consider a PRU placement and allocate a mentor. Concerns were also shared between Vamp's primary and secondary school at transition.

What could have worked better

- Although Vamp was well known to services, there was limited understanding of her lived experience.
- Vamp's adult sibling gave a different perspective to agencies & Vamp's mother – requests for urgent help were not acted on in time. There needed to be more awareness of Vamp's experience, and her mother's needs due to her own health issues.
- Vamp's age was incorrectly recorded as 2-3 years older than her actual age at one point in records, indicating potential identification.
- During the Covid-19 pandemic, Vamp's mother had a period of severe mental illness, from which point Vamp may have become a young carer. Agencies did not appear to have assessed this part of Vamp's experience.
- Vamp lived in Merton, but Sutton provided some services, and her peer support network was also based in other boroughs. This made accessing services initially complicated and caused some delays in responding to her self-harming behaviour.
- Vamp's peer group were not immediately identified. A mapping of intelligence from her missing episodes might have provided more information about risks at an earlier stage.



CAPHB's *Change Champions*

The team are in the process of identifying practitioners who exhibit influence, credibility, and enthusiasm to join as Change Champions in the CAPHB project. Practitioners who have a deep understanding of their roles and the practice developments needs, along with a strong motivation to drive change have been asked to consider themselves for the role.

The Change Champions work to promote and sustain change within the CAPHB Project and are pivotal in driving the programme's progress and implementations, whilst promoting a trauma-informed, therapeutic approach in managing CAPHB within the MSCP. Their role is to ensure consistency, integration of practices, and to advocate for children without the problem of adultification - remaining very mindful that they are dealing with children first and foremost.

A call for Change Champions to join the CAPHB Project has been made, and the team ask for professionals' support in identifying the best people for this important task. To nominate suitable candidates, who are able to start the CAPHB programme mid-September, please contact Vivienne.Williams@merton.gov.uk before Monday 9 September 2024.

Local News

Wellbeing support for CYP in South-West London

King's College Hospital have released emotional and practical support service offers for children and young people (aged 4-18) survivors of any form of sexual harm. These include wellbeing advocate support, CYP Havens holistic medical assessments, trauma-focused therapeutic support sessions, and Independent Sexual Violence Advocates.

To find out more about these offers and how to refer, please see the document displayed below:



Wellbeing in SW
London 2-page serv

Training:

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

Training	Date and Time
<u>Multi Agency Safeguarding Training</u> (Waiting list only)	WEDNESDAY 4 TH SEPTEMBER 2024 (09.30 - 12.30) (VIRTUAL SESSION)
<u>Children Adolescent to Parent Harmful Behaviour (CAPHB) Awareness Training</u>	THURSDAY 5 TH SEPTEMBER 2024 (10.00 - 13.00) (IN PERSON)
<u>Contextual Safeguarding - All-Day Training</u>	TUESDAY 10 TH SEPTEMBER 2024 (09.30 - 16.30) (VIRTUAL SESSION)
<u>Trauma-Informed Practice Training</u> This is a <u>2-day in-person</u> course; attendance at both sessions is a requirement.	WEDNESDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 2024 (09.30 - 16.30) THURSDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 2024 (09.30 - 16.30)
<u>Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) training: Managing allegations against staff - Virtual session</u> (Waiting list only)	THURSDAY 12 TH SEPTEMBER 2024 (10:30 - 12:30) (VIRTUAL SESSION)
<u>Child Neglect and MSCP Neglect Toolkit</u>	MONDAY 16 TH SEPTEMBER 2024 (09.00 - 15.30) (IN PERSON)
<u>Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Briefing Session - Playing a part in safer recruitment</u>	TUESDAY 17 TH SEPTEMBER 2024 (14:00 - 15:30) (VIRTUAL SESSION)
<u>Substance Misuse/Exploitation Training</u> (Waiting list only)	TUESDAY 24 TH SEPTEMBER 2024 (09.30 - 15.30) (VIRTUAL SESSION)
<u>Effective Support for Families In Merton</u> (Waiting list only)	THURSDAY 26 TH SEPTEMBER 2024 (14:00 - 16:00) (VIRTUAL SESSION)

SEEN Training

SEEN is a Banardo's initiative that aims to offer systemic change by challenging structural inequalities that hinder opportunities for children and young people of African, Asian, and Caribbean heritage to have a fair and equitable future. SEEN offer half-day

and full-day sessions for practitioners; to find out more information, please follow this link: [Training - Seen \(weareseen.org.uk\)](https://weareseen.org.uk)

CSA Network Events - Enhancing the Sexual Abuse Pathway for CYP in South London – 2024/25

After a full programme in 2023/24, the Lunch and Learn events are back as part of year 2 of the Enhancing the Sexual Abuse Pathway for CYP. The Lunch and Learn sessions are hosted by local services across South London and provide an opportunity for professionals to find out about the development of services and new resources.

This series will be focusing on the launch of the new Shared Resources created by project managers from Women and Girls Network, RASASC, The Havens, We Stand, LB Bromley, independent local experts, and lived experience consultants.

All Lunch and Learn sessions are online on Microsoft Teams from 12:30 – 1:30pm. **Please sign up for the survey links below.**

Date	Topic	Presenters	Sign up links
15th Oct 2024	Launch of Self-Help resources for children and their caregivers	Self-help resources team – Lamar, Clara Jane, Donna	https://forms.gle/3ubC8YxPhR2vxqqD9
5th Nov 2024	Launch of “Guide to working with/employing people with lived experience.”	Lived Experience Project team – Abi, Isa, and Beth	https://forms.gle/zTpczbPMbCq6pPwy5
3rd Dec 2024	Launch of “Guide to Running Groups”	Groups guide project team – Chris and Jan	https://forms.gle/8rPyopr2QdkHU9CG9

A call for professionals to share their view on how the Enhancing Sexual Abuse Pathway for CYP in South London has impacted their service, organisation or system over the last two years has been requested.

To share your view, please follow the link to complete the survey by Friday 6th September here: <https://forms.gle/Rpy2bZfHZfBC6Kqw5>

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.
<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 behavior.
<i>Empowering Parents, Empowering Communities (EPEC) 6 weeks</i>	5-11 years	Practical support to manage emotional and behavioral development

Family Hub Training

The Family Hub have developed a series of bitesize overview modules focused on meeting the needs of our local communities for each of the 24 ‘core’ services 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.

To access these bitesize modules and find out more information, please click the following link: [Family Hub - Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership \(mertonscp.org.uk\)](http://mertonscp.org.uk)

ESOL Services

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. Please call 020 8545 4146.

Upcoming surgeries meetings are as follows:

Wednesday 11 September 2024 - 12.00pm - 1.00pm - Civic Centre

Wednesday 9 October 2024 - 12.00pm - 1.00pm - Civic Centre

Wednesday 13 November 2024 - 12.00pm - 1.00pm - Civic Centre

Regional/National News

Charity 'For Baby's Sake' domestic abuse data

The charity *For Baby's Sake* has published new data this August suggesting that over 185,000 babies are present at police call outs for domestic abuse incidents each year in England.

The charity sent out a Freedom of Information request to 39 police forces and received responses from 15; the data gathered indicated infants were present at around 13% of police call outs for domestic abuse incidents from 2021 to 2023. The charity highlights a need for a coordinated, multi-sector response that safeguards babies and children from domestic abuse.

To read the press release, please find here: [New data indicates that 187,750 babies are](#)

[present at police callouts for domestic abuse annually](#); see also on NSPCC Learning here: [Protecting children from domestic abuse](#)

Preparing For Healthy Relationships – Primary Teacher Toolkit

The charity *Tender* are pleased to announce the development of a 'Preparing for Healthy Relationships' toolkit. This free resource, developed with MOPAC, for schools teaching primary-age children, contains information to increase understanding and confidence around Gender-Based Abuse and support services; activities to facilitate conversations with children around healthy relationships, consent and keeping safe; guidance on facilitating these important conversations in an engaging, age-appropriate and trauma-informed way, and resources developed with RSE guidance to help meet key elements of the RSE/PSHE curriculum.

To access this toolkit as well as more information on Tender's projects, please visit: <https://tender.org.uk/our-services/training/toolkit-training>

Strip searching of children in England and Wales Report

The first complete dataset for 2018–2023, including new data from July 2022-June 2023 has been published by the Children's Commissioner this August. In response to the horrific case of Child Q, a 15-year-old Black girl who was strip searched at school four years ago, the investigation of the practice of strip-searching children by the police was undertaken by the Children's commissioner, and a complete analysis of the reports were devised. The reports and more information can be found here:

[Strip searching of children in England and Wales: First complete dataset for 2018–2023, including new data July 2022-June 2023 | Children's Commissioner for England \(childrenscommissioner.gov.uk\)](#)

Experiences of Black Missing Children Voices Report

Listen Up is a national research and training organisation established to amplify the experiences of Black and racialised children in child protection research, policy and practice. It is the leading organisation increasing awareness about adultification bias and its implications for child protection. The charity Missing People provides specialist support to people who are at risk of being missing, those who are missing, and the families and friends affected by missing people.

Research to improve the experiences of and responses to missing Black people and their families is being conducted and a comprehensive report consisting of first-hand experiences and findings has been devised collaboratively between the organisations, and can be found on Listen Up's website here: [Listen Up \(listenupresearch.org\)](https://listenupresearch.org)

National Review Panel News

'New support and resources for conducting Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews'

The 'Learning Support' project was launched in early 2024 to gain more of an understanding of how safeguarding partners deliver LCSPRs and effectively learn from serious incidents. Research in Practice's new page, that can be found here [Exploring Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews | Research in Practice](#), will be updated with regular blogs and reflective briefings on the 'Learning Support' project's findings as they develop.

'Reflections on Annual Report'

The National Research panel's 4th Annual Report, published earlier this year, identified six key practice themes seen to make a difference in practice, some of which include: 'Effective leadership and culture supporting critical thinking and professional challenge'; 'Giving central consideration to racial, ethnic and cultural identity and impact on the lived experience of children and families'; 'The importance of a whole family approach to risk assessment and support', and 'Recognising and responding to the vulnerability of babies'.

To find out more, please visit: [Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel: annual report 2022 to 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

AI tool for Social Workers

Beam have recently launched 'Magic Notes', an AI-enabled tool designed for Social Care teams and Children's Services. This tool is set to record, transcribe, translate (if needed), and summarise social worker meeting notes in line with internal systems. The tool is said to save professionals around 2 working-days per social worker in administrative work. Main feedback from council partners has been that it allows the ability to enhance the connection with the individual.

To find out more information on this, please follow this link: [Magic Notes](#)

Survey for Social Workers

Community Care Inform (CCI) is looking to understand how practitioners fit learning into their working lives, through conducting a survey aiming to promote positive change in the provision of CPD. CCI seek to find out if professionals lack time for sufficient learning and if so, why this may be – such as high caseloads, vacancies on the team, or insufficient learning resources.

For more information on this please follow this link: [How do you learn in your social work role? - Community Care](#)

NSPCC's Child Sexual Exploitation Blog

NSPCC Learning has published a blog as part of the 'Why language matters' series on why it's crucial for professionals to consider the language they use when talking about child criminal exploitation. The blog explores how the terms 'recruited' and 'working' minimise children's experiences of criminal exploitation. It also discusses how professionals can approach the topic of criminal exploitation with other professionals and the children they work with.

To read the blog post, please find it here: [Why language matters: how using terms like 'recruited' and 'working' minimise children's experiences of criminal exploitation](#)

Children's Residential Care

The Guardian has published a news story on children's homes in England. An Observer analysis of government data shows a decline in the number of places in council-run children's homes and an increased reliance on privately run provision. The article below highlights concerns about the decline in the number of council-managed residential children's homes, such as children needing to be placed further away from their families.

To read the news story, please click the link here: [Places in council-run children's homes in England fall by third as private firms take over](#)

ACAMH Child Sexual Abuse blog

The Association for Child and Adolescent Mental Health (ACAMH) has published a blog post about sexual abuse and harmful sexual behaviour among children and young people, looking at evidence-based approaches and prevention strategies such as comprehensive sexual education and community-based programmes.

To read the blog and find out more, visit: [Sexual abuse in children and young people: evidence-based approaches](#)

Health and Care Passport Guidance

A guidance and template has been conducted to support integrated care systems (ICS) to review existing arrangements for health and care passports (or hospital passports), in order to address recommendations by the Health Services Safety Investigations Body (HSSIB), and to improve health outcomes for people with learning disabilities and those with autism.

For more information on this please follow the link: [NHS England » Health and care passports](#)

Specialist Relationships, Sex and Health Education accessible resources

Accessible resources produced by Life Support Productions have been made available on a subscription-based process. Topics include consent, body changes, privacy, relationships, RSHE education, online safety, and personal health. For more information on this please follow the link here: [Online Resources - Life Support Productions](#)

National Childrens Bureau - Bullying vs Banter

The National Children's Bureau has published a blog post for schools and youth organisations on distinguishing behaviour as banter and bullying. The blog discusses recognising when banter is appropriate; empowering young people to set personal boundaries, and implementing this a school-wide approach.

To find out more information on this, please follow the link: ["But Miss, it was only banter..." How do we equip children with the skills to understand when banter has gone too far? \(ncb.org.uk\)](#)

Childline: Support with Gender and Sexuality

To celebrate Pride Month, the NSPCC has published a news story on how Childline supports young people in relation to gender and sexuality. Data from Childline shows that in the past 12 months, there were 2,419 counselling sessions related to gender and sexuality. The top concerns discussed included: coming out; questioning sexuality/gender identity; gender dysphoria; and bullying based on gender or sexuality. To read this news story, please find it here: [Children supports thousands of young people on gender and sexuality | NSPCC](#)

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

Please find upcoming MSCP meeting dates below:

September

Effective Safeguarding and Support Subgroup – Monday 4th September 9:30-11:30
Quality Assurance & Practice Review Subgroup – Monday 9th September 13:00-15:00
Executive Group Meeting – Thursday 19th September 9:30-10:30
Subgroup Chairs Meeting – Monday 23rd September 10:30-12:00

October

Executive Group Meeting – Thursday 3rd October 12:30-13:30
MSCP Full Partnership Meeting – Monday 7th October 14:00-17:00
Prevention & Early Intervention Subgroup – Wednesday 9th October 14:00-16:00
Promote & Protect Young People – Tuesday 15th October 14:00-16:00
Policy & Training Subgroup – Wednesday 16th October 09:30-11:30
Subgroup Chairs Meeting – Monday 21st October 10:30-12:00

November

Executive Group Meeting – Thursday 7th November 12:30-13:30
Effective Safeguarding and Support Subgroup – Thursday 21st November 10:00-12:00
Subgroup Chairs Meeting – Monday 25th November 10:30-12:00
Quality Assurance & Practice Review Subgroup – Monday 25th November 13:00-15:00