

Welcome to our Winter Newsletter

Welcome to our latest joint HSCP/HSAB newsletter. As autumn proceeds into winter, we still find ourselves in unknown times in respect of the COVID-19 pandemic. With the introduction of new Government restrictions, all agencies in Hertfordshire continue to work together to ensure the safety of the most vulnerable in our society. Our focus remains the safety of children, families and adults at risk, ensuring their needs are met and they are safeguarded. All agencies are working together, facing many challenges, but together we are adapting and learning about what works. Learning together is our strength.

The HSCP has continued to work on key priorities during the pandemic and in the final part of this year will have a focus on child sexual abuse. Our learning hubs will be on this theme so look out for the flyer early in the new year.

Our learning offer to practitioners continues and, indeed, has increased. Attendance at training events has been phenomenal, with most courses fully booked. Whilst all our courses are now run virtually, this has not deterred practitioners to continue their learning, but we do appreciate virtual training offers limited networking opportunities as opposed to face to face interactions. However, as our trainers gain more confidence in delivering their courses virtually (it's all new to them too!) they are encouraging delegates to partake in virtual chat, leaving cameras on so everyone can see each other, and inviting delegates to voice their views and opinions.

We were able to offer our Learning Hubs virtually in October, on the topic of Online Safety. These sessions were very well received and the facilitator, Dr Peter Buzzi, was amazing. We received numerous requests for more sessions which we are in the process of organising for the New Year. Keep an eye out for our L&D Programme which is circulated every month.

The HSCP have launched the 'Year of Learning'. Each month will spotlight on a safeguarding theme identified through case reviews or audits and offer resources to teams to share in their meetings. The first theme, (October 2020) has focused on the Management of Suspicious Bruises/Marks in Infants under Six Months Policy, previously the Bruising Policy and you should have received the 7-minute briefing to share at your team meetings.

The HSAB has continued to work on its priorities during the pandemic and there has been progress on developing

a multi-agency approach to the issue of cuckooing - the exploitation of adults in their own home. More details are in the newsletter and the HSAB wish to extend thanks to members of district councils and the community safety partnerships for their input to this work.

The HSAB have also been regularly producing Learning Bulletins which capture learning from Safeguarding Adults Reviews, practice developments and real-life case studies from the local services.

During the National Safeguarding Adults week 16 -22 September HSAB has been raising awareness of adult abuse and neglect with a [press release](#) and Twitter campaign @HertsSab.

We have also updated our Safeguarding Procedures, added Medication Errors Policy and Pressure Ulcers Policy as well as revised some of the existing documents available on our [website](#).

We are mindful of the wellbeing of all partner agency practitioners and would encourage you to attend the Wellbeing Sessions that the Partnership are offering for staff working with children and adults. Four sessions are being offered – one each in Dec 2020, Jan 2021, Feb 2021 and Mar 2021 – so consider taking some time out to reflect and take care of yourself.

Visit our joint [Training and Resources](#) website where you can check out the monthly L&D Programme and book a training.

Finally, we would like to extend a big thank you to you all for keeping everyone safe, particularly those most at risk, and hope you all have a wonderful time over the festive period. Take care of yourselves – keep safe.

Bill Jephson

Chair Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

Liz Hanlon

Chair, Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board

It was hard to escape

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (2020) has published “It was hard to escape: Safeguarding Children from Criminal Exploitation.”

[Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel: “It was hard to escape”: Safeguarding Children at Risk from Criminal Exploitation](#)

This document investigated practice reviews; involving 21 children; from 17 different LAs where a child either died or was seriously harmed owing to criminal exploitation. This is the national panel’s first publication of its type and focuses upon just a nine month period in 2018-19.



Prevent – the UK Government’s strategy to tackle radicalisation - is being refreshed across HCC. With a new Prevent Programme Manager in place (Sophie Lawrence), improved coordination of Prevent delivery has already started with a revamped internal HCC Prevent Board and external Hertfordshire Multi-Agency Prevent Board with a focus on redesigning training, communications and partner engagement, going beyond the requirements of the Prevent Duty. In recent weeks we have seen the devastating impact of terrorism in France and how important community, education and partnerships are in combatting radicalisation. We will continue to build a robust Prevent agenda in Hertfordshire to ensure HCC and partners are fulfilling the fundamental aim of Prevent: to safeguard and support those most at risk and build resilience to extremism in Hertfordshire.

[HSCP website Prevent Programme](#)

Anne Longfield, Children’s Commissioner for England, has published a report shining a light on some of the most vulnerable children in the country – those children who are living ‘behind closed doors’, including those locked up in secure hospitals, prisons or children’s homes.

The report, [“Who are they, where are they?”](#) shows that in the official figures there are 1,340 children ‘locked up’ in various institutions. On 31st March 2020 there were:

- 715 children in youth custody
- 81 children placed in Secure Children’s Homes for their own welfare
- 544 children detained in hospitals under the Mental Health Act.
- For the first time it shows what types of ward children were detained on, with 237 children in secure mental health wards and psychiatric intensive care units

The report shows that although children end up in different types of setting, they often have very similar and overlapping needs – nearly half the children in custody have been in care, and three quarters have mental health needs. Half the children locked up for their own welfare have mental health needs, and 80% have also been charged with a criminal offence.

[Continue reading →→](#) [Download the report now](#)

Private Fostering

DO YOU KNOW if you are caring for a child/young person under the age of 16 (or 18 if they have a disability) who is not your child and you are not an immediate relative such as a grandparent, brother, sister, aunt or uncle or step parent by marriage, **this may be a Private Fostering Arrangement.**

The law requires parents and/or carers to notify Hertfordshire County Council where a child or young person under 16 is living away from their parents in a Private Fostering arrangement for more than 28 days or the arrangement is intended to last for over 28 days.

For more information click the following link: [Private Fostering](#)

What happens next?



The Marie Collins Foundation

Online Sexual Harm Reduction Guide

This guide has been developed to address the challenges professionals face when working with issues of online harm and young people.

It contains information about what online harm is, the specific issues facing young people, and ways professionals can effectively engage with young people and their families.

Initial Steps

- Prepare and make sure you know as much as possible about the family.
- Listen to what the young person and their family have to say.
- Take your time and build a relationship with the family.
- Be clear with the family about what your concerns are.
- Tell the child that it is not their fault and they are not to blame.

Working Together

- Work collaboratively with the family and other professionals.
- Share information to get a whole picture.
- Include the parents as safeguarding partners, with support they are often best placed to help their child
- Help parents to understand the importance of language and attitudes.
- Ask the child what they want to happen.
- Work with the family to help them understand online sexual harm and the impact it may have on the child and wider family

Looking forward

- Identify key people who the family can work with.
- Involve the child and their family in identifying these people.
- Explore the harm reduction strategies we have set out in this guide.
- Ensure the child and their family have the right ongoing support to enable recovery.
- Review the support being offered to identify any new, unmet need.

The impact of the coronavirus pandemic on child welfare: online abuse

Our briefing uses insight from NSPCC helpline contacts and Childline counselling sessions to highlight the impact of online abuse on children and young people during the coronavirus pandemic

It focuses on perpetrators targeting children online for sexual abuse and contains quotes from children and young people that some people may find upsetting.

Key themes include:

- the impact of online sexual abuse on children
- online grooming
- loneliness and self-esteem
- using online platforms for the first time
- sharing sexual images
- sexual exploitation
- speaking out about abuse.

Important Links

Download [The impact of the coronavirus pandemic on child welfare: online abuse](#)

[Download the briefing \(PDF\)](#)

From https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2020/coronavirus-insight-briefing-online-abuse?utm_source=adestra&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=AZ3928*&utm_content=NSPCC-Learning-newsletter+Online-abuse%20+Oct20&ac=>

Protecting children from county lines What are county lines?

County lines is a form of criminal exploitation where urban gangs persuade, coerce or force children and young people to store drugs and money and/or transport them to suburban areas, market towns and coastal towns (Home Office, 2018). It can happen in any part of the UK and is against the law and a form of child abuse.

From: https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/county-lines?utm_source=adestra&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=AZ3984*&utm_content=NSPCC-Learning-newsletter+County-lines+Oct20&ac=>



How structural racism faced by Roma families in the child protection system can be tackled

Source: Community Care

Date: 21 October 2020

Community Care reports on a project looking at the discrimination and disadvantages Roma and Gypsy families experience when subject to social work involvement. The project, developed and delivered by Law for Life, an education and information charity, aims to improve access to justice for Roma parents going through child protection proceedings. Findings from an evaluation of the project include improved understanding about the child protection process amongst Roma community members.

Read the news story:

[How structural racism faced by Roma families in the child protection system can be tackled](#)

YOUNGMINDS

Coronavirus: children and young people's views

Source: Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health

Date: 15 October 2020

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) has published summaries of children's and young people's views on the evidence from published studies around being in lockdown. Analysis of 15 studies by six young people aged 16-25 identified eight themes for consideration by NHS Trusts including: making sure there is support in recovery plans for children and young people's mental health; supporting the mental health impact of not seeing friends; helping children and young people to learn how to reconnect with others; and making online learning as fair for all students as possible.

Read the news story: [COVID-19 - summaries of key findings on children and young people's views](#)

Coronavirus: children and young people's mental health

Source: YoungMinds

Date: 16 October 2020

YoungMinds has published the findings from their third survey investigating the mental health impact of the coronavirus pandemic on young people in the UK. Findings from this survey with 2,011 young people aged 11-18 with a history of mental health needs who had returned to secondary school or college include: 23% of respondents said that there was less mental health support in their school than before the pandemic; and 58% of respondents did not feel that there was enough information and support available for their mental health.

Read the report: [Coronavirus: impact on young people with mental health needs \(PDF\)](#)

See also on NSPCC Learning: [Child mental health](#)

NOBODY IS NORMAL

It can be tough sometimes when you're feeling different. But we're here for you, whatever you're going through.

#NobodyisNormal

Childline has launched a new campaign - Nobody is Normal - which aims to help children understand that lacking confidence, feeling not good enough or that you don't fit in, is a shared experience. Statistics show that Childline has delivered 42,953 counselling sessions to children about their mental and emotional health across the UK since lockdown was first put in place. Figures also show that the monthly average number of Childline counselling sessions about eating and body image disorders increased by 32% on the pre-lockdown average; and the monthly average number of sessions about sexuality and gender identity increased by 16% compared with the pre-lockdown average.

Visit the webpage: [Nobody is Normal](#)

Something's
not right

▶ As further pandemic restrictions take effect in England, the Home Office has joined forces with charities including the NSPCC, Barnardo's and The Children's Society to launch a new campaign to protect victims of child abuse.

The month-long campaign, 'Something's Not Right', encourages young people to recognise different forms of abuse, report it and get help.

The campaign will see animated adverts aimed at secondary school pupils aged 13+, running across Instagram, Snapchat and Facebook. Young people will be directed to a dedicated page on the NSPCC service Childline where they can access information and seek support.

Read the news story: [Government leads national drive to protect victims of child abuse](#)

Safeguarding practice and scams

Scams are a form of financial abuse and can be sophisticated, drawn out and based in relationships. Safeguarding adults with care and support needs from abuse and neglect is a core part of our role, but we may not always realise that protecting adults from scams falls into this category.

[The statutory guidance to the Care Act](#) is explicit in stating that scams, whether internet, postal or doorstep, are a form of financial abuse.

We are well familiar with the instances of financial and material abuse where money or valuables have gone missing. Such cases come in as safeguarding referrals and should be taken seriously. However, the more devastating aspects of financial abuse are not opportunistic in nature or petty theft; rather, they are sophisticated and often drawn out. They are based in relationships with the scammers that are often nearly impossible for professionals to break down.

The relationships that scammers form with victims could be described as adult grooming as the criminal will often spend months befriending a victim and making them increasingly dependent on them. The relationships between victim and criminal is not limited to face to face contact but can also happen via post or phone or a combination of both.

Spotting the signs

Scams are not easy to spot at first. These are some of the signs to look out for:

- A victim may receive a large amount of post. Psychic or clairvoyant mass marketing mail tends to address the recipient by their first name or by the generic term 'friend'.
- They may have received 'holding' prizes – small items of little value delivered to their home as an enticement to maintain their interest.
- The landline may ring regularly or at odd hours of the day and night – these callers are often phoning from overseas, their 'call centre' is open 24/7 and they think nothing of getting a victim out of bed to instil the mantra of the win.
- The victim may be very secretive about this aspect of their life. They have often been groomed into believing that to divulge their imminent win or cure will result in all contact being terminated.
- Some victims may confess to being penniless. It may transpire that all of their money has gone towards constant release fees, paid out in small but increasingly regular amounts.



Tackling scams requires a multiagency approach, consider people who have close contact with the victim; care staff, district nurses, meals on wheels, voluntary services. They can be eyes and ears and first to spot the signs.

Bringing professionals together and agreeing a plan is often a good way forward to coordinate actions and provide cohesive support. Use our [Multidisciplinary Complex Cases Policy](#) to guide you how to do it.

Transitional Safeguarding

Leaving care: 'I made it to university, but then I fell through the cracks'

You might have attended one of the learning hubs or a webinar on Transitional Safeguarding introducing this emerging approach to practice with young people transitioning to adulthood.

Evidence suggests that more effectively meeting the needs of adolescents and young adults may help to avoid later interventions, including those within the criminal justice system, acute health services and specialist drug and alcohol treatments (Rees et al, 2017).

Furthermore, learning from Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs) demonstrates that poor transitional planning can contribute to young adults 'slipping through the net', sometimes with tragic consequences.

Go to the [BBC website](#) and read Kim's story, a 17y old care leaver who decides to leave her foster family and embark on the life on her own in the hostel accommodation and then as a university student.

It is an honest and revealing account of her emotional journey, fears and risks she comes to deal with. Kim's story brings transitional safeguarding to life exposing contextual dangers of transition into adult life and, in Kim's case, overwhelming loneliness and lack of support.

"I know I'm not someone that you need to check in on all the time, but it would have been nice to hear just something from them," she says. "I had absolutely nothing and that's poor."



Professional curiosity

Professional curiosity is an emerging theme in the SARs and other reviews completed by HSAB, and this is reflected nationally. It has long been recognised as an important concept in practice with adults at risk.

What is professional curiosity

Professional curiosity is about exploring and understanding what is happening with adults at risk and their wider environment. It is about enquiring

deeper and using proactive questioning and challenge. It also relates to understanding own responsibility and knowing when to act, rather than making assumptions or taking things at face value. In practice, professional curiosity is aligned to multi-agency working, collating information from different sources and applying different perspectives. This will lead to developing a better understanding of an adult at risk and the context their life is embedded in aiding a systematic analysis.

Key practice points:

- Look and Listen
- Ask and Act
- Check Out and Reflect
- Explore and Understand
- Anticipate but don't Presume or Assume
- Look Further and Enquire Deeper
- Remain Flexible and Open-Minded

- See the Whole Picture and Beyond the Obvious
- Think the Unthinkable and Believe the Unbelievable
- Think Professional Curiosity / Respectful Uncertainty and Challenge
- Use Evidence, Professional Judgement, Common Sense, Intuition and Gut Feelings

To read our [October Learning Bulletin](#) go to the [Training and Resources Website](#)

Hertfordshire Care Homes REVIEW of Practice: COVID-19

The Board have undertaken a short review of practice in care homes during lockdown to give Care Homes and agencies the opportunity to share their learning from this period and to make recommendations for future plans in preparation for a possible second wave of infection.

This review is not about blaming any individuals or agencies but about learning, improving practice, giving care home staff a voice and making recommendations to support homes and their residents in the future. It is likely that there will be reviews of those elements of the response to the pandemic that are governed by national decision-making, such as PPE policies and supply, and testing. The Board will not be specifically making recommendations on these areas but aims to identify additional lessons learnt to support the sector in case of a second wave of COVID.



Based on the findings of this report, HSAB has formulated the following recommendations:

- 1. "Tell us once" central mechanism for data collection to avoid repetition, save time and frustration.**
 - Partner agencies to review contact mechanisms for communication with care homes to mitigate against repetition.
- 2. Reliable access to professional support so that care staff feel confident in their ability and are not expected to undertake tasks beyond their competencies.**
 - Care home managers to prioritise work with primary health care providers e.g. GPs, district nurses to ensure staff within the home are not undertaking medical tasks during the second wave of COVID-19.
- 3. Individual risks assessment for care home staff working in more than one service.**
 - Any care home staff member who works in more than one care setting should have an individual risk assessment for each place of work.
- 4. Infection control training and refresher sessions to make sure the awareness and standards are maintained.**
 - Care home managers should ensure that all staff have regular refresher sessions in infection control and promote its awareness in practice.
- 5. Practical and emotional support mechanisms for staff to maintain the morale and recognise their commitment.**
 - Care providers management should ensure that all staff working within their organisation have access to support mechanisms to enable staff well-being and continued resilience.
- 6. The identification of separate areas for those residents who are discharged from hospital either having not been tested or having tested positive for COVID-19.**
 - Care home managers, working together with agencies, should ensure that they have adequate facilities available for people who are discharged from hospital either having not been tested or who are COVID-19 positive. This includes end of life residents.

We would like to thank all the providers who contributed to the review and colleagues across the statutory partnership.

To read the [full report](#) go to [HSAB website](#).

Caring Behind Closed Doors

Carers UK is the national charity campaigning for the recognition and support for carers. They have published a report highlighting the impact of the pandemic on carers' situation which has been detrimental.

Whilst there have been positive innovations in tech-based support for carers and some carers have greatly enjoyed the slower pace of life due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the vast majority have found life significantly more difficult. A decrease in support and sometimes complete closure of local services alongside an increase in care needs has led to most carers having to provide much more care.



Caring behind closed doors: six months on – key stats:

- 4 in 5 unpaid carers (81%) are currently providing more care than before lockdown.
- More than three quarters (78%) of carers reported that the needs of the person they care for have increased recently.
- Most carers (64%) have not been able to take any breaks at all in the last six months.
- More than half (58%) of carers have seen their physical health impacted by caring through the pandemic, while 64% said their mental health has worsened.

You can read more about the challenges faced by carers during the coronavirus outbreak in the Carers UK report, [Caring behind closed doors: six months on \(October 2020\)](#).

Visit our [website](#) for policy and procedures, practice guidance, reports from SARs and MAPRs and more...

Our priorities - cuckooing

We have engaged our partners and practitioners to look at identification and support for victims of cuckooing. We have scheduled two safeguarding forums for the agencies to come together and brainstorm how we can work jointly to develop the existing practice in this area.

Cuckooing is when people's homes are invaded by criminal gangs to deal drugs and commit other serious crime. Those whose homes are targeted most include older people, people with learning disabilities or mental health difficulties, drug users and those living in poverty. Victims are befriended



by the dealers as they may be vulnerable, isolated, and often drug users themselves.

Signs that cuckooing may be going on at a property include but are not limited to:

- An increase in people entering and leaving
- An increase in cars or bikes outside
- An increase in anti-social behaviour
- Increasing litter outside
- People coming and going at strange times
- Damage to the door/the door propped open
- Unknown people pressing buzzers to gain access to the building

Coronavirus has changed how drug dealers and other organised crime gangs operate. We know that drug dealing is moving off the streets and into people's homes as a result of lockdown and the restrictions on movement. Cuckooing can have detrimental impact on people's lives, and it is important that we all contribute to tackling it.