

# CHILDREN'S MARS BOARD NEWS UPDATE



## Welcome

Welcome to the eighth edition of the news update for the North Lincolnshire Children's Multi Agency Resilience and Safeguarding (MARS) Local Arrangements. This news update is one way of communicating information and messages relating to the Children's MARS Local Arrangements.

The focus of this edition is to update on the Children's MARS Board, raise awareness of progress in relation to the safeguarding partner's portfolio areas, highlight what is working well and summarise areas for development of key partnership groups. Other communications and relevant contacts are included.

Please share this information across your agency/organisation and use it as a means of prompting discussion, sharing learning and improving practice.

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## CHILDREN'S MARS BOARD — JULY 2020 UPDATE

Safeguarding partners met again at the Children's MARS Board on 30 July 2020. They continue to develop strong, collaborative relationships with a focus on being proactive and forward thinking.



Key areas of discussion included:

- Outcomes of consultation work completed with children, young people and families around their experiences during the COVID-19 lockdown period
- Progress relating to the safeguarding partners' portfolio areas
- Updates from the Children's Help and Protection Pathway Group and the Safeguarding Practice Learning and Improvement Group
- Thematic areas of focus - Domestic Abuse, Child Exploitation and Missing Children and Neglect

## Children's MARS Website Updates

We have been working to keep our key documents, local resources, policies and procedures up to date and available on our website.

Recently updated pages include:

- [Resources](#)—this page now includes a variety of local and national resources for professionals to use when working with children, young people and families
- A Using Technology with Children, Young People and Families Toolkit and 'Change the Narrative': Using Appropriate Language relating to Child Exploitation briefing have been added to the [Resources page](#)
- Policies, procedures and guidance— our exemplar safeguarding policies for childminders and the voluntary, community and PVI sector have been refreshed and updated
- [Helping Children and Families in North Lincolnshire 2020/24](#) document has been refreshed and republished. The document sets out the levels of need in North Lincolnshire in the context of our broader system for early help and protection

## Safeguarding Partner Development Session and Review of Local Arrangements

The Safeguarding Partners met on 28 July 2020 to focus on:

- the review and adaptation of the Children's MARS Local Arrangements based on the past year's learning, and to reflect the new and developing infrastructure, changes to governance arrangements so that our arrangements act as a launchpad to drive the partnership forward for the next few years
- ongoing dialogue and continued shared understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and their families, giving consideration to emerging themes and what is needed to restore and reset support services
- The key areas of focus in which the Children's MARS Board wish to 'shine a light' and to maintain oversight of to ensure there is focussed partnership action and system change to contribute to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and families
- The areas of focus in which the Children's MARS Board will maintain a 'line of sight' of in order to seek assurance, challenge, shape and influence partnership action and system change which are the responsibility of other partnership and planning frameworks

The Shine a Light areas of focus for 2020/21 are:

- To further develop the multi agency Contextual Safeguarding Approach and work with adolescents and their families
- Continue to respond to COVID-19 and emerging harm across the early help and safeguarding system

The Line of Sight areas of focus for 2020/21 are:

- Emotional Health and Wellbeing
- Domestic Abuse

## Children's MARS Annual Report 2019/20

The Children's MARS Annual Report for 2019/2020 has been published on the [Children's MARS website](#).

In North Lincolnshire, children, young people, families and communities are at the heart of what we do and we are proud to acknowledge and celebrate the positive outcomes achieved and the strength of partnership working.

## Children's MARS Training

Work has been ongoing to develop and deliver the training programme for 2020/21. There has been positive partnership engagement within the virtual training programme which has led to a number of our courses becoming fully booked.

Upcoming Courses:

- Reducing Parental Conflict Modules 1-4—eLearning licences
- Emerging Drug Trends and Local Updates—24 September 2020
- Child Protection 1 Day Masterclass—18 November 2020

New e-workbooks have been developed to raise practitioners awareness of a number of safeguarding issues. These are available for download from the [training page](#).

A new toolkit for professionals has been added to the website to guide professionals on using technology with children, young people and families. The toolkit is available to download from the [resources page](#).

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## Partnership Communications

A multi-agency communications campaign was launched in August using the hashtag #HowRUnorthlincs

The campaign sought to encourage family members, neighbours, and citizens to look out for others, particularly parents of young children and ask 'how are you?' The campaign was in response to national concerns about hidden harm and the increased risk to babies in particular during COVID-19 restrictions, and it signposted to domestic abuse, reducing parental conflict, and the ICON coping with crying resources.

Key resources were shared through @SafeNorthLincs social media channels and through partner agencies communications networks under the hashtag #HowRUnorthlincs. Links were made with previous communications work around 'what to do if' and the hint and tips leaflets for children and parents which provide guidance on how to help.

To view the resources and information that were shared as part of the campaign, search 'howareyounorthlincs' on Facebook or Twitter. Further information on ICON cope and relationship matters are available on the resources page of the Children's MARS website.

## Scrutiny and Assurance

### Practice Learning Line of Sight Events—Children who are at risk of, or who are experiencing sexual and/or criminal exploitation

Two Line of Sight Events took place in June 2020. Sarah Glossop, Designated Nurse and Head of Safeguarding, North Lincolnshire CCG was the independent chair of the first event, which looked at two cases involving a wide range of agencies. Dave Basker, Independent Scrutiny Officer was the independent chair for the case specific event which took a deep dive into a one case.

Both events highlighted good practice applied by front line staff who often went above and beyond their remit to achieve the best outcomes for children and their families. The recurrent themes identified were:

- The importance of relationships - evidenced through strong relationships between practitioners with children and families also good multi agency working relationships and collaborative working across agencies
- The strength of partnership working and the knowledge of practitioners of child exploitation and contextual safeguarding and the child's voice. There is consideration being given to transitions for young people to adulthood and the Multi Agency Child Exploitation meetings have begun to discuss young adults
- The importance of supporting the resilience of the people who are most connected to the young people who are experiencing these risks. This could be resilience of foster carers, parents or frontline staff
- The importance of the consistency of messages and professionals in the young person's life

Learning identified below is being taken forward through the Safeguarding Practice Learning and Improvement Group (SPLIG) and Child Exploitation and Missing Children Strategy Group:

- Further training and awareness raising is required in respect of the appropriate language to use to describe those who are vulnerable to, at risk from or experiencing exploitation
- Consideration of the wider social conditions relating to harm to children to determine what action can be taken as a strategic partnership. Taking a locality-based approach to look at the multi-agency approach to hotspots. Professional curiosity is required to think about wider social conditions, parks and places that require further strategic work
- Further reflect upon the child protection systems that are in place and how well this is working for children and their families when the harm is societally i.e. extra-familial harm

## Independent Scrutiny of the Multi Agency Child Exploitation Triage and Meeting

A thematic assurance event took place in July 2020 in which Dave Basker, Independent Scrutiny Officer, observed the Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) triage meeting and MACE meeting.

The visit was an opportunity for the Children's MARS Board to seek assurance as to the effectiveness of the MACE process in agencies fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities and contributions to the Children's MARS local arrangements.

Prior to the visit, the Independent Scrutiny Officer had sight of the Children's MARS policy and procedures on Child Sexual and Criminal Exploitation. Contained within these documents is the MACE process procedure and terms of reference.

An independent scrutiny report is being written up and will be shared with the next Children's MARS Board for consideration. Key strengths and developments will be shared for wider dissemination across the partnership. The outcomes of the event will also be considered at the SPLIG.

## Independent Scrutiny of potential Serious Cases

Edwina Harrison, Independent Scrutiny Officer completed a review of the cases and decision making where service managers from Children's Services have made a decision that the case does not meet the criteria to be considered by Board members as a 'serious case'.

Six cases were chosen from between November 2018 and December 2019 for review. The themes identified were:

- The system is working well with a dynamic risk assessment process and there is plenty of opportunity for discussion and challenge
- The Children's MARS team and website is used regularly as a source of reference
- Awareness and understanding of the process/procedure is high and North Lincolnshire has a historically low level of notifications/high level of agreement with the National Panel

Recommendations were made to partner agencies and for the Children's MARS Board as below:

- To maintain a list of cases which do not meet the criteria for notification
- Track and monitor single agency reviews and disseminate any learning
- Ascertain across agencies whether cases have been referred to the Safeguarding Lead (as outlined in the Children's MARS procedures) and have not progressed to notification
- Recommendations of single agency Learning Lessons Reviews to be tracked and monitored by the home agency

## Children's Help and Protection Pathway Group

The previous Children's MARS Board approved the proposal to merge the Early Help Strategic Leads Group and the Safeguarding Pathway Lead Officers Group into a new lead officer group to provide leadership and oversight and take assurance about the whole help and protection pathway. As a result, partnership work has been undertaken on the development of the Children's Help and Protection Pathway (CHaPP), which had its inaugural meeting on 23 July where the terms of reference and new reporting arrangements were discussed.

### Role and Remit

The Children's Help and Protection Pathway (CHaPP) Group oversees and quality assures multi agency working across the 'Early Help and Safeguarding Pathway' including early help services and statutory safeguarding processes.

Specific areas are:

- The provision of effective early help which meets the needs of children and families within their own communities at a universal and informal level
- The interface between 'informal' and 'formal' early help and between 'targeted' and 'specialist' help, ensuring that systems are in place to facilitate an offer of help in line with the Helping Children and Families in North Lincolnshire Document and the North Lincolnshire One Family Approach
- The interface between Early Help and the Integrated Multi-Agency Partnership (IMAP)
- Multi agency working and decision making
- The quality of multi agency assessments
- The effectiveness and timeliness of multi agency help and protection
- Information sharing at all stages

### Key Updates

- There continues to be a significant amount of informal early help undertaken in North Lincolnshire, evidencing a strong culture of prevention and well-understood 'thresholds' in relation to levels of need
- There is more targeted early help being undertaken than is currently being reported in the data. The number of early help assessments that are logged on the online reporting system continues to fall, as increasingly professionals are choosing not to log them on the online reporting system
- In the COVID-19 period, after an initial reduction demand has increased, seeing a particular increase in domestic abuse and calls relating to contextual safeguarding concerns
- Family conflict is also a key feature at the front door, particularly at the weekends, and a meeting is planned with targeted services and the police to strengthen the multi-agency response so that it diverts away from the potential criminalisation of young people. This work will link to the reducing parental conflict initiative
- Child protection re-plans are showing an increase in 2020/21 and the meeting agreed for MAAG to undertake deep dives in relation to identifying learning from some of these cases
- Across the partnership the response to COVID-19 has demonstrated resilience, flexibility and innovation and we continue to help and protect our children and families, prioritising the most vulnerable while ensuring we support and protect our workforce
- Children's centres, nursery staff, and FaSST, alongside education inclusion officers have come together to deliver an integrated One Family Approach targeted help offer, including information, advice and guidance and set up to support statutory functions

## Safeguarding Practice Learning and Improvement Group

### Role and Remit

The Safeguarding Practice Learning and Improvement Group (SPLIG) has responsibilities for:

- Co-ordinating the outcomes from local multi agency scrutiny and assurance activity, reviewing monitoring and implementing areas for development to ensure the Children's MARS arrangements positively impact on the shared commitment towards continuous improvements to front line practice
- Disseminating the learning from local scrutiny and assurance activity, local and national child safeguarding practice reviews, other national reports and research

### Key Updates

- Work planned to consider the learning from the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Annual Report 2018/19. Work to undertake a benchmarking exercise for North Lincolnshire has commenced and will be concluded before the next meeting of the SPLIG
- The Emotional Health and Wellbeing Steering Group has been asked to consider the issues arising from the Practice Learning Line of Sight Events in relation to children living with Emotional and Mental Ill-health
- Whilst this has not been a feature in North Lincolnshire, both regionally and nationally there have been increases in the number of babies experiencing physical injuries during the COVID-19 period. This has driven a local conversation about communications and support systems for families with young families
- The SPLIG were also briefed on the launch of the ICON programme which focuses on managing parental expectations of crying babies, and mechanisms to cope. A version of the ICON programme has been adopted by RDaSH during the COVID-19 pandemic, but the full launch will include involvement of maternity and wider partners

## Safeguarding Children in Education

An exceptions report was provided to the Children's MARS Board in respect of safeguarding children in education, particularly vulnerable children.

### Key Updates

- During COVID-19, school staff have used their early help knowledge to inform the vulnerable children group and invite them into school
- School staff have been creative in visiting, safely, families who they have identified as in need of early help, to ensure they see children rather than just rely on telephone or virtual contact
- Humberside Police have been supporting schools by delivering Cyber training to secondary schools. Regular newsletters have also been sent to schools to support their teaching of the hidden harm and exploitation online
- All schools and settings in North Lincolnshire are making plans for full reopening from September 2020. This is backed up by risk assessments that reflect the individual schools situation
- All schools are developing catch up and resilience packages to ensure children's needs are met when returning in September
- Guidance for Local Authority Officers visiting schools to be developed to support essential visits from local authority teams

## Further Information

For further information visit our website [www.northlincscmars.co.uk](http://www.northlincscmars.co.uk) or contact us by email at [mars@northlincs.gov.uk](mailto:mars@northlincs.gov.uk)

If you wish to subscribe for Children's MARS communications emails, including updates on training, events and new resources for professionals, please complete the [communications sign up form](#).

Follow us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/SafeNorthLincs](http://www.facebook.com/SafeNorthLincs)

Follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/SafeNorthLincs](http://www.twitter.com/SafeNorthLincs)

Safe North Lincs is a partnership between the Children's MARS Board and the Community Safety Partnership. Our vision is to promote the safeguarding and resilience for children, families and communities to enable people to feel safe and be safe in North Lincolnshire.



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**Children, Young People and Families are Resilient and Safeguarded**