

CHILDREN'S MARS BOARD NEWS UPDATE



CHILDREN'S MARS BOARD—OCTOBER 2020

Welcome to the ninth edition of the news update for the North Lincolnshire Children's Multi Agency Resilience and Safeguarding (MARS) Local Arrangements. Safeguarding partners met again at the Children's MARS Board on 30 October 2020.

Key areas of discussion included:

- 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
- Shine a Light areas of focus - Contextual Safeguarding and Responding to COVID-19 and emerging harm
- The outcomes of the schools safeguarding audit and the private, voluntary and community sector safeguarding audit for 2019-2020
- Outcomes of recent independent scrutiny and assurance activity



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

Children's MARS Website Updates

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Communications

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](#)—information and resources relating to the ICON programme has been added. Posters, action plans and information sheets are available for professionals to use when working with children and families
- A briefing on Helping and Protecting Babies and Children has been added to the [Resources page](#)
- [A bespoke Learning Lessons News Update](#) has been published which summarises key learning from national reports and scrutiny activity
- [Policies, procedures and guidance](#)— the Improving Child Protection and Safeguarding Practice procedures have been updated as a result of guidance issues by the national Child Safeguarding Practice Review panel. Updated Standards for Safer Recruitment procedures are now available on our website
- [The Child Sexual Abuse in the family environment toolkit](#) has been refreshed and republished

Scrutiny and Assurance

Case Specific Practice Learning Line of Sight Event

A Case Specific Practice Learning Line of Sight Event took place in November 2020. Dave Basker, Independent Scrutiny Officer acted as the chair of the event which looked at one case involving a wide range of agencies.

Key themes include:

- Professionals were proactive and worked in a timely manner
- The work was child-centred and there was a focus on keeping the child within his family
- There was positive information sharing and communication between professionals
- The importance of professional curiosity and understanding the holistic needs of a family
- A process for professionals to contact a health colleague for advice in respect of injuries to children would be beneficial

Thematic Assurance Event—Strategy Discussions

A thematic assurance event took place in November 2020. The event was an opportunity for the Children’s MARS Board to seek assurance around the quality and effectiveness of strategy discussions. Dave Basker, Independent Scrutiny Officer provided independent views and challenges during the event.

The event highlighted appropriate and proportionate decision making. Strategy discussions were held in a timely manner and there was positive contributions from partners. The records evidenced that professionals are child-centred and the discussions and action planning were bespoke to the needs of the child.

Areas for development include:

- Re-raising the profile of indicators of child sexual abuse in the family environment across the workforce and partnership
- How the workforce are equipped to identify and intervene with adults and children within the context of Coercive Control
- Developing minimum standards of practice for strategy discussions across the partnership. The work should capture the purpose of strategy discussions, expectations of partners and the analysis of information to inform the understanding of the child’s lived experience and the follow up on actions agreed as part of strategy discussions

The outcomes of both learning events will be considered at the Safeguarding Practice Learning and Improvement Group (SPLIG) and a partnership plan will be developed and overseen by the group.

Children's MARS Training

The Children's MARS training programme and further information relating to upcoming courses is available on the [Children's MARS website](#).

Upcoming Courses:

- Reducing Parental Conflict Modules 1-4—eLearning licences
- Re:Form Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme Workshop—9 February 2021
- Mind Your Language! - NWG Network training—18 Feb & 23 March 2021
- Child Protection 1 Day Masterclass—24 February 2021 & 21 April 2021

e-workbooks are available 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 helping and protecting babies and young children. The toolkit is available to download from the [resources page](#).

National Guidance

Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2018 update

In December 2020, the government issued an updated version of Working Together 2018.

References to domestic abuse have been strengthened throughout the document with explicit reference to controlling and coercive behaviour. The new guidance also includes a new section on the homeless duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

[A briefing is available on the Children's MARS website](#) which provides a summary and further detail around the recent changes.

Domestic Abuse Bill 2020

A [draft Statutory Guidance Framework](#) has been published by the Home Office in relation to the Domestic Abuse Bill 2020.

The guidance will be considered as part of the partnership work being undertaken and the development of the local strategy which is overseen by the Domestic Abuse Strategy Group.

Children's Help and Protection Pathway Group

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

- Practice is robust and awareness continues to grow in relation to Contextual Safeguarding. Further developments are underway across the partnership to develop the approach to transforming places and spaces to reduce risk and vulnerability in the widest sense
- Consultation is taking place with leading expert Dr. Carlene Firman to consider if she could review practices, processes and ongoing cases to further strengthen practice
- Close working between social work services and education inclusion using a daily and weekly tasking approach has provided increased responsiveness in ensuring a focus on the most vulnerable
- A pathway for helping families in managing conflict has been developed, linked to the multi-agency domestic abuse triage processes within IMAP. This pathway enables families to receive targeted help from an identified worker who has undertaken the Reducing Parental Conflict training
- A new virtual antenatal education partnership approach has been created during the pandemic response, developing an online parenting programme for expectant parents
- Following the #howrunorthlincs campaign, a regular multi-agency communications group has been established
- Given incidents of harm to infants have been reported nationally, over the past two weeks agencies in North Lincolnshire have been promoting the ICON coping with crying materials and resources. This has included social media posts and targeted communications through the maternity voices partnership, RDaSH forums and early years settings.

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

- The SPLIG have considered and overseen the North Lincolnshire response to a number of key national reports including:
 - The September 2020 newsletter from the national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel
 - 'Out of Routine' Sudden Death in Infancy Report from the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel
 - 'The Multi-Agency Response to Child Sexual Abuse in the Family Environment' report of the Joint Targeted Area of Inspectors into this theme
 - The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health guidance on perplexing presentations and fabricated or induced illness
- The SPLIG continues to oversee the progress against the action plans devised as a result of Children's MARS assurance and scrutiny activity

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

- The resilience of the school workforce is high, and with 96% of maintained workforce available, children continue to have access to trusted adults
- Children are showing high levels of resilience and adaptability. The vast majority have successfully transitioned back into early years settings, schools and colleges
- There has been a sharp focus on ensuring the most vulnerable children and young people are in learning. Daily tasking meetings between education inclusion, social work and wider partners have been sustained along with the post 16 provider panel – both ensuring a key focus upon those children and young people open to social work, those potentially considering Elective Home Education (EHE) and also Children Missing Education (CME)
- 510 laptops have been distributed to vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people
- Public health advice and guidance has been made available to schools and early years settings through 'drop in' sessions
- There has been a sharp focus on children's emotional health and wellbeing. Work is ongoing regarding the Wellbeing for Education Return roll out, with local adaptations for early years settings and for children's centres. Emotional literacy training for support assistants and bereavement support training for mental health champions has also been implemented.

Partnership Communications

A multi-agency communications campaign is ongoing in response to the national concerns around hidden harm as a result of COVID-19 and the increase in harm to infants and babies.

Work has been done to promote the ICON programme which aims to support parents and carers to cope with crying babies. Information about the ICON programme along with posters, information sheets and action plans are available on the [Children's MARS website](#).

We are continuing to support the Home Office [#youarenotalone campaign](#) around Domestic Abuse alongside local campaigns run by Humberside Police and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Staying Safe and Well during COVID-19 tips for young people and tips for parents leaflets are available on the [Children's MARS website](#) for families who require further online support.

[The NLC webpage for young people's mental health](#) has been updated and includes a number of sources of support and video resources for young people who are struggling with their emotional and mental wellbeing.

[Further sources of support for families and what to do if you are worried about a child](#) is available on the NLC website.

Further information

For further information visit our website or follow us on Facebook or Twitter [@SafeNorthLincs](#)

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](#).

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.

 [@safeNorthLincs](#)

 mars@northlincs.gov.uk

 www.northlincscmars.co.uk



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