

CHILDREN'S MARS BOARD NEWS UPDATE



Children's MARS Board—February 2023

Welcome to the 18th 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 3 February 2023.

Key areas of discussion included:

- Progress relating to the safeguarding partners' portfolio areas and the Children's MARS delivery plan
- Updates from the Early Help Strategic Leads Group, Children's Help and Protection Pathway Group, the Safeguarding Practice Learning and Improvement Group and the Risk Outside the Home Strategic Group
- Outcomes of the annual safeguarding audit for the private, voluntary and independent childcare sector and nurseries
- An update on stakeholder engagement and communications including the voice of children and families



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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We have been working to keep our key documents, local resources, policies and procedures up to date and available on our website. The below documents have been updated and made available on the Children's MARS website:

[Policies, procedures and guidance](#)

- Multi-agency policy and procedure for honour based abuse and forced marriage
- Policy and procedure for identifying and responding to concerns about FGM
- Guidance on bruising/injuries to children including non-mobile babies

[Learning from practice](#)

- 7 minute briefing—Teenage relationship abuse
- 7 minute briefing—Child criminal and sexual exploitation

[Resources](#)

- Family Help toolkit—Chapter 1 Neglect

[Early Help](#)

- Online system help cards

Learning from practice

Key themes from the Multi-Agency Reflective Practice Forum (MARPF)

The MARPF is held on a monthly basis to reflect on practice, based upon prior single agency audit and quality assurance. A summary of the strengths and learning highlighted at the MARPF this quarter includes:

- Evidence of positive approaches successfully achieving trusting relationships with a number of professionals
- Practitioners identified the best person to address issues thus preventing duplication and demonstrating fewest best interventions
- The child was empowered and given control to choose who she wanted to speak to
- The group reflected around how a parents' own adverse childhood experiences impacted on her parenting style and it was crucial that she was supported to move forward in a positive way
- The MARPF felt there were potential issues when a Children's Services Assessment recommends one course of action and the Decision and Allocation Meeting (DAM) recommends another. Lead Officers from Children and Families NLC have implemented a protocol for the decision made at the DAM to be the only outcome shared with the child and family

Case Specific Practice Learning Line of Sight Event - Teenage relationship abuse

A multi-agency case audit practice learning line of sight event took place in February 2023.

Good practice and key learning include:

- Practitioners were tenacious and were willing to deal with difficult subjects and have difficult conversations. Practitioners in the room were confident and celebrated the periods of stability for the family
- Communication between agencies was strong. All practitioners knew the family and were aware of the dynamics
- Professionals were quick to recognise adverse childhood experiences and the need to do things differently when working with past trauma
- The One Family Approach was used in action in that the child was in their family, in their school and in their community
- There was evidence of professional curiosity and the use of fewest best interventions
- In one case, school were proactive in providing support to both young people where there was teenage relationship abuse
- Communication and joint working between Children's and Adult's Services was positive
- Practitioners would benefit from further understanding of specific interventions offered by The Blue Door, for example the Respect Programme for young perpetrators
- The event emphasised the importance of whole family working including consideration of siblings and the wider family network

A 7 minute briefing on this event is now available on the [learning from practice page](#) of the Children's MARS website.

Children's MARS education and training

The Children's MARS Education and Training programme 2023/24 has been published. The programme contains information on our upcoming courses and is available on the [Children's MARS website](#).

Upcoming Courses:

- Graded Care Profile 2—15 June, 9.30 to 12.00, Church Square House
- Strategy Discussions—21 June, 9.30 to 4.30, The Wortley House Hotel
- Child Protection—22 June, 9.30 to 4.30, MS Teams

Future dates for the above courses can be found in the education and training programme.

Yorkshire and Humber Multi-Agency Safeguarding Trainers Group webinars

The Children's MARS Board are a member of the Yorkshire and Humber Multi-Agency Safeguarding Trainers Group (YHMAST). Through YHMAST, a number of regional education and training opportunities are periodically arranged and made available to all staff in the Yorkshire and Humber area.

Upcoming regional education and training opportunities taking place in July 2023 are as follows:

- Technology-assisted harmful sexual behaviour
- Sexual abuse outside the home
- Sexual abuse inside the home
- Sibling sexual abuse

These webinars will be available to book via Eventbrite over the coming weeks and will be advertised via the Children's MARS email communications.

New! - Early years page on the Children's MARS website

A new page has been created on the Children's MARS website specifically for staff working in early years settings and childminders.

The page contains information on early years specific training courses, training requirements and resources from previous designated safeguarding leads forums.

You can access it via the link on the training page or directly via www.northlincscmars.co.uk/early-years

New! - Children's MARS Neglect Toolkit

A new Children's MARS toolkit has been made available on the [resources page](#) of the Children's MARS website on the topic of neglect.

The toolkit contains information about how to identify and respond to neglect and includes a range of tools, guidance and sources of support for practitioners.

Children's MARS subgroup updates

Key Updates - Early Help Strategic Leads Group (EHSLG)

- In Quarter 3, the EHSLG devoted the majority of the meeting to a development session, as it transitions from the previous iteration to a new quarterly forum with a more distinct focus on targeted early help and the interface with statutory services. This will help to differentiate the EHSLG from the work of the Supporting Families Steering Group and the developing Family Hubs Steering Group which are more concerned with the strategic development of the wider early help system
- The new early help assessment and plan has been launched and went live in November, coinciding with the roll out of new training. These changes have so far been warmly welcomed by schools, settings and partner agencies, with very positive feedback having been received. The numbers of assessments do not appear to have reduced, which was one of the implementation risks, and we will be able to extract data for a much enhanced performance framework in April 2023
- The EHSLG are ensuring that it maintains a close link with the Start for Life Family Hubs Programme which is being developed across North Lincolnshire. The Family Hubs delivery plan has been submitted to the DfE for evaluation, following which a number of subgroups will begin working on the key strands of the delivery plan
- It was highlighted that of all the requests made for family support this year, approximately one third came from social work and one quarter from schools and settings. Relatively few were received from health teams and none were from adult focussed services. The group considered whether some agencies were referring families to the front door with a safeguarding query that could have been more accurately framed as a family needing support. Further work is being undertaken to explore this and to consider the current options for seeking support for a family

Key Updates - Children's Help and Protection Pathway (CHaPP) Group

- The CHaPP has changed the format of the lead officer reports to strengthen the focus on the Shine a Light areas of focus. This provides a stronger framework for targeted information within the reports from partners which demonstrates activity and impact. Positive examples of the inclusion of fathers and male carers information was noted within the RDaSH and Probation Service reports
- Persistent absence from education was noted to be increasing nationally and locally. Lead officers discussed the local approach to support and respond to this challenge. It was noted that a dashboard is in development to monitor persistent absence and exclusions which the CHaPP will receive an update on when it is available
- The strong partnership data set provided assurance that the vast majority of performance and activity indicators relating to the early help and protection system continues to show sustained performance and compliance with local practice standards and statutory timescales
- The demand for targeted and specialist services across the help and protection pathway continues to be high, however data confirms that the system appears to be meeting and responding to this need without impacting on core delivery

- Lead officers discussed support provided to families who have been referred to/discussed within the Single Point of Contact and the Integrated Multi-Agency Partnership who did not require a statutory service. Further work is underway to look at some of these cases to determine whether there is anything further we can do to assist in practitioners' decision making

Key updates - Safeguarding Practice Learning and Improvement Group (SPLIG)

- The SPLIG received an overview of the outcomes from recent Practice Learning Line of Sight events on child criminal and sexual exploitation. It was noted that the events were very positive and the strength of relationships was highlighted in particular
- An overview of the Yorkshire and Humber Female Genital Mutilation research project final report was provided to the SPLIG and regional workshops/training are being considered by the Department for Education/ Yorkshire and Humber ADCS leads
- The SPLIG took account of the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel briefing - multi-agency safeguarding and domestic abuse and a briefing regarding bruising in non-mobile infants. Amendments have been made to local policy and procedures in response to the briefing
- The joint ministerial response to Myth of Invisible Men was considered by the SPLIG. This is an area of focus for the Children's MARS Arrangements this year and a bespoke development session will be held to consider the learning from the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel reports and plan any further action
- The SPLIG discussed partnership responses to engaging with fathers and male carers. It was agreed that this work will be captured in single agency overview reports which will feed into SPLIG. The work will also be captured in the Children's MARS annual report as it evidences a place-based approach to engaging with fathers and male carers

Key updates - Risk Outside the Home Strategic Group

- A bespoke development session was held to look at progress against the Risk Outside the Home Strategy and delivery plan for 2022/23 and to consider areas for future partnership action to include in the delivery plan for 2023/24
- The Risk Outside the Home Strategic Group considered the draft Practice Principles for Child Exploitation and Extra Familial Harm published by Research in Practice and considered any changes to the local Risk Outside the Home Strategy. It was highlighted that all the principles are recognisable in the current strategy and delivery plan. The group will continue to use these principles along with relevant recommendations from Joint Targeted Area Inspections, national reviews and other published guidance in the development of the next delivery plan to ensure that the offer to children and families is of the highest quality and has the most impact
- It was noted that the Risk Outside the Home Strategic Group and associated work was subject to an internal scrutiny process through North Lincolnshire Council's audit team. The audit report concluded that there is 'substantial assurance on the effectiveness of the control environment, with the most significant finding being that of strong cross council and multi-agency participation under robust government arrangements'. The audit confirmed the commitment to tackling risk and safeguarding young people across the partnership

Communications and stakeholder engagement

We are continuing to share messages via Safe North Lincs and through our email communications in response to key documents, emerging themes and further opportunities for education and training.

The Children's MARS Spotlight is a mechanism for coordinating key communications messages, tools and resources and upcoming training associated with the Children's MARS 'Shine a Light' areas of focus.

The theme of the latest Spotlight is online abuse. You can view it on the [communications page](#) of the Children's MARS website.



Further information

For further information visit our website or follow us on Facebook or Twitter @SafeNorthLincs

 @safeNorthLincs

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If you wish to subscribe for Children's MARS communications

 www.northlincscmars.co.uk

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, Safeguarding Adults 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.



Scan our QR Code to be taken directly to the Safe North Lincs Facebook page