

Special Edition—Nov 2023

CHILDREN'S MARS BOARD NEWS UPDATE



CHILDREN'S MARS RESILIENCE AND SAFEGUARDING IN PRACTICE EVENT 2023



Welcome to this Special Edition news update of the North Lincolnshire Children's Multi Agency Resilience and Safeguarding (MARS) Local Arrangements.

The Children's MARS Resilience and Safeguarding in Practice event took place on 13 November 2023 at The Baths Hall. Over 130 people attended from across the partnership including leaders at all levels and young people.

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

Inside this issue:

Welcome Listening, Learning, Reviewing and Adapting	2
Real Lives Keynote speaker	3
Keynote speaker Integrated Children and Families Offer	4
Closing remarks Reflections and feedback	5
Further information and resources	6

Event comperes

Isobel Andrews, Chair of North Lincolnshire Youth Council and Deputy Member of Youth Parliament

Gemma Bryan, Family Voice Representative, North Lincolnshire Council

We would like to give special thanks to Isobel and Gemma for being comperes for the event.

They did an excellent job of introducing the speakers and keeping all professionals in the room engaged and focussed throughout the day.



Welcome and Listening, Learning, Reviewing and Adapting

Welcome

Helen Davis, Place Nurse Director, North Lincolnshire Health and Care Partnership
Ann-Marie Matson, Director of Children and Families, North Lincolnshire Council
Darren Wildbore, Chief Superintendent and South Bank Divisional Commander, Humberside Police

We heard from our safeguarding partners who discussed their shared commitment to lead on key functions that underpin our arrangements and the significant successes which demonstrate that the Children's MARS Local Arrangements have a positive impact on outcomes for children, young people and families.

The partners shared their ambition to keep improving to strengthen partnership working and local practice to improve the lives, experiences and outcomes for children and families.



Listening, Learning, Reviewing and Adapting

Edwina Harrison and Dave Basker, Independent Scrutiny Officers

Two of our Independent Scrutiny Officers, Edwina and Dave shared an overview of the good practice that they have seen throughout their work in North Lincolnshire and the positive impact that it has had on children and families. Through their independent scrutiny of the local arrangements, it is evident that the partnership continues to strengthen year on year.

They highlighted that there is an overwhelmingly positive partnership approach to preventing need from escalating and ensuring that children and families receive a direct offer of help at the lowest level.



Real Lives: Claire's Story

We next heard a real life story from a parent who has been supported to improve outcomes for her and her family. Claire shared how the multi-agency group around her supported her to build her resilience and feel confident in being a parent.



Claire's story demonstrated the value of consistent, flexible and creative support and the importance of right people, right place, right time. Claire reflected on how she was initially reluctant to accept the support she was being offered but the tenacity of professionals and 'them not giving up on her' made her develop trusting relationships with the team around her. She also shared that she was made to feel part of the team rather than 'like she was being told off if she didn't do something'.

We would like to give special thanks to Claire for sharing her inspirational story with us and highlighting how the values of the One Family Approach are working in practice.

Keynote: Professional Curiosity

Ruth Pearson

We welcomed Ruth Pearson as our first keynote speaker of the day who provided a presentation on professional curiosity.

Ruth discussed how practitioners can approach working with resistant families who may be cooperating on a low level to minimise agency engagement and intervention.



A key message from Ruth's presentation was around being clear and specific when working with families about the change that you need to see for the child brought about by change from the parent rather than relying on parents' self-reported change.

Ruth also shared some key messages from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews around ensuring practitioners focus on the child's lived experience and not take things at face value. Practitioners should observe, ask follow up questions and work as a professional team to ensure that what parents are telling us is the reality for the child.

Other key advice for practitioners was around sharing information in a timely manner to ensure that you can build up an accurate picture of what the lived experience for the family is. Practitioners were also advised to practice having difficult and challenging conversations to increase their confidence in asking questions. Ruth shared that practitioners should be aware of confirmation bias and unconscious bias when visiting families and they should try to take an evidence based approach to

Real lives and keynote speaker

Keynote Speaker and the Integrated Children and Families Offer

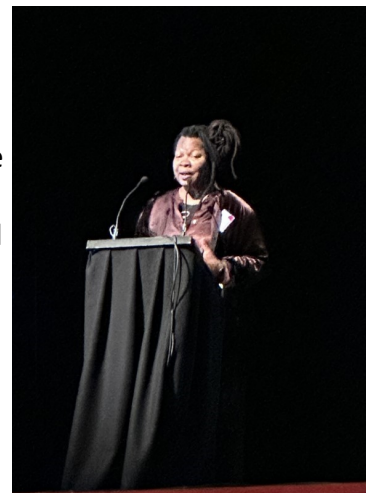
Keynote: Intersectionality and safeguarding

Professor Claudia Bernard, Goldsmith's University

We welcomed Professor Claudia Bernard to the stage to provide the second keynote of the day on the topic of intersectionality and safeguarding practices. Professor Bernard shared that intersectionality can be used to take account of the family circumstances and the wider community context in which the child and family are living in to accurately assess how their inequalities impact on their lived experiences.

Professor Bernard shared many examples from research around how children in economically deprived neighbourhoods have increased exposure to multiple stressors which can heighten their risk to abuse including criminal or sexual exploitation. Professor Bernard shared key messages from her own research on serious case reviews involving black male children which found that racism and cultural issues created barriers to appropriate interventions and that there was a lack of professional curiosity in understanding how race impacted on children's lives.

A key point for reflection from Professor Bernard's keynote was around how practitioners and senior leaders embrace discomfort to have the difficult conversations around anti-racist practice. She shared that bold conversations about race and culture are often avoided as it gives rise to strong feelings and difficult emotions but a culturally responsive workforce is required to better serve children who are disproportionately impacted by social conditions and systematic racism.



Integrated Children and Families Offer

Tom Hewis, Head of Children's Provision, North Lincolnshire Council

Rebecca Pease, Head of Service Children's Care Group, Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust

Our final presentation of the day shared an overview of the work that has taken place to move towards an integrated offer for children and families. The One Family Approach provides the ideal framework for integrated working ensuring that getting help for families is easier, it is embedded in the community and it involves conversations rather than referrals.

Tom and Rebecca emphasised the importance of integration, shared the ambition for the future and asked that practitioners and senior leaders support the journey to provide families with the right help and support, in the right place and at the right time.



Closing remarks

Ann-Marie Matson, Director of Children and Families, North Lincolnshire Council

To close the event, Ann-Marie reinforced the shared ambition for families to thrive in their families, achieve in their schools and flourish in their communities.

She stressed that the Children's MARS Board will continue to listen, learn, review and adapt to ensure that the partnership is the best that it can be.

Ann-Marie shared her pride in the progress that has been made since the launch conference and provided thanks on behalf of the Board to the whole workforce for their commitment to improving the lives of children and families in North Lincolnshire.



Feedback and reflections

After the event, attendees were asked what their top takeaways were from the conference. A selection of responses are below:

Good reminder about strengths-based practice

The importance of relational practice - the video of lived experience was powerful in showing this

Including honest co-working with parents - they are the experts

I found the considerations of change alongside professional curiosity thought provoking

I loved listening to Claire's story and being able to view how our work actually helps the people we work with

The lived experience and hearing Claire's story really brought to life the impact professionals can have and the importance of working together to support families and individuals

It was really positive to hear feedback about the One Family Approach and how multi-agency working is helping all children and families

To make sure the values and culture of our clients is considered in the ways we support them

Closing remarks and Feedback and reflections

Further Information and resources

A copy of the conference programme and composite presentations are available to view on the [communications page](#) of the Children's MARS website.

Other key documents and resources referred to during the conference are available below:

- [Children's MARS Annual Report 2022/23](#)
- [7 minute briefings from scrutiny and assurance activity](#)
- [One Family Approach: Practice model briefing](#)
- [Conference presentations and programme](#)



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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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