

# CHILDREN'S MARS BOARD NEWS UPDATE



## Children's MARS Board—October 2023

Welcome to the 21st 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 17 October 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
- A briefing relating to the Joint Targeted Area Inspection Framework on the theme of serious youth violence
- An update on stakeholder engagement and communications including the voice of children and families
- The refreshed Children in Care and Care Leavers Plan 2022-24



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

- Childminder template safeguarding policy
- Private, voluntary and independent nurseries template safeguarding policy
- Schools safeguarding policy template

#### Designated Safeguarding Leads (Education)

- DSL briefing presentation—January 2024

#### Early years

- Safeguarding children over the festive period

#### Communications

- Special edition news update—Children's MARS resilience and safeguarding practice event

## Children's MARS Resilience and Safeguarding in Practice Event

The Children's MARS Resilience and Safeguarding in Practice event took place in November 2023. The event was an opportunity to bring together practitioners and local leaders at all levels who have responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. As well as having a focus on our local arrangements, there was input from two national speakers who helped us to reflect upon local practice.

On the [communications page](#) of the Children's MARS website is a special edition conference news update which provides a summary of the speakers and presentations during the event. Copies of the event programme and presentations from the day are also available on our website.

- [Special edition news update](#)
- [Event programme](#)
- [Composite event presentations](#)

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## Key national guidance and policies

The government published the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023: A guide to multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children on 15 December 2023.

Alongside this statutory guidance, the government also published a revised copy of the [Working Together to Safeguard Children: Statutory Framework](#) and a [Summary of Changes document](#) which provides a brief summary of the changes to each chapter of the guidance.

A number of documents have been published alongside Working Together 2023 including:

- Children's Social Care National Framework
- Children's Social Care Dashboard and indicators update
- Background information for Working Together and the National Framework: Improving practice with children young people and families
- Supporting local areas to embed Working Together to Safeguard Children and the National Framework
- 10 Step Guide to information sharing to safeguard children
- Cross ministerial letter to safeguarding partners – December 2023
- Strengthening multi-agency leadership: Section 31 determination letter – December 2023

The Children's MARS Board will consider the revised guidance and an implementation plan will be developed to move towards the new arrangements.

## 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:

- The case was extremely child focussed with professionals listening and acting upon her reported lived experiences
- There was significant management oversight and specialist independent advice was accessed from a national organisation
- After intervention, the child is flourishing, achieving and aspiring in her family, college and community
- The MARPF recognised that the level of professional curiosity in the early days of understanding the family dynamics could have been strengthened

The learning from the MARPF was shared with the Safeguarding Practice Learning and Improvement Group for further consideration.

## Children's MARS education and training

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

Upcoming Courses:

- Strategy discussions: 7 February 2024, 9.30 to 4.30, The Wortley House Hotel
- Early help practice and process: 20 February 2024, 9.30 to 12.30, Face to face venue TBC
- Reducing Parental Conflict: 21 and 22 February 2024, 9.30 and 12.30, MS Teams—Staff must be able to attend both sessions
- Child exploitation, 6 March 2024, 1.00 to 3.00, MS Teams
- Managing allegations against adults who work with children (LADO): 22 March 2024, 1.00 to 3.00, MS Teams
- Child Protection: 21 March 2024, 9.30 to 4.30, Connect Church
- Early help practice and process: 26 March 2024, 9.30 to 12.30, Face to face venue TBC

Future dates for the above courses and information relating to course content can be found in our education and training programme.

The Children's MARS Education and Training programme for 2024/25 is in development and will be published shortly.

## Children's MARS subgroup updates

### Key Updates - Early Help Strategic Leads Group (EHSLG)

- The number of early help assessments being undertaken and recorded on the system continues to be very strong. The overall number in 2022/23 was 743 which was the highest in 6 years, and the data from Q1 in 2023/24 indicates that this year will be at a similar level
- The rise in early help assessments is a significant achievement given that a new format for the assessments and a new recording system have been implemented during the previous year. The data now includes assessments completed by the council's family support service, and there is an ambition over time to also incorporate youth justice and health visitor assessments in the data to give an even more joined up picture of early help
- Bi-monthly multi-agency Single Point of Contact (SPOC) review meetings have been established to dip-sample and reflect on the decision making and offers of early help for children and families referred into SPOC which did not result in a specialist service being offered. The themes and identified learning from these reviews are being fed into the EHSLG to provide the group with a richer understanding of the behaviours and issues underpinning calls to the team
- A 7-minute briefing on early help is now available on the Children's MARS website and work is nearing completion on an animation aimed at explaining the early help process to families to help remove anxieties and barriers that reduce access to formal support
- The EHSLG has given focus over recent meetings to how we can improve the quality of early help practice. The new training offer has been key to this, with feedback from attendees consistently referencing the usefulness of the input around how to engage and build trust, encouraging family-led planning

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

- The CHaPP received detailed analysis of data with exception reporting and some qualitative analysis. The strong data report assured that the vast majority of performance and activity indicators relating to the early help and protection system continues to show sustained high performance and compliance with local practice standards and statutory timescales
- The offer to children and families in North Lincolnshire continues to ensure that needs are met at the lowest level through the fewest and best interventions aligned to Working Together, national legislation, and local policy and procedure. Intervention with children and families is aligned to the values and principle of OFA in ensuring children thrive within their families, achieve within their schools and belong to their community
- The CHaPP heard updated from key health partners on recent developments including the new RDaSH offer for parents to receive bespoke additional support for crying babies by self referral and midwifery's strengthened approach to early help

### Key updates - Risk Outside the Home Strategic Group

- The profile for the last quarter is very comprehensive and gives a good overview of the current situation. Data is showing that, the number of children at risk of CSE and their age demographic remains stable. However, there has been a marked shift to online investigations around child sexual exploitation
- There continues to be a strong focus on keeping young people in school with extensive work in place to encourage school attendance which included training on the Attend Framework. There are mechanisms in place to communicate current themes and risks to Designated Safeguarding Leads in schools. Schools are actively trying to find other ways to address children's behaviour when they have been identified as at risk in their community
- There remains strong evidence of police and partner focus on disruption and dismantling the associated Organised Crime Groups. Risks around members of the groups remain but have been reduced and comprehensive plans are shown to be in place
- There was strong evidence of creativity in engagement, support for the families and progression of Child First principles with excellent challenge around the potential use of secure accommodation. The One Family Approach and focus on keeping young people in their families and in the community was evident.
- MACE continues to meet and is well attended and is complimented by location-based meeting, which focus on specific groups and geographic areas. Emerging themes are fully explored and have robust actions to mitigate risk. Current challenging themes relate to specific identified geographic areas, changes in the nature of substance misuse and concerns around associations. All of these themes are being explored further with specific responses and continued collating of intelligence and evidence.

### Key updates - Safeguarding Practice Learning and Improvement Group

- A briefing was shared that sets out some key learning on thematic child safeguarding practice reviews that have taken place across the country in relation to the Joint Targeted Area Inspection to determine whether anything further needs to be done
- The SPLIG took account of the evaluation report from the Yorkshire and Humber Multi-Agency Safeguarding Trainers Group relating to the child sexual abuse webinar series that took place in July
- The SPLIG data report evidences that training continues to be delivered to a high standard and feedback remains overwhelmingly positive
- The outcomes from the annual review of the Children's MARS Arrangements was highly positive in relation to learning and improvement and was complementary of the quality of resources on the Children's MARS website
- Updates in relation to the Stay Safe Conference was provided to the group. The event was an opportunity to share key information with children on how to stay safe in their homes, schools and communities. Workshops included internet safety, community safety and child exploitation
- A representative from the Humberside Police Domestic Abuse Safeguarding Investigation Team attended the meeting to provide a presentation on the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law) to raise awareness of the process and criteria 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.

A range of Spotlights can be found 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

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, 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.

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