

CHILDREN'S MARS BOARD NEWS UPDATE



Children's MARS Board—April 2024

Welcome to the 23rd 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 22 April 2024.

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
- An update on the progress made to implement Working Together 2023 and the Children's Social Care National Framework
- The outcomes from the annual schools safeguarding audit and the early years safeguarding audits



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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Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel — New publication!

Safeguarding Electively Home Educated Children briefing

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel has published a short briefing paper about safeguarding children in elective home education. The briefing explores common themes and patterns identified across reviews where children died or were seriously harmed while being electively home educated. It highlights practice issues raised by safeguarding partners and shares learning from reviews to help improve the quality of multi-agency safeguarding practice and thereby enhance how this group of children may be better protected in the future.

The briefing can be accessed here - [Safeguarding children in elective home education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-in-elective-home-education)

Children's MARS education and training

The Children's MARS Education and Training programme for 2024-25 has been published on the training page on the [Children's MARS website](#).

Upcoming Courses:

- Child Protection: 11 September 2024, 9am to 4.30pm, Connect Church
- Strategy discussions: 16 September 2024, 9.30am to 4.30pm, The Wortley House Hotel
- Early Help: Practice and Process: 24 September 2024, 9.30am to 12.30pm, Church Square House
- Drug trends and local updates: 25 September 2024, 2pm to 3pm, MS Teams
- Child Exploitation: 8 October 2024, 1pm to 5pm, Church Square House
- Graded Care Profile 2: 10 October 2024, 9.30am to 1pm, Church Square House

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

Learning from practice

New 7 minute briefings have been published on the Children's MARS website relating to scrutiny and assurance events that have taken place this year including:

Thematic Assurance Event—Early Help

This thematic event consisted of:

- A meeting with the Local Authority One Family Approach Supporting Families Policy Manager and the Local Authority Safeguarding Education Officer
- Observation of the Early Help Forum
- A bespoke event for managers and practitioners to present their work relating to four families
- An additional two cases were chosen by the One Family Approach Supporting Families Policy Manager and sent to the scrutiny officers for examination and evaluation

Thematic Assurance Event—Child Exploitation including transitions to adulthood

This thematic event comprised of

- Observation of the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) meeting including triage
- A bespoke meeting with multi-agency managers and practitioners to discuss their roles, remit and responsibilities
- A meeting with multi-agency practitioners who presented their work through case discussions relating to 3 young people who had transitioned to adulthood within the past 3 years
- 14 cases in total were considered in detail across all meetings

Practice Learning Line of Sight Event—Domestic abuse and the impact on children

After a process of single agency case audits, a panel of Children's MARS representatives and an Independent Scrutiny Officer met with practitioners to discuss a small number of cases. Areas of best practice, learning and further improvement relating to multi agency practice was agreed.

The 7 minute briefings detailing the learning from these events can be found on the [learning from practice page of the Children's MARS website](#).

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:

- Practitioners were tenacious in their approach to achieving positive change for children
- Information sharing was strong and assisted timely decision making
- There was commitment from primary education to be creative in engaging children in school
- Strong evidence of collaborative working between the multi-agency group supporting the family who adapted their approach to meet the individual needs of the child
- The forum reflected how services need to be persistent and tenacious in following up reachable moments, particularly when a trusted person has moved on from their role
- There is further work to do to develop practice with regards to family-led planning and the role of family solutions

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

Working Together 2023: Consultation

Working Together 2023 was published in December 2023 with a number of new requirements for multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, one of which is to consult with a wide variety of partners when revising our local arrangements.

The Children's MARS Board are utilising a number of mechanisms this year to seek the views of the workforce as part of the implementation of the new arrangements, one of which is via a consultation survey.

4 briefings are taking place on the below dates via MS Teams:

- 8 October 2024, 3.30pm to 4.30pm
- 8 October 2024, 6pm to 7pm
- 10 October 2024, 9.30am to 10.30am
- 10 October 2024, 10.30am to 11.30am

We would appreciate it if you would share the dates with your teams and encourage them to attend to share their views.

To book onto the sessions, please email mars@northlincs.gov.uk and we will forward on the electronic invitation.

As a reminder, the electronic survey is still open for staff to share their views on our local arrangements. The survey can be accessed here -

<https://forms.office.com/e/tyyxQ50Ue5>

Children's MARS subgroup updates

Key Updates - Early Help Strategic Leads Group (EHSLG)

- The meeting followed a revised format, with more focus on evaluating the effectiveness of early help from a broader, more preventative perspective. This will be further developed and it is proposed that the Family Hubs Offer Steering Group and the Youth Offer Strategic Group both report directly into the EHSLG to enable a more joined up approach and clearer reporting structures into the Children's MARS Board. This aligns with the more integrated policy framework for early help that is set out in the new Working Together 2023 which references the Family Hubs agenda and the Supporting Families programme
- The commitment to formal early help, as measured by the number of assessments that are completed with families and logged on the system, remains strong in North Lincolnshire
- Recognising the limitations of data in relation to prevention, the overall position demonstrates that over 2023/24, levels of need as measured by demand for specialist social work services appears to have reduced whilst work at a targeted level has increased or been maintained. This can also be seen in relation to older children from a youth justice perspective
- Front door referral activity consistently demonstrates strong partnership working, with clearly identified step-out plans being made following Single Point of Contact enquiries/contact/referral/assessment. This is identified through audit and routine management oversight

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

- Performance at the front door is all showing a continued decreasing trend. The number of section 47 enquiries are following the same trend as assessments and front door activity. This would confirm that performance has returned to pre pandemic levels. Discussions at PITSTOP may have also aided this
- The lead officers were confident that the One Family Approach in North Lincolnshire is supporting families through community intervention, universal services, targeted support, specialist services and safeguarding intervention when needed for most areas
- A significant emerging theme through the data and the written reports was domestic abuse. It was noted that domestic abuse nationally has increased, and the offer for North Lincolnshire families who are subject to domestic abuse was a theme identified in several reports. The next scope for the Joint Targeted Area Inspection is domestic abuse and the impact on children and the inspection preparedness meeting will be another mechanism for the CHaPP to seek assurance as to the offer for children locally
- Persistence absence from education is increasing nationally and locally. The data shows persistent absence and both secondary and primary is at the highest level locally. Exclusions remain high, as is the electively home educated (EHE) cohort and this data will continue to receive the focus of CHaPP this is understood

Key updates - Risk Outside the Home Strategic Group

- A small group has also met to review the ROTH Delivery Plan and ensure Actions are continuing and completed. The May meeting will focus on reviewing the plan for 2024/25 and adding any work streams
- The Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) meeting is well attended and is complimented by location-based meeting, which focuses 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
- The last three months have seen significant activity in the Town Centre with a focus on improving the Night Time Economy. Although this is Adult focused all of the sessions and training has ensured that there is also an awareness of the risk associated with young people in the Night Time Economy.
- The group heard an update on the disruption activity related to a local Organised Crime Group (OCG). There remains strong evidence of police and partnership focus on disruption and dismantling the associated OCG's and several Principal members of the OCG have been arrested. Risks around these individuals remain but have been reduced and comprehensive plans are shown to be in place. There was also 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 values of the One Family Approach and focus on keeping young people in their families and in the community was evident

Key updates - Safeguarding Practice Learning and Improvement Group

- The SPLIG reflected on the changes made to Working Together 2023 and discussed the local implementation plan. As part of the plan, workshops with partners and staff will be developed and delivered
- Performance data presented to the SPLIG shows that Children's MARS training continues to be positively received across the partnership. Bespoke training on coercive control and its impacts on children was well attended and the feedback was shared with the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board
- Lead Officers reflected on the recent scrutiny and assurance events on the theme of domestic abuse and the impact on children, child exploitation and transitions to adulthood and early help. The final reports from independent scrutiny officers will be considered at the next SPLIG meeting
- As part of the review of the local arrangements and the implementation plan, it was noted that there will be a review of the scrutiny and assurance framework to ensure that the current processes still working. This is an opportunity to think about how we do things differently while maintaining the strong network of confirm and challenge to ensure the learning is embedded in practice

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

 @safeNorthLincs

 mars@northlincs.gov.uk

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

