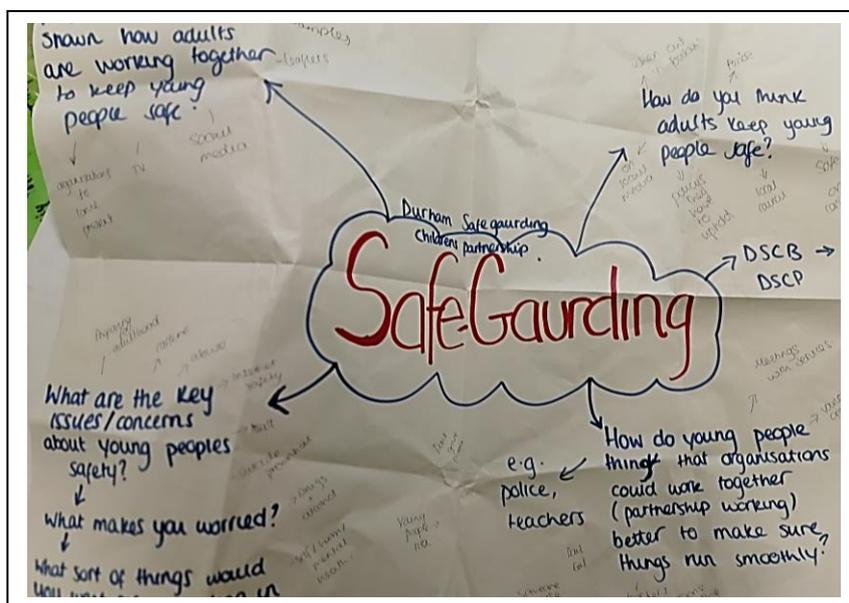




Investing in Children

A new partnership approach to safeguarding children and young people in County Durham Draft Agenda Day™ report.



Written by Caitlin Dobbie – Investing in Children Young Facilitator.
Supported by Robert Johnson – Investing in Children



Introduction:

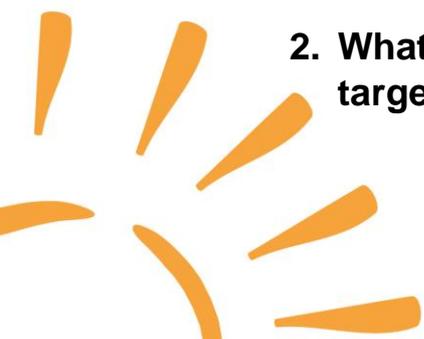
Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board are changing to Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP) in early 2019. With this in mind Durham LSCB approached Investing in Children to obtain some young people's ideas and opinions about their experiences of safeguarding. In order to improve working relationships within the new partnership some young people were given the opportunity to discuss the priorities that they thought adults should concentrate on. The partnership wishes to use this information to support their work moving forward as they are changing from the LSCB to the new safeguarding partnership arrangements.

To achieve this we facilitated two Agenda Days™. These are adult free spaces to promote young people's rights in decision making. The first Agenda Day™ took place on the 11th December 2018 with 10 young people from County Durham who have some additional needs and disabilities. These young people were active in the Investing in Children's eXtreme Group. The second Agenda Day™ took place with six young women from across County Durham on the 17th December 2018. Both groups discussed questions developed by Mark Quinn, Durham Safeguarding Children Board, and I asked some extra questions for better understanding and feedback.

Included in the report are the questions asked and the main findings. Young people spoke about the main issues affecting young people's safety and how adults and young people can help this better through a working partnership. A conclusion is included explaining how we think this report can help the next partnership, Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership, in the New Year.

Below are the questions I asked, and the issues discussed by young people:

- 1. What are the main safeguarding concerns impacting on the lives of young people today?**
- 2. What do you see as safeguarding priorities for adults to target within a partnership approach?**



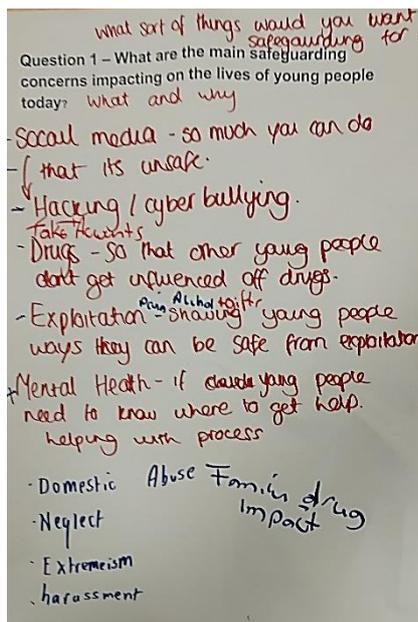
3. How would young people like to know more about what Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership does in the future?

Question 1 – What are the main safeguarding concerns impacting on the lives of young people today?

The above question was used to support discussions on safeguarding. However, other questions were also used to understand the key issues and concerns about young people's safety.

Below are the most common concerns discussed by young people during the two Agenda Days™

- Some young women were concerned about grooming, particularly young women being groomed by older men aged 18-30, suggesting this as a major concern, which more young people should be made aware of and of safe ways to report it.



- The impact of drugs was spoken about by both groups. They talked about young people needing more support if parents and carers are using or selling. They also gave examples of an increase in younger children taking drugs, suggesting that their home life was part of the reasons for taking drugs and a lack of things to do was an issue. Overall, both groups again felt that this was a big safeguarding issue

- Other young people shared that drugs are easily available in their area, leading them to suggest that more could be done to safeguard young people from drug dealers, particularly class A drug dealing.



- Social media was viewed by all young people as having a negative impact on their world. Examples were given of fake accounts used by bullies.
- Domestic Abuse was raised by some young people as a concern, and they felt that more could be done to raise young people's awareness of the impact.
- Mental health was a big talking point with both groups and was suggested by both groups as the main issue impacting on many young people and families. All of the young people thought more could be done to improve on the support available. Examples were given of self-harming and being assaulted, and there is the belief that there needs to be an improvement in the quality of early help.

Question 2 - What do you see as the safeguarding priorities for adults to target within a partnership approach?

Discussions were around what sort of situations should safeguarding be used in and how could adults work together better on young people's priorities.

Below are the most common priorities each group agreed on.

- The main priority the young women agreed on was that the different groups within the partnership need to come together and form a plan for how they will work better, along with the need for the plan to be shared with young people and families.
- Most young people thought the partnership should be able to ask each team to present on how they can connect with each other better in order to support young people.



Q2-What do you see as the safeguarding priorities for adults to work together better on for partnership working - to make things run smoothly.

group of organisations come together to form a plan with young people

be involved with people they are supposed to be connecting with such as social work and family support worker.

Young people have individual sessions with people from services to show where they can improve.

Multi-disciplinary groups to work with the young people.

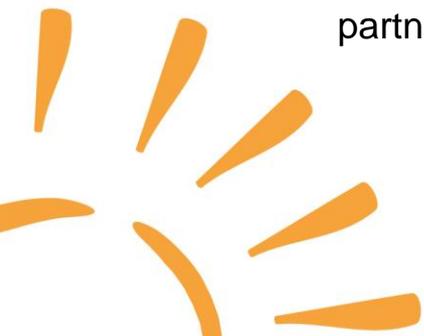
Actually making young people aware of how things are ran and telling them what other services there is.

- Most young people thought the new partnership should make more young people aware of how things are run and tell them what they are trying to do for the better, such as on mental health and exploitation.
- Improve ways in which young people and families can have a say about safeguarding support when it is needed, was suggested by many young people as the key to improving safeguarding.

Below are some of the young women with whom I met, I am on the far right.

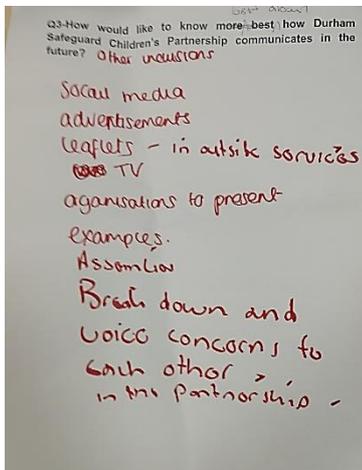


- It was also suggested by young people that teams could be more open about how they safeguard young people and set one or two priorities each year to improve how they work, with input from young people.
- Many young people wanted to change the way in which meetings took place about their care involving only adults, then the young people being called in afterwards for their input. They thought that if they attended all meetings and their ideas were listened to this would make a big difference regarding improving safeguarding, support and a good partnership.



Question 3 - How would young people like to know what Durham Safeguarding Children's Partnership does in the future?

- All the young people thought large organisations, such as schools, social services, health services and others could advertise their services better, especially regarding how they keep young people safe through the new partnership.
- Young people wanted to know what the new partnership does to keep young people safe, which was viewed as important. Many young people had some understanding of what safeguarding meant but had very little idea of all the work done by adults to keep young people safe in County Durham.



- Young people thought more needs to be done on this because they believed that more young people should know how places like schools and hospitals keep young people safe. They believed that more young people might speak out or contact the right people about concerns they have about abuse or violence.

- Leaflets promoting what the partnership does and how to contact them about ideas or concerns was viewed as a good way for some young people to understand what it does.
- All of the young people thought that teams within the partnership should present to young people in schools and colleges to explain what they and the partnership do to improve safeguarding.
- Some young people thought teams within the partnership should talk to young people more about their work and find out what they think about the work they do.



Conclusion:

All of the young people agreed that it was important to keep young people and families safe and believed young people should be listened to when they have safeguarding concerns. They all shared the fact they have a voice and young people, regardless of their age, should be involved in the new partnership.

They felt social media and mental health were big priorities for young people's safeguarding and shared their experiences and concerns. There were some good suggestions for how the new partnership could improve safeguarding further, like improved approaches to allow teams in the new partnership to show how they work together best and be able to challenge each other. There should also be increased opportunities for these teams to promote directly to young people as it was believed that not enough young people knew how they keep young people safe across County Durham.

All of these young people would like more work to be done by the partnership regarding the safeguarding concerns raised. Many of the young people also suggested that being listened to and making choices in safeguarding should be looked at more seriously by the new partnership. The new partnership should consider how these ideas can support better practice, to allow young people to be kept safe and to understand their rights, using them in everyday life and on matters that are important to them alongside adults who can support them.

Written by Caitlin Dobbie– Investing in Children Young Facilitator with support from Robert Johnson Investing in Children December 2018.

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