

DSCP Newsletter

Autumn 2019



Welcome

It is hard to believe but here we are six months into the Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP)! Our final annual report of the old Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) has been well received and is testament to the hard work by partners, supported by our excellent Business Unit, in not only conducting business as usual, but managing a transition process to the new partnership and progressing the (huge) Joint Targeted Area Inspection action plan too! [2018-19 DSCP Annual Report](#).

Since the commencement of the DSCP we have begun to put in place the things which will assist the partnership to be the best it can be in safeguarding our children and young people. In our first Development Day in May, at which the whole extended partnership was invited, we looked at some emerging threats, such as child criminal exploitation, so that we can position ourselves to best effect in dealing with them, both as individual agencies and as a partnership.

We are proud to have appointed our Young Peoples Commissioner, Amy Waites, who will assist the DSCP in better hearing 'The Voice of the Child' and thereby shape our services. Amy will also be part of the Independent Scrutiny Panel which will hold the DSCP to account. Welcome Amy!

We have developed a 'Balanced Scorecard' of performance indicators which will assist us in measuring our effectiveness in fulfilling our vision and values for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our children and young people in County Durham.

We are a learning partnership and, as such, we ensure that we learn the lessons from Serious Case Reviews, audits, and professional challenges from partners, by embedding that learning and checking its impact. A 'Third Party Assurance Framework' is under development and we will also commission independent scrutiny of the DSCP via the Local Government Association to check that the partnership is delivering on its aims and purpose.

We acknowledge that, given the breadth and depth of the new DSCP, not all partners are 'sitting round the table' as of old, and that this will take some getting used to. However, we have introduced structures and information sharing processes to assist in constructive engagement with all Relevant Agencies. We will see how that is working out as part of our next Development Day.

We must be the best we can be, every day, for every child and family requiring safeguarding and support for their welfare. If you have any suggestions as to how we can improve our partnership in achieving this, then I look forward to hearing from you.



Michael Banks, DSCP Independent Chair

Young People's Commissioner Apprentice Appointed



In September 2019 the Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP), appointed a Young People's Commissioner Apprentice, Amy Waites. This is an innovative move from the partnership, with Amy perhaps being the first nationally to take up such a position. Her role will be to work closely with the DSCP to support and influence their priorities. She will connect directly with a range of young people and partners across the county, to review whether what the partnership does keeps young people safe.

Amy will also play a key role in the independent DSCP Scrutiny Panel.

"I'm looking forward to being able to engage with young people and children. It's important they have a voice to ensure their opinions and views are being heard so that professionals can be confident that their objectives meet their needs and improve outcomes for young people. This is especially important in my role as I aim to connect directly with a range of young people and other key community partners to review and explore whether what the Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership are doing is keeping young people safe"

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Threshold –Climbing the staircase of need **Ofsted report Children's services**

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

Safeguarding Week – 18/11/19 to 24/11/19

National Safeguarding Adults week is due to run from Monday 18 November 2019, but here in Durham we intend focusing on cross cutting messages that have impact on both children and adults. The main themes will be domestic abuse, as it effects both children and adults, and exploitation across areas such as County lines, Modern Day Slavery, and Child Sexual Exploitation. The week will include important messages across the media, with the main event being held on Wednesday 20 November 2019, when we will have stalls across various partner agencies, together with a number of guest speakers, at a County Hall based event.

So don't be shy, save the date and please look out for additional details as we develop the programme. It will be great to see as

Getting the Partnership right for young people

Going forward the Young Persons Commissioner will not only assist in scrutinising the DSCP, but will also facilitate agenda days to establish the views of children in order to influence our work. If we are going to be child centric then this work is vital.

What we know now ?

Main Concerns – Grooming / Drugs / Social Media /Domestic Abuse

Priorities as Young People see it – Improved joined up working from agencies / Communicate better and share with them what we are doing / Be more transparent and let them have a say / have less priorities but focussed / improve early help and support / tell them what's available / better explanation and engagement.

In a nutshell, young people want to be :

- Listened to
- Be allowed to make choices

So we all need to continually reflect and listen!!

What is Contextual Safeguarding (CS)?

Contextual Safeguarding (CS) is an approach to safeguarding that supports practitioners to recognise and respond to the harm young people experience outside of the family home. Current child protection systems were primarily designed to protect children from risks posed to them by their families. There is an increased recognition across the sector that the system is not working effectively enough for adolescents. This approach gives prominence and weight to the influence of peers on young people's decision making. Intervening to affect context of the extra-familial risk can increase the capacity of families to safeguard young people and divert young people away from harmful contexts, thus CS can be seen to extend the notion of capacity to safeguard placing the young person front and centre of the process.

Threshold guidance—Climbing the Staircase of Need

The use of the Threshold guidance document will not be new to any of us. That said, it has recently been subject of detailed review and refresh. It has been rebranded and titled, '**Supporting the Durham Staircase and Continuum of Need**', and supports the key principles underpinning Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. Going forward you should use this threshold document in tandem with the national guidance. It is the intended to launch the new Threshold document during National Safeguarding week, running from 18/11 – 24/11/19, so watch this space !!

Professional Challenge Pledge—Remember this ? —We all agreed to it !!

DSCP want to get the message out that appropriate challenges are welcomed and to give permission for us all to use it in our everyday practice. Challenge is about challenging decisions and assumptions made, not the person. It's about what makes you worried, your fears and anxieties. It's about asking yourself, as a professional, can you walk away from a situation leaving issues unchallenged. The child's views and needs are always paramount. [here](#)



A Step in the Right Direction (click logo for full report)

An inspection of children’s social care services took place between 9 September and 20 September 2019. Previously, the joint targeted area inspection (JTAI), July 2018 found that multi-agency working and strategy meetings were areas requiring priority action. A significant work plan followed with over 100 actions focused on the key themes. A further Ofsted visit of children in need and those subject to a child protection plans in January 2019

demonstrated some improvements, but weaknesses remained and there was drift and delay for children, as well as in recording and management oversight.

*‘Since that time, the local authority has taken swift and decisive action to strengthen services. Pace has increased since the focused visit, and solid improvements can be seen in many service areas, including at the front door and for children in care. Firm foundations are in place to sustain and build on the improvements made’. ****Keep up the good work !!*****

There has been a significant increase in workforce capacity and a restructure of children’s services, including a restructure of the senior leadership team. The new leadership structure has improved practice oversight, enabling leaders to better challenge weaker practice. However, management oversight, challenge and consistency of social work practice are not fully embedded in all service areas, including those for disabled children, those for children who are privately fostered and those for homeless 16 and 17-year-olds. As a result, some children are not always receiving help at the earliest opportunity. Senior leaders and managers were not aware of some of these shortfalls until the inspection. However, they made plans to address them during the inspection.

Children in care and care leavers get a good service, and the quality of practice has improved since the last inspection. There is strong political and corporate parenting focus, oversight and challenge. Children influence leaders at all levels, and they have an impact on providing good services for children in care and care leavers.

What needs to improve ?

- ◆ The quality and impact of management oversight including that of child protection chairs
- ◆ The timeliness of assessments and support for children who return home
- ◆ The quality of child ren s plans so that they are timebound, and include clear actions and contingency plans

Serious Case Reviews (SCR’s) - Themes and Lessons

What is the Issue ?	What have we done ?
Effectiveness and Compliance with Bruising to Non-Mobile Babies Pathway	Pathway reviewed and relaunched in May 2019 and awareness raising across partnership
Assessment and decision making of children displaying sexually harmful behaviour and adults who post a risk of	Specialist training commissioned / MAPPA e learning / Review AIM procedures
Thresholds and Decision making	Peer Review of the Front Door and MASH Task & Finish Group in place to review and refresh the DSCP
Effectiveness of Strategy Meetings/S47 enquiries	Changes to the Strategy Meeting process, e.g. introduction of tele-conferencing at Strategy Meetings and a Single Point of Contact
Professional Challenge and Escalation	Multi-Agency Challenge Process to ensure consistency. Multi-Agency Challenge Pledge that was endorsed by Chief/Senior Officers from
Communication and Information Sharing	Embed SOS as practice model across partnership to support use of shared language

Assessment & Intervention Level 3

Friday 29 November -Meadowfield Depot,

Thursday 23 January - Durham County Hall

Wednesday 19 February - Durham County Hall

Thursday 19 March - Meadowfield Depot

Being Part of a TAF

Thursday 28 November AM –Durham County Hall

Thursday 30 January AM–Durham County Hall

Child Protection Conference Level 3

Friday 24 January –Meadowfield Depot

Thursday 25 March –Durham County hall

Child Sexual Exploitation Level 3

Tuesday 5 November AM / PM- Meadowfield Depot

Thursday 12 December AM / PM- Meadowfield Depot

Tuesday 4 February AM / PM- Meadowfield Depot

Toxic Quad Level 3

Thursday 7 November - Meadowfield Depot

Monday 2 December - Meadowfield Depot, Industrial Estate

Friday 31 January - Meadowfield Depot, Industrial Estate

Monday 17 February - Meadowfield Depot, Industrial Estate

Tuesday 3 March - Meadowfield Depot, Industrial Estate

Children with Additional Needs Level 3

Thursday 19 December AM / PM- Durham County Hall

Thursday 27 February AM / PM- Meadowfield Depot

Safer Workforce Level 3

Tuesday 17 December - Meadowfield Depot

Fabricated and Induced Illness Briefing

Tuesday 28 January PM- Durham County Hall

Neglect Level 3

Thursday 21 November - Meadowfield Depot

Monday 27 January - Durham County Hall

Tuesday 25 February - Durham County Hall

Tuesday 17 March - Meadowfield Depot

LADO Training Briefing Session

Tuesday 21 January AM—County Hall

Pre– Birth Training

Thursday 14 November AM—Meadowfield

Friday 13 December PM—Meadowfield Depot

Monday 27 January PM—Meadowfield Depot

Thursday 20th February AM—Meadowfield

Safeguarding Processes Level 2

Tuesday 19 November AM / PM - Meadowfield Depot

Thursday 5 December AM / PM - Meadowfield Depot

Tuesday 7 January AM / PM - Meadowfield Depot

Friday 21 February AM / PM - Meadowfield Depot

Signs of Safety Briefing

Monday 11 November AM - Durham County Hall

Thursday 9 January AM - Meadowfield Depot

Thursday 6 February AM –Durham County Hall

Thursday 12 March AM–Durham County Hall

How to Book

You can find out more details about all the courses the DSCP deliver on the Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership Website <https://www.durham-scp.org.uk>

Click on the course title to download the course information sheet that includes training dates. All courses need to be booked using the online survey monkey link, <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/M36SF9Z>

All courses are free to DSCP partner agencies and voluntary agencies.

There is a cost of £50 for all private organisations.