

Welcome to our Summer Newsletter

Welcome to our latest joint HSCP/HSAB newsletter. There have been many changes in working practices since the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated restrictions, but we would like to say a big thank you to all who have adapted to meet the safeguarding needs of children and adults in Hertfordshire. There is clear evidence of incredible innovative and creative ideas across all partner agencies during this difficult time, which is a reflection on everyone's dedication to keeping children and adults safe. Looking to the future, we are sure all agencies are keen that many of these innovative practices will become part of the longer-term service that we offer.

During the lockdown, key agency leads have held weekly meetings to ensure all agencies are working together to keep children and adults safe, to share new learning practices and to identify any areas that need addressing. These meetings are also working on a recovery plan together, to ensure a safe and efficient return to the working place and will continue over the summer period.

At the start of lockdown, the HSCP/HSAB had to suspend all face to face training. However, we have worked with facilitators and trainers to ensure we can offer frontline practitioners the opportunity to continue their training and have moved nearly all our training to live webinar sessions. These have been received very well and are well attended; we would like to say a big thank you to all the trainers who have adapted to this new way of working and we are sure webinar sessions will become part of our training offer in the future. Additionally, we are exploring options for e-learning and we will keep you all posted via our website or monthly L&D Programme.

Our Annual Conference on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) was also cancelled but Warren Larkin and Associates facilitated 7 live webinar sessions in July 2020. Due to demand and because it is acknowledged that this is a key subject where practitioners have asked for training,

the HSCP are working with Warren Larkin & Associates to schedule 8 further sessions during September 2020 and March 2021 – details will be on our website soon.

Prior to lock down the HSAB and HSCP were holding training forums in relation to Transitional Safeguarding. These forums were very well attended by a variety of professionals and are being pulled together by a webinar session in August.

The HSAB have also continued to carry out safeguarding adults training via live webinar sessions which have been very well attended.

Our Learning Hubs which were due to be held in June 2020 were on the topic of On-Line Safety, which was also a key topic that frontline practitioners requested. These sessions were also cancelled but we are now working towards holding the Learning Hubs in September/October 2020 via live webinar sessions. These sessions will be facilitated by Claudia Megele and Dr Peter Buzzi who are recognised leads in the field of child on-line safety. More details will be available on our website ([link below](#)) and through our monthly L&D Programme.

The HSCP/HSAB have now developed a webpage dedicated to Training and Resources and you can access our training offer and the monthly L&D Programmes via this [link](#).

We have new dedicated Training and Resources webpages



which you can access from either

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/hscp

or

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/hsab

Please visit and let us know your feedback

Lifelong Links

Children who are Looked After by the Local Authority often lose contact with their wider family and friends. This can lead to children feeling confused, lost and being unsure about their own sense of identity.

At the point of Leaving Care, Young People often lack informal support networks to fall back on emotionally and economically. Too often this can result in loneliness, isolation, and vulnerability.

Lifelong Links aims to identify and engage relatives and other supportive adults connected to a child who is Looked After and

are willing to make a life-long commitment to that child. The child is central to process and are involved in identifying the family members they wish to have contact with. Once the family members are identified a Lifelong Links FGC is held, where family members can not only come and celebrate with the child, but also to put forward offers of contact and support for the child.

Research shows that the continuity and permanence of familial relationships will offer the child ongoing emotional and practical support, help provide an explanation of historical events,

and reinforce the child's identity and sense of belonging.

The Lifelong links project has been running in Hertfordshire since 2017, and to date 85 children who are Looked After have received a Lifelong Links FGC, where they were reunited with their families, and ongoing plans of support and contact have been developed.

The link below provides further information regarding the service, including information as to how to refer.

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/lifelonglinks

Family Group Conferencing

A Family Group Conference (FGC) is a voluntary process bringing together a child's wider family and support network to develop a plan of support to meet the needs of a child who is in need or at risk of harm. FGCs focus on the strengths within the families and recognises the rights and responsibilities of families to meet the needs of the child.



Hertfordshire Children's Services have been offering FGC's to families since 2009. The FGC Service receives around 370 referrals a year, with 75% of these referrals resulting in FGCs. FGCs have been proven to help produce better outcomes for children by ensuring that the child is supported by their wider family and support network. Where a child is at risk of being removed from their primary carers, holding an FGC increases the likelihood of keeping them within their family or community.

The link below provides further information regarding the service, including information as to how to refer.

<http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/fqcs>

IF YOU THINK IT, REPORT IT.

To find out how visit
[gov.uk/tacklechildabuse](https://tacklechildabuse.gov.uk)

TOGETHER WE CAN TACKLE CHILD ABUSE |  Department for Education

<https://tacklechildabuse.campaign.gov.uk>



Beacon is a free and independent service that offers support to victims and witnesses of crime in Hertfordshire.

If you have any questions about the service they offer, or would like to know more about our simple referral process, please don't hesitate to get in touch on **0300 0115 555 (option 3 for the Catch22 team)**, or you can email our secure mailbox: **info.hertfordshirebeacon@catch-22.org.uk**

You'll also find lots of information on our website: **www.hertfordshirebeacon.org** and you can keep up to speed with what we're up to by following us on   Twitter and Instagram – **@HertsBeacon**



The ability to cope with stress depends on the controllability of the stressor.



The measures to contain and delay the spread of COVID19 are already presenting major stressors for families which they cannot control e.g. Loss of income, Self isolation with children and potentially at risk adults, Social distancing restrictions on activities which might lessen stress (e.g. sports, social engagement and entertainment, celebrations) and Social distancing restrictions on activities which might enhance support and coping (e.g support groups, children/baby groups and classes, baby clinics).

Please share the ICON coping techniques to families across your networks.

<http://iconcope.org/for-professionals/>

Management of Suspicious Bruises/Marks in Babies under 6 months;



Please see the link below to use as a resource for Team Meetings/training

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJsbl-Tb31k&feature=youtu.be>

NSPCC briefing on social isolation and the risk of child abuse during and after the coronavirus pandemic

In July 2020 the NSPCC published a briefing on social isolation and the risk of child abuse during and after the coronavirus pandemic. (Isolated and Struggling: Eleni Romanou and Emma Belton 2020; London NSPCC)

Key findings

We researched the risks children might be facing and the reasons why these might intensify during the pandemic. Our findings fall into three broad categories.

- **Increase in stressors to parents and caregivers**

The research we reviewed confirms that the risk of child abuse is higher when caregivers become overloaded by the stressors in their lives. There are indications that the coronavirus pandemic has increased stressors on caregivers.

- **Increase in children and young people's vulnerability**

There are indications that the conditions caused by the coronavirus pandemic have heightened the vulnerability of children and young people to certain types of abuse, for example online abuse, abuse within the home, criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation.

- **Reduction in normal protective services**

There is evidence that the 'normal' safeguards we rely on to protect children and young people have been reduced during the pandemic. However social connections and social support can provide a protective effect for children's safety and wellbeing.



Please click [here](#) for a full copy of the briefing.

Important Links

Best Practice Guide for Video Call and Virtual Home Visits:

<https://esafeguarding.org/publications/PSW-and-SWE-Best-Practice-Guide-for-Video-Call-and-Virtual-Home-Visit-20200505.pdf>

Prioritising Children and Families Needs and Risks:

<https://esafeguarding.org/publications/PSW-and-SWE-Best-Practice-Guide-for-Prioritizing-Children-and-Families-Needs-and-Risks-20200505.pdf>

Ethical Response and Best Practice Guide:

<https://esafeguarding.org/publications/PSW-and-SWE-Coronavirus-Ethical-Response-and-Best-Practice-Guide-20200505.pdf>

Impact of the coronavirus on Young Carers in England

The University of East Anglia (UEA) has published a report looking at the impact of the coronavirus on young carers in England.

Findings from interviews with 20 young carers and young adult carers found that the restrictions of lockdown and anxiety related to the coronavirus crisis have increased their caring load and prevented them from getting a break or from turning to their established coping strategies such as spending time with friends, going to school or engaging in a hobby.

The report calls for children under 18 living with a parent or sibling with substantial disability, physical health needs or mental ill health to be automatically regarded as a young carer during the pandemic.

Read the press release:

[Study reveals impact of COVID-19 on young carers](#)

Read the report:

[Understanding the needs of young carers in the context of the COVID-19 global pandemic \(PDF\)](#)

The consequences of the coronavirus crisis on children and young people living in poverty in the UK

Source: *The Childhood Trust*

Date: 22 June 2020

The Childhood Trust has published a report looking at the consequences of the coronavirus crisis on children and young people living in poverty in the UK. The report draws together emerging evidence from studies to highlight the most pressing concerns that government and third sector organisations need to address. Topics covered include: emotional and physical abuse; mental health; learning loss; hunger and food insecurity; homelessness; and wellbeing.

Read the report:

[Children in lockdown: the consequences of the coronavirus crisis for children living in poverty \(PDF\)](#)



Hertfordshire Community Trust champions the Mental Capacity Act



Have you considered your patient's capacity to consent to their care today?

Assume I have capacity to make my own decisions (1) and help me understand the information I need (2). Don't assume that I lack capacity because the decision I make seems unwise (3). If you make a decision for me, make sure it is in my best interests (4) and the least restrictive to my rights (5).

Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust is committed to ensuring their staff have the knowledge and confidence to use the Mental Capacity Act as part of their daily work.

In Feb 2020 HCT's CEO Clare Hawkins supported the launch of the MCA Excellence campaign. This campaign seeks to highlight the fantastic daily work of staff in supporting patients to understand and consent to their care. Where a patient has a cognitive impairment, HCT staff are looking for excellent examples of capacity assessments and best interests decision making.

Staff are nominated to receive a specially designed lanyard badge to recognise their work in this area and can become a source of peer support in their teams.

The campaign has been supported with regular communications and a screensaver. As the Trust moves through the pandemic and can resume this campaign, they will also be looking to develop this initiative further alongside the Mental Capacity Amendment Act and Liberty Protection Safeguards changes.

Safeguarding adults with dementia

Common symptoms of dementia include memory loss, disorientation, difficulty communicating, behavioural changes, low mood, and overall cognitive impairment, all of which can put a person at risk of abuse or neglect.

Concerns about neglect are common because dementia can hinder a person's ability to speak out or can make them confused about what is going on around them. Vulnerability to financial and material abuse may arise because they may stop understanding bills or finances and entrust them to an unsuitable third party. People with dementia can be susceptible to psychological abuse because carers reach breaking point and can express their frustration in many ways. The person with dementia may not understand this reaction or why it has come about.

People with dementia are often targeted by abusers because they may be unable to say "no" or are easily overwhelmed by domineering characters. Dementia can erode person's communication skills, rendering them unable to summon help or speak out. They often feel lonely and may be more inclined to accept abusive behaviours than spend time on their own.

Additionally, the person may forget about the abuse and never report it. As dementia takes hold and progresses, the person's self-protection mechanisms begin to fall away.

Effective safeguarding and risk assessment depend on building relationships with the person with dementia. Practitioners can do this by communicating with the service user in a way that respects them and their cognitive status.

If you see something, hear something or have that gut feeling – report it.

Telephone **0300 123 40 42** or go to
<https://hcsportal.hertfordshire.gov.uk/web/portal/pages/home>



Focus on exploitation - cuckooing

In March 2020 we planned a multiagency forum on cuckooing. Like many other events, we had no option as to postpone it at the time. We have not lost the sight of cuckooing, a crime that has a huge impact on individuals and communities. We are looking to hold this event virtually later in the year so watch this space and get involved.

Cuckooing is a term used to describe the takeover of someone's home by drug gangs from outside the area to use as their base. Homes of vulnerable women -often single parents or drug users and people with learning disabilities are targeted. The impact of cuckooing is devastating as there will often be dozens of people visiting the target address, causing antisocial behaviour, dealing and using drugs.

Only deeper understanding of how exploitation works, and closer multi-agency links can help to tackle cuckooing.

Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS)

The government has told councils and other sector bodies "not to prioritise" implementing the replacement for the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards with the previously scheduled October 2020 go-live date now on hold.

The LPS was due to come into force in October of this year but due to the delay in consultations regarding the code of practice and perhaps more significantly, the impact of Covid-19 pandemic the implementation will be postponed.

A Department of Health and Social Care spokesperson said: "We are aware of the pressures the pandemic is putting on the health and social care sector and are not asking the sector to prioritise LPS preparation during this time."

The target date for implementation is 1 April 2022. Prior to then, a revised MCA Code of Practice will be published, which, the sector trusts, will bring clarity to some outstanding questions about how LPS will work in practice.

For more information on LPS go to www.edgetraining.org.uk and click on DoLS and LPS resources

Hertfordshire domestic abuse pathways project

If you are a front-line practitioner with the experience of domestic abuse, this is your chance to get involved in shaping support for people affected by domestic abuse.

Go to <https://surveys.hertfordshire.gov.uk/s/YourStoryDA/> and answer a few questions about your professional experience, including what you've seen and how you've responded to suspected or confirmed cases of domestic abuse. The survey is open until 28th September 2020.

To find out more about the project click on the link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FH_aksMjVzw&feature=youtu.be

Practitioners' Dedication – Self-Neglect Case

The HSAB recently received a referral for a Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) from a District Council.



The referral was for a homeless man who for a short period of time had been supported by housing officers from a District Council. The Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) Subgroup considered the case carefully and decided that it did not meet criteria for a SAR. However, it highlighted some good practice shown by housing officers and health staff from Hertfordshire Community Trust (HCT) in supporting Mr R.

Mr R. had a history of depression and many physical health problems which he neglected. He wasn't managing to look after himself and was reluctant to engage with services. Housing officers worked hard with Mr R. to help him to address his needs but many of their attempts went in vain as Mr R. would refuse help. Staff from both organisations had serious concerns about Mr R's wellbeing and continued developing the relationship which led to some wins when Mr R. occasionally accepted support.

There were other agencies involved such as Age UK and Adult Care Services and the case illustrates some good multi-agency practice, communication and joint working. In particular the evidence of compassion and tenacity of practitioners in working with Mr. R was noted as excellent.

Working with people who self-neglect is challenging and can sometimes leave practitioners feeling helpless.

What can we learn from this case:

- Don't do it alone - involve the right people to help you
- Try to understand the reasons behind the person's behaviour
- Explore alternative ways to help people who self-neglect to take part in assessment, medical appointment, etc
- Multi-agency approach works best and long-term involvement is sometimes necessary. Always consider a professional meeting to discuss and coordinate actions
- Focus on the positives: small wins can lead to bigger changes
- Reducing the risk of harm rather than removing it completely may be a good approach
- Not all interventions have a happy ending. The support provided by different agencies did not prevent Mr R's death, but his life was improved.

We have resources to help you with self-neglect practice. Go to www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/hsab and read our Self-neglect Policy.

If you have any queries on any items in this newsletter please contact a member of the Business Unit Staff

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