Welcome to our Spring Newsletter

Welcome to our latest joint HSCP/HSAB newsletter. Spring is around the corner and hopefully we can start to enjoy the great outdoors in the sunshine. Whilst we continue to face challenges across our working and personal lives this does not stop our frontline practitioners from ensuring services are delivered and our vulnerable community is kept safe - and for that we thank you.

Even though the pandemic has placed a considerable strain on agencies, the HSAB has continued to work closely with professionals to assure itself that agencies are working to safeguard adults in Hertfordshire. As the independent Chair of the Board I would like to express my thanks to all those who have, and who are continuing, to work so very hard to support the most vulnerable adults within our community.

During the past quarter the HSAB has continued to work on our priorities. A major workstream on Cuckooing is now under way and you will see an article in this newsletter outlining more detail about this work. This will remain a key priority for the coming financial year for the Board.

Work has continued on Safeguarding Adult Reviews with learnings being shared across the partnership to enhance practice. The HSAB has partnered with Alcohol Change UK to look at cases of alcohol addiction and the safeguarding issues that can occur for these individuals. These will be linked to National learnings and once completed will be shared widely with partners.

We are also planning more multi-agency practitioner forums for the coming year, themes planned include scamming and working with complex cases. In conjunction with the HSCP and DA partnerships we are also planning a multi-agency training offer on domestic abuse for the coming year.

Once again thank you to everyone in Hertfordshire working so hard to keep people safe.

In February 2021 the HSCP launched their Neglect Strategy & Campaign, which is a joint campaign with the NSPCC. The campaign is community based, with a strong focus on early help. The first phase included the February launch with the keynote speaker being Dez Holmes from Research in Practice. We also ran a parents’ survey to gauge the local understanding of neglect within Hertfordshire.

For frontline practitioners we offered ‘lunch and learn’ sessions, as well as neglect awareness sessions. The next two phases of the campaign will be held later in the year and we will keep you updated.

Our Learning Hubs planned for March 2021 are on the topic of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA). The Hubs will be facilitated by Emma Harewood from The Lighthouse London. Emma is an inspiration speaker and a key lead in CSA.

The partnership has continued to work on our key business priorities throughout the pandemic, with big developments and events around our new Neglect Strategy, Online Safeguarding, Child Sexual Abuse, Exploitation and sharing learnings from case reviews and audit.

I would like to extend a big thank you to everyone, both behind the scenes and on the frontline. Together we will get through this and continue to ensure all children and young people in Hertfordshire are kept safe.

Visit our joint Training and Resources website

Liz Hanlon
Chair, Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board

Bill Jephson
Chair, Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership
The Home Office has published the Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy setting out the government’s vision for preventing, tackling and responding to child sexual abuse whether it is committed in person or online, in families or communities, in the UK or overseas.

The strategy is based on the following three objectives:

**objective 1:** tackling all forms of child sexual abuse and bringing offenders to justice

**objective 2:** preventing offending and re-offending

**objective 3:** protecting and safeguarding children and young people, and supporting all victims and survivors

Read the strategy: Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy

See also on NSPCC Learning
→ Protecting children from sexual abuse

The Children’s Commissioner for England has published an annual report on the state of children’s mental health services.

The report examines the progress that has been made over the past five years as well as looking at the impact the Covid crisis has had on children’s mental health.

Recommendations include that the government commits to the implementation of Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) in every region of England to facilitate joint working between schools and the NHS.

Read the news story: Damage to children’s mental health caused by Covid crisis could last for years without a large-scale increase for children’s mental health services

Read the report: The state of children’s mental health services 2020/21 (PDF)

Just for Kids Law reports on the announcement by the Ministry of Justice that they will introduce further regulations exempting children from extended custody time limits in England and Wales. The regulations will apply retrospectively to children who had their custody time limits set under the September 2020 regulations, so that all children remanded at the Crown Court will have a custody time limit of 182 days.

Read the news story: Just for Kids Law welcomes Government U-turn to exempt children from extended custody time limits
HSCP Neglect Strategy & joint Campaign with the NSPCC

Neglect Matters

On 25 February 2021 the HSCP launched their joint year-long Neglect Campaign with the NSPCC. During the year events will be organised for both practitioners, families and children, to raise awareness of neglect in Hertfordshire. The focus of the Campaign is early help, for both practitioners and the public to know where to seek support at an early stage.

**Phase 1** is focused on practitioners, to ensure they are equipped with tools and knowledge. We have also carried out a parents’ survey to gauge their understanding of the neglect in Hertfordshire, which will inform future phases of the Campaign.

**Phase 2** will focus on parents and the wider community, including posters in public settings, newsletters aimed at parents and linking with local businesses. We will also be consulting with children and young people to help us shape the Campaign.

**Phase 3** will focus on children and young people, with targeted work with specific age groups e.g. the NSPCC will deliver sessions to primary school aged children. A booklet will be developed for young people and adolescents, as well as awareness raising information via Snap Chat, Twitter etc.

Keep a look out throughout the year for our upcoming events

The Department for Education (DfE) has updated Keeping children safe in education

The statutory guidance for schools and colleges on safeguarding children and safer recruitment, and the Staffing and employment guidance for schools in England to reflect legal changes following exit from the EU, including guidance on checking the past conduct of individuals who have lived or worked overseas.

**Read the guidance:**
Keeping children safe in education

**Staffing and employment: advice for schools**

HSCP Digital E-Learn offer – NEW

The HSCP now has a digital offer which is FREE to all practitioners. Currently we have four topics available (as per below), all of which are CPD accredited, and hope to enhance the offer further in the future.

- Gypsy and Traveller Cultural Awareness
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Gangs and Youth Violence
- Sexual Abuse and Recognising Grooming

Visit our joint Training and Resources website where you can check out the monthly L&D Programme, book a training or sign up for the e-learning offer.
Spotlight on Domestic Abuse, Young Adults and Disability

“We Matter Too” Research

The overall objective of the project was to develop the evidence base and shine a light on the needs of a group of young people less likely to be noticed, asked, heard or able to tell about abuse that goes on often behind closed doors. It aims to support practice development, inform service design and delivery at management levels and seek the development of policy and guidance at strategic levels.

Key findings - What disabled young people said they need:

- To be asked
- To be treated like they matter
- To have professionals who check if they have understood
- For professionals to understand that “asking for help is hard; it is scary”
- For professionals to understand that it is difficult to make sense of what happens
- For professionals, and especially the police, to understand the fear that people experience
- To have people who try to understand the behaviour – victims and witnesses don’t always use words, they don’t always have the words
- To have help to understand healthy relationships and choices

The work of several organisations nationally including SafeLives and Women’s Aid has highlighted that domestic abuse services are less effective in reaching some sections of the population.

The SafeLives Spotlights report, ‘Safe Young Lives’ highlights that of all those experiencing domestic abuse, young people aged 16-20 and 21-24 years face the highest risks. Disabled people also face far higher risks of domestic abuse compared to non-disabled people.

The research project, “We Matter Too”, explores the experiences and needs of those who are both young and disabled experiencing domestic abuse in order to address the gap in our understanding of the specific needs of this group.

Read We Matter too – executive summary
The Hidden Consequences of Lockdown: The Rise in ‘Sex for Rent’ Landlords

What is ‘Sex for Rent’?
The national charity Shelter describes ‘sex for rent’ as an arrangement where someone is being asked for payment for the housing costs in the form of sexual favours.

Alongside clear exploitation, these arrangements present risks around whether the tenants have sufficient housing rights. Prior to the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, there was already a lack of affordable housing. This has been exacerbated by the rise in unemployment because of the pandemic. Consequently, Shelter has found that since the pandemic began in March over 30,000 women have been propositioned by ‘sex for rent’ landlords, as a means to pay for rent arrears or as a means of getting free or reduced-price accommodation. Although this issue has been found to disproportionately impact women, it is important to note that anyone at risk of homelessness could face such exploitation.

Everyone should have the right to live safely, free from the risk of abuse. ‘Sex for rent’ arrangements create a situation where individuals are at risk of multiple forms of abuse as a result of the power landlords have over people who are dependent on them for housing. Firstly, sex for rent arrangements are a form of sexual abuse as individuals are pressured into engaging in sexual acts against their will to avoid becoming homeless. Secondly, individuals in such arrangements are being asked to enter a space that is entirely controlled by the landlord. This creates a catalyst for physical and emotional abuse. Finally, such arrangements could lead to individuals becoming at risk of self neglect. This covers a wide range of behaviour, but it can be broadly defined as neglecting to care for one’s personal hygiene or health and can become a coping mechanism for sexual trauma.

Listen to Peter Kyle, labour MP speak to the BBC about sex for rent

Shelter offers advice for homeless people and those at risk of losing their home.
Our Work on Cuckooing

In December 2020 and January 2021, HSAB held two safeguarding forums with the focus on cuckooing.

Cuckooing takes place when criminals take over homes of people they target. These are often individuals vulnerable to this type of exploitation: drug users, people with learning disabilities/mental health needs, people previously homeless, or those who are socially isolated. Cuckooing is often linked to the drug trade known as ‘county lines’, the name given to drug dealing networks connecting urban and rural areas across the UK through dedicated mobile phones.

Cuckooing often starts from befriending victims but soon sees dealers using both physical and emotional threats to establish a base for selling drugs in their home.

Both forums were well attended with presentations from Hertfordshire Constabulary, Watford Borough Council and the County Community Safety Unit. We had an opportunity to develop the local and national picture of cuckooing as well as to listen to the case study which highlighted the lived experience of cuckooing.

Our colleagues from Housing contributed to the presentations explaining the difficulties in identifying victims of cuckooing as often they are seen as the source of antisocial behaviour and drug trade. This illustrates the complexity of this issue and tells us that we all need to be vigilant to its signs and report it to prevent abuse and exploitation.

Following on from the forums, HSAB will be setting up a task and finish group to look at the role of multiagency practice in identifying and supporting victims of cuckooing. We will update on the progress of this work later in the year.

Signs of cuckooing can include:

- Different people coming and going from a property during the day and night
- Suspicious smells coming from the property
- Windows covered or curtains closed all hours of the day
- Cars pulling up to or near to the property for a short period of time
- Increase in ASB around the property
- New or regularly changing residents
- Change in resident’s mood or behaviour (e.g. secretive, withdrawn, aggressive, emotional)
- Substance misuse and/or drug paraphernalia
**Practice Resources from HSAB**

Good, person centred practice starts from the referral. You will achieve better outcomes and speed up safeguarding enquiries by making good quality referrals. Take a look at our [How to make a good safeguarding referral](#) factsheet and check our [Safeguarding referral pathway](#) poster to make sure your referral goes to the right service.

If you would like to refer a case to us for a Safeguarding Adults Review, you will find the [referral form](#) on our [website](#).

We also have two apps designed to support professional practice. Both apps are available on our website.

**Safeguarding APP**

**Mental Capacity APP**

Read about local and national practice developments, findings from SARs, what went well and what can be done differently in our learning bulletins available at [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/learningbulletins](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/learningbulletins).

**Working from home? Take a look at the Wellness Action Plan from Mind**

Many of us work from home due to the pandemic, and the usual support we access in our workplaces might not work the same way it used to. For example, you might have previously enjoyed taking a break to talk to colleagues when you were feeling under pressure in the office, but now you’re working from home that’s not readily available. Therefore, you might need to consider new ways of managing your mental wellbeing that works in these new conditions.

A wellness action plan (WAP) is a useful tool to help us identify what keeps us well and what impacts our mental health. It looks like a short list of questions for you to complete, asking what helps you stay healthy, how you can cope with stress, and other wellbeing topics. You can find [WAP](#) on the Mind website.

**Mind** is a leading mental health charity. It provides advice and support to empower anyone experiencing mental health problems. It campaigns to improve services, raise awareness and promote understanding.

**COVID-19 and Safeguarding Adults: Resource Pack**

The Local Government Association (LGO) and the Association of Directors for Adult Social Services (ADASS) gathered resources collected between March and December 2020 to support safeguarding work during the COVID-19 pandemic. Information was compiled initially through a ‘safeguarding issues grid’, in response to issues raised by Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) Chairs, SAB Managers, Principal Social Workers and others regarding safeguarding adults during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pack contains examples of good practice of changes in practice and service delivery developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Read the resource pack

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