Welcome to the Autumn newsletter

Welcome to the HSCP/HSAB newsletter. Again it’s been a busy time for the HSCP since our last communication. Local Learning Hubs took place throughout October and focused on the subject of neglect. The discussions and feedback from practitioners will now inform the development of our partnership Neglect Strategy and work going forward, particularly in spotting early signs so families can get the support they need. Dr Warren Larkin presented on Adverse Childhood Experiences and the impact these can have on children and young people at our Twilight Sessions for schools. The Breaking the Chain theatre production was rolled out to 17 schools throughout Hertfordshire during November to raise awareness, promote conversations and build resilience around youth violence – with a focus on knife crime. A production for professionals was launched on the 4th November with 120 professional attending and the Fearless launch occurred on the same day (see the newsletter for more details).

Nicky Pace is developing the role of the Independent Scrutineer of our new safeguarding arrangements and Nicky has contributed an article for the newsletter. We always welcome comments and feedback on the activities and training of the HSCP so don’t hesitate to let us know what you think.

Jenny Coles
Director of Children’s Services

Welcome to the latest joint newsletter for the HSAB and the HSCP. We have had a very busy and productive three months within the Adults’ board. The Board has recently published the latest Safeguarding Adults Review regarding ‘Josanne’. Josanne was an adult with learning difficulties who unfortunately died following admission to hospital. The review highlighted areas of good multi-agency working but also looked at recommendations for agencies. The review is on our website and is a very interesting read. The board has also recently put on multi-agency training forums in relation to domestic abuse and also learning from SAR’s regarding self-neglect. The forums were well attended and were highlighted as being productive especially regarding the highlighting of multi-agency issues and learning.

We have recently completed a follow up self-neglect audit following on from the audit commissioned 18 months ago. The audit showed a great deal of improvement regarding the knowledge and skills surrounding self-neglect and the progress that has taken place. The Board is currently working on the recommendations that have come out of the previous review and audit. The Board has held a joint HSAB/HSCP Housing Conference which was incredibly well attended. The conference looked at self-neglect including hoarding, cuckooing and multi-agency working.

The Board continues to work towards its priorities and business plans and has published its yearly Annual Report which highlights the achievements and developments of the board over the previous year. The annual report is published on the website for all to view.

Lastly I would like to highlight Bonita Sparkes, from West Herts Hospital who has recently won the award for Nurse of the year. Congratulations to her and very well deserved. Bonnie works very hard for the Board and is the chair of the Public Engagement Group.

Liz Hanlon
Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board

Congratulations – Nurse of the Year!
Bonita Sparkes
West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust

Bonnie Sparkes, the clinical nurse specialist for safeguarding adults at West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust, is Nurse of the Year! Bonnie actively works and supports the HSAB and is chair of the Public Engagement sub-group.

‘Bonnie has led on an innovative project working with the police to support possible victims of human trafficking and modern slavery working in the sex trade. This required significant skills in communication, partnership working and leadership. The project led to the development of a pioneering service giving advice, support and healthcare to possible victims, many of whom have been trafficked into the UK from Europe. The success of the service is due to her determination and commitment to help and support its users. She is passionate about safeguarding and her innovative work is a credit to the nursing profession.’ – The Nursing Times

Congratulations to Bonnie from all the partnership on receiving this prestigious award.
Developing the scrutiny role

As part of the new safeguarding arrangements that were established with the Children & Social Work Act 2017 and Working Together 2018, there was a requirement for the new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements to set up a system of scrutiny.

The safeguarding partners should set up their arrangements to create an environment conducive to robust scrutiny and constructive challenge and must ensure there is independent scrutiny of the effectiveness of the arrangements. (WT18)

As we went live with the new arrangements in January 2019 my role moved from one as the Independent chair of the Safeguarding Board to the Independent scrutineer of the new partnership arrangements. As there is no job description and not a lot of guidance in WT18, we have been able to innovate and agree with the partnership what this role will involve. The partnership agreed that scrutiny in Hertfordshire will be focussed on learning as its outcome and will be positive in its approach. The Partnership will aim to build a culture where everyone involved in safeguarding children from the front line up to the Strategic Board, welcomes scrutiny and actively participates in it; trusting and learning from each other as well as taking accountability. We aim to achieve improvement by developing and spreading good practice based on what we know works well and is evidenced based. In practice this will involve using tools such as appreciative inquiry to conduct audits and prepare information for the Learning Hub, seeking to normalise peer to peer challenge, and ensuring that the work of the Partnership is strengths based, consistently asking about how partners can learn from positive practice and the experiences of children and families, as well as where things don’t go so well.

Over the last year I have established a rolling programme of deep dives focussed on multi-agency activity and agreed by the partnership, which has included a review of services, teams and functions around contextualised safeguarding and considering children held in police custody. These have included focussing on individual children’s cases, meeting front line staff, teams and individuals including attending panels. The recommendations from these have been presented to the Executive Board and an action plan to address the recommendations is being prepared. Future deep dives will focus on child protection medicals including use of the bruising protocol and the front door, quality of referrals and applications of thresholds with a particular focus on any differential responses across the county. A peer review process has also been developed and shared with Eastern region colleagues, which we anticipate rolling out in 2020. Hertfordshire has also been involved with the Early Adopter programme and our learning has been shared through this forum. We are also presenting at the next National Conference for Adults and Childrens Services (NCACS) on how we have established scrutiny in Hertfordshire.

Nicky Pace
Independent scrutineer
Alter Ego Creative Solutions Cast from ‘Breaking the Chain’

Alter Ego Creative Solutions performers were commissioned to perform ‘Breaking the Chain’, a hard-hitting applied theatre production that aims to raise awareness, kick-start conversations and build resilience around youth violence – with a focus on knife crime – as part of a public health approach to tackling the issue – an issue that is seeing young people seriously hurt and, all too often, killed on the streets of our towns and cities. This was performed to year 7 & 8 students in 15 schools across Hertfordshire in early November.

A new website, Fearless.org was unveiled by the HSCP on 4th November to enable young people to anonymously report criminal or violent activity. The 24/7 website is a safe and anonymous service for young people to report crime or pass on crucial information which could prevent a young person being injured or killed. As well as enabling anonymous third party reporting of incidents such as knife crime, the website provides a wealth of non-judgemental information and advice about crime and criminality.

Assistant Chief Constable Bill Jephson said “We are delighted to support Fearless.org as an accessible and informative portal for young people to access and self-educate on gangs and knife crime, to seek support and report matters anonymously if they so wish. The Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership will ensure the reach of this campaign will cover key agencies and location throughout Hertfordshire.”

Fearless.org
ARTICLES:

Report about the rights of children whose mothers go to prison
http://www.russellwebster.com/jchrkids19/

Key messages from research on identifying and responding to disclosures of child sexual abuse
by Debra Allnock, Pam Miller and Helen Baker,
The International Centre (University of Bedfordshire) and NSPCC
https://www.csacentre.org.uk/resources/key-maqes/disclosures-csa/

Data collection and connected toys:

NSPCC
University of Bedfordshire

Posters to download about CSE in sports:
http://www.stop-cse.org/tackling-cse-in-sports/

Video clip from the British Institute of Human Rights:
https://knowyourhumanrights.co.uk/
The Lullaby Trust has a free bereavement helpline to help you when you have been involved with a sudden infant death:

Ofsted - What is peer on peer abuse?

Ofsted’s National Directors of Social Care and Education, Yvette Stanley and Sean Harford, recently published a joint blog on often unseen peer-on-peer-abuse: what it is, how schools should respond to it and how the inspectorate is helping their inspectors to get to grips with this issue.

https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2019/10/04/what-is-peer-on-peer-abuse/?hootPostID=58dba06af96455b5a4f8946a5bc423e0

Department for Education - Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel: second national review

Panel Chair Edward Timpson has written to Gavin Williamson MP, Secretary of State for Education, announcing the second national child safeguarding practice review into sudden unexpected infant deaths in families where the children are considered at risk of harm. The letter also includes the terms of reference, panel members carrying out the review, and timescales.


Age UK - No age limit: the hidden face of domestic abuse - report

https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/reports-and-publications/reports-and-briefings/id204298-domestic-abuse-a5-booklet.pdf?utm_source=The%20King%27s%20Fund%20newsletters%20%20main%20account%29&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=11038217_NEWSL_HMP%202019-11-08&dm_i=21A8,6KL55,IRVS90,Q4X1K,1

AccessAble is an App to give you detailed information to work out if a place is going to be accessible to you.

https://www.accessa.co.uk
Children’s insights

The Office of the Children’s Commissioner has published the first issue of its Insight series to know more about the latest trends in games, social media, foods and shine a light on the thoughts, worries and experiences of all children.

[Link to the report]

Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse - Effectiveness studies

The Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse has published three new reports on the effectiveness of services for children and young people who have experienced sexual abuse and a briefing paper summarising the findings from the reports. The three reports include: a review of the current landscape of service provision; findings from a survey of 50 organisations which provide services to children who have experienced sexual abuse; and findings from interviews with ten young people with learning difficulties and ten young people with experience of being in care who have accessed child sexual abuse support services.

[Link to the reports]

Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health - Fabricated illness

RCPCH is currently updating their 2008 guidance Fabricated or Induced Illness (FII) by Carers and is seeking input from senior social care professionals to inform the update. Cases of FII and perplexing presentations require multi-agency and multi-professional collaboration to ensure the best outcomes for children and families. Although the guidance has been developed primarily for paediatricians, there are implications for children’s social care, specifically on when to refer children.

On Monday 25 November, RCPCH is hosting a roundtable discussion with social care to discuss current practice and guidance and would like to invite Directors of Children’s Services to attend. The meeting will be hosted at RCPCH central London offices, to find out more please contact katy.block@adcs.org.uk

Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government - Support for survivors of domestic abuse

Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick has confirmed that survivors of domestic abuse will be provided with essential, life-saving support in safe accommodation due to the new legal requirement upon every council in England from 2021. As outlined in the Queen’s Speech, the government intends to amend the landmark Domestic Abuse Bill to include, for the first time, a statutory duty on councils to provide support.

 Ahead of this new duty coming into force, the government has also announced a further £15 million in funding to run these essential services in 2020 to 2021. The duty will then be funded from April 2021, subject to future spending review discussions.

[Link to the announcement]

Children’s Commissioner - Gaming the system

This week the Children’s Commissioner has published a report about gaming and the associated risks to children and young people. The report highlights a number of recommendations to address the potential harms - limiting the role of money; helping children to manage their time; doing more to ensure content is appropriate; and, teaching children to be digital citizens.

[Link to the report]
Safeguarding for Housing Professionals

The HSCP, HSAB and Domestic Abuse Partnerships came together to run a safeguarding conference for staff who work in the housing sector in October.

The conference heard from Juliet Rampage who is Head of Safeguarding in the charity, Action for Children. Juliet spoke about the importance of recognising childhood neglect, including the older age group. Juliet explained that neglect in older children can sometimes be unseen and drew attention of delegates to the fact that behaviour of older children must be understood in the context of trauma.

The conference then had a presentation from Jo Harding. Jo is an expert on Hoarding and is a Director of Hoarding Disorders UK.

Jo talked to the group about some of the triggers which may cause hoarding behaviours e.g. Abuse, Bereavement, Depression, Long term illness, PTSD, Adverse Childhood Experiences and Autism. She went onto to discuss how families and individuals suffer when their basic needs are not addressed through loss of functionality within the home and they are prevented from carrying out activities caused by hoarding. Jo advocated the importance of multi-agency working.

Next up was Gussy Burnet who is the Group Lead on Domestic Abuse at Peabody, one of the largest housing providers in London, and has worked in the field of domestic abuse for 15 years.

Gussy co-founded the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) in 2014 which is a national initiative to improve the whole housing sector response to domestic abuse. Gussy talked through the work of the alliance and how housing providers through training can identify domestic abuse early and put safety measures in place.

They can also take a proactive role in holding perpetrators to account for their actions; working with the police. Gussy then discussed the new Domestic Abuse Bill and the National Housing and Domestic Abuse Policy and Practice Group.

The conference also had workshops and a talk from DCI Steve O’Keeffe on the work of the partnerships on cuckooing and county lines.
Update on Self-Neglect

The HSAB is continuing with work on Self-Neglect. The Board conducted a case audit to seek assurance on self-neglect practice in Hertfordshire. This became a priority as a result of the findings from a Safeguarding Adult Review ‘Stanley’ which was published last year.

Areas of Good Practice

- Good evidence across the agencies that practitioners recognised the importance of the relationship in achieving positive outcomes and time required to engage the person
- Excellent examples of practitioners working with the person to understand the meaning behind their behaviour
- There was good understanding of the need to work with consent (or having clear legal authority to act without consent) in the majority of cases
- The cases sampled did evidence some very effective multi-agency working outside of Safeguarding Adults procedures. There were also some very good examples of reasoned decision making to ‘step-up’ to multi-agency work through Safeguarding Adults procedures

Areas for Development

- Feedback to the original referrer - The new Safeguarding arrangements currently being embedded for Hertfordshire should improve this
- Improved recording for decision making

The HSAB are working on the recommendations from this audit and will be reviewing the multi-agency Self-Neglect and Hoarding Guidance to include:

- Risk Management Guidance
- Additions to the resource directory – including national resources, details of services for people who are alcohol or substance dependant
- The Board are also running practitioner forums in November and December on Self-Neglect and are aiming to have a multi-agency training offer in the coming financial year

The HSAB are committed to embedding the multi-agency approach and associated guidance across the partnership so will be running further launches of this practice guidance once the updates have been completed. The full guidance can be found on the HSAB website – under the Practice Guidance Drop Down

Termly Twilight sessions for School Designated Safeguarding Leads:

The next sessions will be held on January 27th, 28th and February 4th and will provide an overview of the Channel process in Hertfordshire, and linked to this an overview of the Far Right/Extreme Right Wing, focusing on how groups in this arena have changed over the last five years and the challenge they present to the education sector. This will be led by Jo Fisher (Operations Director, HCC, for children and young people) and Dave Layton-Scott (FE/HE Prevent Coordinator for the East of England).

Research Update by Claudia Megele, Head of Service for Quality Assurance and Practice:

In the summer of 2018, the Local Government Association commissioned the Centre for Youth Impact to produce an outcomes framework to help organisations and agencies across the youth sector to develop mutual aims for work with and for young people in their local areas. Following more than 18 months consultation, development and testing, the centre published the final document in November 2019.

This year marks 30 years and 15 years respectively since the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 received Royal Assent. ADCS President, Vice President and Past Presidents to reflect on the Acts, the successes and what has changed since their passage into law, click here to read reflections.

The National Children and Adult Services Conference (NCASC), ADCS published a new position paper on children’s health and wellbeing, outlining what a health care system that works for all children looks like, click here to read the position paper.

A large-scale research project into examining online safeguarding and digital skills for practitioners is being led by the national Principal Social Work networks, CAFCASS, Making Research Count, Care Knowledge and leading local authorities including Hertfordshire Council. There have been over 1000 responses to this research. The initial results were shared with 120 practitioners and sector leads at Kings College. Jenny Coles and Yvette Stanley were speakers at the conference and provided feedback regarding the research findings. Please contribute to this research by completing the survey: https://survey.esafeguarding.org/zs/QbB36N
Some people hurt babies

The most important step in diagnosing non-accidental injury is to force yourself to think of it in the first place.

The biggest barrier to diagnosis is the existence of emotional blocks in the minds of professionals. These can be so powerful that they prevent the diagnosis being considered, even in quite obvious cases.

Remember the Bruising Policy for babies under six months:
babies who don’t cruise rarely bruise
Small in size.
The risk of a big problem.

Inside some electronic devices are button cell batteries that if swallowed can cause severe life-impacting burns or even death.

These batteries can be found in toys, musical books, key fobs, remote controls, calculators, and other small electronic devices.

Ensure your child does not have access to these devices if the battery compartment is not secure.

Make certain that spare batteries are locked away and that used batteries are disposed of safely.

If your child does swallow a button cell battery, seek urgent medical advice immediately.