

Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board
Newsletter Issue 34: Summer 2020



Welcome to the Summer edition of the OSCB newsletter.

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1. Introduction from the OSCB Chair

Dear Colleagues

I trust that this newsletter finds you dealing as well as can be expected with what has been a quite unprecedented past few months.



I did want to firstly thank you all for what you have done individually and collectively to keep services to children and their families going. Every time I speak to one of you or your managers, I hear remarkable stories of creativity and adaptations – be that moving things to a digital solution or simply going the extra mile. It has been an extraordinary effort and the fact that what would have been seen as radical, challenging and maybe even impossible, has in so many cases become the “new normal” is truly impressive.

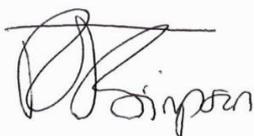
In terms of the Safeguarding Children Board, we agreed a set of New Normal arrangements that included not meeting as a full Partnership, creating an Extended Executive and moving all of our meetings and training online. This has not been without its challenges, not least for me in chairing some of these meetings, when you cannot see everyone who is there, you are trying to follow the papers but also check whether anyone has raised a virtual hand, you are constantly turning yourself on and off mute and all this while ensuring the camera doesn't pick up your washing on the drying rack! Who would have ever thought that part of our normal would be that “Can you hear me?” is now a recognised greeting!

Another piece of news that I need to share is that after much soul-searching I have decided to step down as the Chair of the Safeguarding Board. As many of you will know I work for Barnardo's. Just over five weeks ago my boss died suddenly, and I have since then been acting as the Head of Safeguarding and Quality. I have come to the sad conclusion that I cannot combine that role and Chair the Safeguarding Board to the level and standard that I and the role demands. I will be looking to step down around the end of September and will work with the Senior Safeguarding Partners and the wider Partnership on ensuring an orderly transfer to my successor. I have to say I will miss doing the role massively, as I have met some remarkable people doing remarkable things and feel I have genuinely learnt so much over the past two years.

Despite my impending departure there are a range of things that we are busy trying to address, including:

1. Working to organise a Full Board meeting in September
 2. Finishing off the Annual Report and do the round of meetings that receive the report
 3. Working with the Adult Board to map out how we might progress our joint priority of Housing and Homelessness
 4. Progressing the publication of two Serious Case Reviews, undertaking Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and disseminating the learning from three Partnership Reviews
 5. Continuing to deliver a wide range of training
 6. Recruiting a new Lay Member and a new Voluntary and Community Sector member to the Board
- So as I close, thank you all once again for your efforts, commitment, skill and compassion as you seek to work individually and collectively to safeguard children and their families in Oxfordshire.

Best wishes



Chair of Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board

2. OSCB Business Unit Update



Training update

All OSCB face to face courses were cancelled at the beginning of lockdown and no face to face courses have taken place since 18th March 2020.

The board and training team were determined that core safeguarding courses remain available for practitioners and have been focusing all efforts on developing an alternative eLearning programme.

We have since launched the following eLearning courses:

- **'Level 1: Introduction to safeguarding 2020'** eLearning course which is specifically recommended for the role of volunteering. With an increase in numbers of volunteers offering help and support in all sorts of ways across Oxfordshire, we were very determined to offer some kind of safeguarding training for those individuals. Currently, **** 1008 completions since March ****
- **'Level 2: Awareness of abuse and neglect'** eLearning (which covers the 'generalist' face to face course content). Currently, **** 1740 completions since March ****
- **'Level 3: Advanced / Designated Safeguarding Lead'** eLearning; particularly important for those individuals who may be undertaking this role in their organisation for the first time, due to staff shortages / absence during the COVID-19 crisis. Currently, **** 715 completions since March ****

Please refer to the most up to date **OSCB Temporary Training Policy Document** for further information on the Board's recommendations for training pathways/requirements and validity of training certificates for mandatory safeguarding training courses.

More recently we have risen to the challenge of developing **webinars**! The team have facilitated six webinar sessions for our brilliant group of trainers and launched two new webinars this month; the 'Generalist' and 'Early Help Assessment' courses! These are available to book via our website in the same way as you would for a face to face course, but numbers are limited, so be quick!

All this technology has been more challenging for some people than others, (including the Training Co-ordinator), and many trainers have undertaken their own steep learning curve, BUT we are all passionate about doing what we can to continue with our part in keeping children safe.

As to the rest of our usual face to face themed and risky behaviour training programme; we are continuing to work alongside the trainers who deliver these courses on behalf of the OSCB, and we are hopeful that there will be further developments in Autumn, in both eLearning and webinar delivery. The first of these will be eLearning 'Understanding Child Exploitation' being made available in July/Aug, followed with a webinar after the summer. Our Sexual Abuse Workshop launches as a live webinar on the 1st of September, with a further date to be scheduled in November, and a Safeguarding Disabled Children Webinar launches on the 29th September. To see the full schedule of webinars and e-learning courses available go to our [Training Booking System](#).

So.... the OSCB training team is **still here** and there is **still training on offer** (with more to come), though it may look a little different! At the time of writing this, there are no definite plans for the recommencement of face to face courses so we hope you will continue to take the opportunity to access our free virtual training as the programme expands!

Learning and Improvement

The Procedures subgroup met in March to review and agree new and updated policies and procedures to be added to our online procedure manual. New procedures published in June included the [Resolving Multi-Agency Disagreements and Escalation Policy](#), to replace the old Conflict Resolution policy. The new policy takes a restorative approach to resolving disagreements and sets out the Escalation Leads for Children's Social Care, the Police and Health. Click on [this link](#) to access the procedure manual where you can register to be alerted to any future changes.

We continue to review and update the OSCB website and have recently published the following learning resources:

- [Thematic review on physical abuse](#)
- [Thematic review on parental vulnerability](#)
- [Safeguarding conversations poster](#)

OSCB Safeguarding Commendations

The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board is looking to celebrate good practice in our safeguarding partnership over the course of this financial year.



Would you like to commend a colleague, team or piece of safeguarding work?

We are interested in hearing about colleagues who have made an impact on the safeguarding partnership, led by good example, delivered practice improvement, communicated safeguarding messages or perhaps completed a challenging piece of safeguarding work. We want to hear about colleagues from across the entire partnership from all our agencies.



Commendations
form.docx

You can complete the attached nomination form or send a nomination by email to: oscb@oxfordshire.gov.uk

3. Children's Services operational arrangements in Oxfordshire during COVID 19

Service Delivery

All Children's Services have been and continue to be fully operational. Children's Social Care is concerned at the increased risk that vulnerable children face during lockdown. Children not in school or visible in the community means less opportunity for children to disclose or for professionals to identify abuse. Added family tensions and anxiety in the home also increase the risk of abuse including neglect.

LCSS

Locality Community Support Services (LCSS) continue to offer a full duty service and are available to support with any emerging safeguarding concerns. If you are concerned about a child/family, please contact LCSS for advice. LCSS is also available to respond to and contact families directly to offer advice and support, and to attend meetings and visits as appropriate. Team around the Family (TAF) meetings should continue, wherever possible and LCSS can assist with this.

MASH

The MASH is fully operational and is continuing to work alongside partner agencies responding to safeguarding referrals. The **Emergency Duty Team (EDT)** provides a social work response for urgent matters out of office hours, from 5pm-8.30am, Mondays to Thursdays, and 4pm on Fridays until 8.30am on Mondays plus Bank Holidays, on 0800 833408.

Children's Services contact with children and families during COVID 19

At the start of the lockdown period all children known to children's social care were risk assessed and contact /visiting arrangements were determined according to risk. COVID 19 restrictions have meant that staff have had to think creatively to ensure there is contact with vulnerable children and their families to assess safeguarding and welfare need. There is a wide variety of different types of visiting occurring.

Where it is safe to do so, some contacts with families have been and continue to be occurring virtually to ascertain how children and families are, or if they require support. "Doorstep" visiting and meeting in open spaces is also occurring with vulnerable children and their families. The limitations of this, however, are fully recognised. It is essential that children subject to statutory assessment, safeguarding investigation, or child protection planning are visited directly, wherever possible and where risk assessment indicates that a direct face to face visit needs to be carried out, this is being done e.g. all initial S47 investigations are being carried out face to face.

Visits may be at home or at school if a child or sibling is attending school, depending on the nature of concerns. Children subject to assessment or child protection planning due to neglect, for example, should be seen in the home environment. Visits to family homes are occurring where families are both asymptomatic or are symptomatic. Full risk assessments are carried out to ensure the safety of those families being visited and Social Care staff. The use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is considered as part of this visiting risk assessment. Core group meetings are continuing, as well as regular communications with partner agencies. They remain a key mechanism for planning visits to children.

Children at risk of exploitation network meetings

The Children at Risk of Exploitation network meeting is now up and running virtually. Meetings were initially paused in March/April but have recently been re-established and were held in the weeks commencing 22/29th June in all areas.

Meetings will continue every 6 weeks in the next academic year and will be physical or virtual, dependent on the situation with regards to COVID-19 at that time. In between meetings, if you have any concerns that a child may be at risk of exploitation please complete the exploitation screening tool and share with MASH or LCSS, depending on level of risk identified.

LCSS have designed a leaflet, [Children at Risk of Exploitation Network Meeting - Guide for families](#), that agencies can share with parents. If you require any further information including attending meeting invitations, please contact your [LCSS team](#).

LCSS have also shared a safety poster below that can be displayed in your setting to provide information for children and young people on safety contacts should they need help or support.



My safety contacts -
discreet.docx

4. Safeguarding in Education

OSCB are currently developing a Safeguarding in Education webpage to keep you updated on the work of the subgroup, and to share relevant resources and research. We would love to hear from you for suggestions on content to include on the webpage. Please contact carole.kinnell@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Current resources on this page include [Knife Crime: Guidance for Children and Schools](#) and [Safety Programmes for Schools](#), resources recently developed through the Safeguarding in Education subgroup.

Insite Schools [Returning to school after lockdown](#) page has information and up to date local, national and international guidance, specialist support and good practice, to aid the transition back to school following the COVID-19 lockdown and management of the recovery phase.

'[My Back to School Bubble](#)' aims to help children understand the new protective measures that may be in place at their school, when they do return, in an age-appropriate way. It reinforces public health messages including the importance of hand and respiratory hygiene, whilst reassuring children that everyone makes mistakes, helping to combat feelings of anxiety, that have been reported by parents.

The government has produced [guidance for parents and carers on changes to after-school clubs, holiday clubs, tuition, community activities and other out-of-school settings for children and young people over the age of 5 during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#).

5. Talking to children and young people about discrimination

The recent death of George Floyd in the US, and subsequent media coverage of the global response and Black Lives Matter movement, have highlighted the divisions that exist and need to be addressed in society.

The hostile environment and reported increases in hate crime following the Brexit referendum, have similarly shone a spotlight on discrimination and inequality in the UK. As a result, children may be feeling anxious, worried about saying the wrong thing or struggling with their own experiences of discrimination.

The following resources and guidance can be used to encourage open and honest conversations with children and young people, about discrimination and inequality, the impact and emotions that they might bring up:

- [Sesame Street covers the Black Lives Matter Protests](#)
- [BBC Bitesize: Not racist v anti-racist: what's the difference?](#)

- [Place2Be: Resources for parents and carers, resources for schools](#)
- [Children 1st: Advice for parents and carers](#)
- Talking to children about gender identity: [The Gender Unicorn](#) (suggested for children aged 11+) is one way of helping people to understand more about the subject of gender identity. Click on [Pop 'n' Olly](#) to preview a clip which offers guidance on the use of the Gender Unicorn resource

Free anti-bullying training

As part of their All Together programme, the Anti-Bullying Alliance have developed a suite of free online training for anyone that works with children and young people. Training courses include:

- What is bullying?
- Bullying and the Law
- Bullying and SEN/disability
- 10 principles to reduce bullying
- Preventing bullying
- Responding to bullying
- Cyberbullying (Online bullying)

Each module takes between 30-45 minutes to complete. This online course is CPD approved which means it is certified and counts towards your continuing professional development. The programme was particularly developed to reduce levels of bullying of disabled children and those with special educational needs (SEN) but applies to all children

ABA also now also have 3 NEW short modules on:

- Young Carers and Bullying
- Looked After Children and Bullying
- Mental Health and Bullying

Each of these modules takes between 15-30 minutes to complete. They are not yet CPD certified but there is a certificate available on completion

For further information or to register, please visit <https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/all-together-hub/free-cpd-online-training> or download [the flyer](#)

Choose Kindness

[Bullying UK](#) is encouraging people to #ChooseKindness and help stand up to bullying. No-one ever knows the struggles people are going through inside and we believe that a simple act of kindness can help a person feel empowered to stand up to bullying. We are encouraging everyone to get involved in choosing kindness and be the reason to make someone smile.

[#ChooseKindness](#) top tips :

- Choosing kindness doesn't cost anything but can help someone enormously. We all have choices to make, do you #choosekindness?
- Choose kindness, as you never know what someone else is going through
- Saying something nice can bring a smile to someone's face
- Acts of kindness will never come back to hurt you and is never wasted on someone



- Being mean and hurting others can hurt someone very deeply, think twice about what you say or do
- Acts of kindness are good for you- they release oxytocin which lowers our blood pressure
- Being kind can help others feel happy and confident

Download the [#ChooseKindness](#) poster and help stand up to bullying.

6. Keeping safe this Summer



The MASH have highlighted an increase in anonymous referrals during the lockdown period, including incidents involving dog bites, garden and water safety. The Summer holidays, warmer weather and recent easing of lockdown measures increase the opportunity to spend time with friends and family and enjoy the great outdoors. The following links provide some tips on doing so safely:

The [Child Accident Prevention Trust website](#) has a range of online resources and publications around safety themes, including burns, falls, safety in the home and garden and water safety.

The [RSPCA website](#) has information and advice on dogs and children, including a short video and handy infographic with the six golden rules to keeping children safe and dogs happy.

The Lullaby Trust have put together some tips on [baby summer safety](#) so you can enjoy the summer and keep baby safe when the weather gets hot.

The [Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents \(RoSPA\)](#) has advice on keeping safe through the holiday period, whether at home, work or play.

Having been made aware that face coverings for babies and very young children are available for sale in England. Public Health England has issued the following urgent warning:

“PHE has been made aware that face coverings for babies and very young children are available for sale in England. Guidance is clear that children under the age of three years should NOT wear face coverings or masks, these masks should not be used as they are potentially dangerous and can cause choking and suffocation.

If you or your child is unwell with the symptoms of COVID-19, then you should get a test and stay at home until you get the result. If you are worried then you should call 111 or speak to your doctor”, Professor Viv Bennet, Chief Nurse, Public Health England.

See [face masks and children](#) for further information.

7. Voluntary and community sector news

SAFE!

SAFE! have released the excellent SafeStories video, [Hope's Story](#). This story portrays the experience of Hope, as she meets and starts a relationship with Donte. The plot and characters were created by young people during workshops with SAFE!, and the video was subsequently written and produced by 1848Media.



The video is designed to be accessed directly by young people, as well as for use in a classroom setting, or as a resource for one-to-one support. With many thanks to Leanne Dorn and Rae Hancock at the Cherwell School in Oxford who have written differentiated sets of lesson plans for key stages 3 and 4 which include PowerPoint presentations, resources, and accompanying teacher notes. These are in line with the new guidelines around compulsory relationships education in PSHE from September. If you are interested in receiving a copy of the lesson plans for use in school or a youth work setting, please complete this [form](#)

SAFE! have also recently published the report [Experiences of Peer-on-Peer Abuse in the Thames Valley](#), following a consultation with young people, parents and professionals.

Children Heard and Seen



On 22nd July BBC South Today ran a report highlighting the impact of prison visit restrictions on children, featuring fabulous local charity Children Heard and Seen, with powerful contributions from affected families and founder Sarah Burrows. To watch the report follow [this link](#).

One of the highlights from the OSCB Understanding My World Conference in March was a presentation by Sarah and some of the young people supported by the charity. To read their recent post on the event, [click here](#).

To find out more about the impact having a parent in prison has on children and the support Children Heard and Seen can offer, please visit [their website](#).

TOPAZ

TOPAZ social group for young people who are 13 - 19, who identify as LGBTI+ or who are questioning their sexuality or gender identity has gone online.

For information about the online sessions and server invites, email topaz-hq@hotmail.co.uk

All groups run on Discord:
 10 to 14 yrs, 1st and 3rd Monday eve
 15 to 18 yrs 1st and 3rd Monday eve
 18 to 24 yrs 2nd Monday eve
 Parents and carers 4th Thursday eve

Free to attend! **TOPAZ**
www.TopazOxford.org.uk

ONLINE

Email topaz-hq@hotmail.co.uk for information and for server invites

Please check Discord for upcoming sessions and cancellations

We try to make Topaz accessible. If you have any specific needs, please get in touch.

Mental Wealth Academy Partnership

The Mental Wealth Academy recently launched, offering a proactive and preventative programme of non-clinical mental health services for 18-25-year-olds across Oxfordshire. For the next six months, in response to the effects of the COVID pandemic, the service is being extended to 16-and-17-year-olds.

The project is being delivered through an exciting partnership between **Response, Oxfordshire Mind, Oxfordshire Youth, Ark-T, Banbury Young Homelessness Project (BYHP)** and **SOFEA**, allowing a wider reach to young people and the community across Oxfordshire.

The Mental Wealth Academy project offers a 1:1 intervention programme based on cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) and solution focused therapies, which are delivered by a team of Transition Wellbeing Practitioners.

The support services include peer mentoring; dealing with anxiety and stress; education; employment; training; personal identity; physical health and body image; recognising and managing emotions; relationships and social media; steps to wellbeing, social skills and engagement; Mental Health Ambassador programme and community engagement.

Support from the project can be accessed via self-referral or a family member or mental health professional through the Response website by visiting:

www.response.org.uk/MentalWealthAcademy

Keep up to date with the Mental Wealth Academy via social media:

Twitter [MWAcademy](#)

Facebook [MentalWealthAcademy](#)

Instagram [mentalwealthacademy](#)



Oxfordshire Youth's Are You Listening? Mental Health Podcast OUT NOW!

A new episode of Oxfordshire Youth's Youth Committees Podcast is available to stream on [Spotify](#) and [Apple podcasts!](#) Check out the episode where hosts Sam and Darius talk mental health during the coronavirus pandemic and are joined by Alice, The Youth Wellbeing Manager & Transition Wellbeing Practitioner from [Ark-T](#) who gives some brilliant tips on how to look after your mental health as well as highlighting some great organisations who can provide information and support!

Alice works with young people aged 16-25 supporting with mental health as part of [The Mental Wealth Academy!](#) If you are a young person experiencing low mood or anxiety Alice may be the person to support so feel free to get in touch with her via email (alice@ark-t.org) or via Facebook ([@aliceark-t](#))

If you're a young person who would like to be involved in the podcast and have your voice heard, or you work with or know a young person who might be interested OY want to hear from you!

Get in touch with via email: voice@oxfordshireyouth.org or DM the following on Instagram!

[@DazOxYouthPod](#) – Darius

[@SamOxYouthPod](#) – Sam

[@oxfordshireyouth](#)

8. Useful information

Listening Works

Listening works is a new national support line for care experienced young people aged 18-27, provided by Family Action. It offers support on the phone, through text messages, or via an online chat, and is run by a team of trained volunteers.

For further information visit the [Family Action website](#) or see information below.



Listening Works -
contact info.pdf



Listening Works -
Information (F).pdf



Listening Works -
Information.pdf

LGBT+ Parent Support Group

If you have any parents/carers of young people who identify as LGBT or questioning and you think they might be interested in becoming part of a support group, please share the below link with them. The consultation opens on Monday 1st June and closes on Friday 28th August.

LGBT+ Parent Support Group consultation link: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/J8P6DWQ>

In the meantime, if there are any parents/carers who you feel would benefit from more immediate support, do refer them to the below links:

- <https://www.topazoxford.org.uk/>
- <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/resources/introduction-supporting-lgbt-children-and-young-people>

Coronavirus and caring for baby

The Lullaby Trust have put together [the latest advice on coronavirus \(COVID-19\) if you are pregnant or have a young child](#).

The Trust also has a [baby check app](#), featuring 19 simple checks that parents can do if their baby is showing signs of illness, and a wealth of information and advice on [safer sleep](#), including downloadable posters and booklets available in 24 languages.

Childcare over the Summer Holidays

The Family Information Service (FIS) have a directory of childcare providers across Oxfordshire and it shows which are open during the summer.

<https://fisd.oxfordshire.gov.uk/kb5/oxfordshire/directory/home.page>

The criteria for places is dependent upon the individual setting, some will continue to prioritise Vulnerable children and those of Key Workers. However, most will provide places on a first come first served basis. The FIS can help broker childcare places for parents, if they are struggling to find availability.

Parents can log onto the directory and search by area of Oxfordshire/type of provision etc and the FIS have not reported any issues brokering places for childcare throughout lockdown and looking forwards to the summer.

9. National news

Youth violence

The Youth Violence Commission has published a report examining the root causes of youth violence in England, Scotland and Wales. The report looks at: the causes of serious violence between young people; the economic and social cost of serious violence; the public health approach and violence reduction units. The report includes findings from a survey of more 2,200 young people who shared their experiences of how youth violence impacts their day-to-day lives.

Read the news story: [Youth Violence Commission final report](#)

Read the report: [Youth Violence Commission: final report \(PDF\)](#)

Protecting vulnerable children

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) has published a report following a national child protection inspection of City of London Police. The inspection examined the effectiveness of the decisions made by the police at each stage of their interactions with or for children, from initial contact through to the investigation of offences against them and scrutinised the treatment of children in custody. Findings include: the workforce was aware of the threat to children from organised crime, including county lines, and from exposure to gangs, however they often failed to recognise the importance of capturing the voice of the child or seeing wider risks for children beyond the incident at hand.

Read the press release: [City of London Police clear in its commitment to protecting vulnerable children](#)

Read the report: [City of London - national child protection inspection \(PDF\)](#)

Online safety:

The London Grid for Learning (LGfL) has released a podcast discussing changes to the 2020 edition of Education for a connected world, published by the UK Council for Internet Safety to equip children and young people for digital life. New topics covered include: voice-activated searching; upskirting; the use of banter; and a more in-depth focus on digital consent, sexting-related technology and protected characteristics.

Read the news story and listen to the podcast: [Education for a connected world: 2020 audio update](#)

Read the guidance: [Education for a connected world framework: 2020 guidance](#)

Children with special educational needs and disability

nasen, a charity that supports those working with children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND) and learning differences, has published a report to help improve early identification of, and support for special educational needs (SEN) in the early years. The report highlights concerns within the sector that children presenting with low levels of SEN could be being missed as a result of time and resource restrictions resulting in a tendency to focus on children with more complex needs.

Read the news story: [nasen highlights the need to improve early identification of SEND and prevent children 'slipping through the net'](#)

Read the report: [Identifying special educational needs in the early years: perspectives from special educational needs coordinators \(PDF\)](#)

Safeguarding children at risk from sudden unexpected infant death

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel has published a review into sudden unexpected death in infancy in families in England where children are considered at risk of significant harm through abuse or neglect, and how professionals can support parents to ensure that safer sleep advice is

embedded in parenting practice. A CASPAR briefing has been published outlining the main findings and recommendations.

Read the press release: [Press release Support frontline workers to engage parents struggling with safer sleeping advice](#)

Read the report: [Out of routine: A review of sudden unexpected death in infancy \(SUDI\) in families where the children are considered at risk of significant harm \(PDF\)](#)

See also on NSPCC Learning: [Sudden unexpected death in infancy \(SUDI\): CASPAR briefing](#)

Improving health outcomes for babies and young children

The government has announced a review into improving health outcomes of babies and young children in England. The review will be led by Andrea Leadsom MP and will consider the barriers that impact on early-years development, including social and emotional factors and early childhood experiences. Findings will be published in a report in January 2021.

Read the news story: [New focus on babies' and children's health as review launches](#)

Healthy sexual development

NSPCC Learning has updated content on healthy sexual development of children and young people, pulling together information about the stages of healthy sexual development and behaviour for different age groups.

Read the content: [Healthy sexual development of children and young people](#)

See also on NSPCC Learning: [Harmful sexual behaviour in schools training](#)

Safeguarding in sport

The Association of Child Protection Professionals (AoCPP) has released a podcast discussing safeguarding in sport.

Read the blog and listen to the podcast: [Safeguarding in sport](#)

Early years

The Children's Commissioner for England has published a report looking at the provision of early years services for children in England setting out how starting school behind can undermine children's life chances. Analysis of data on all children in England who had not met the expected level on half of their early learning goals at age 5 found that they were: five times as likely to end up being excluded by age 10; twice as likely to have had contact with children's social care by age 11; and three times more likely to be struggling with reading at age 11.

Read the news story: [Children's Commissioner for England calls on Government to make early years central to Covid fightback with a new "Best Beginnings" guarantee](#)

Read the report: [Best Beginnings \(PDF\)](#)

Modern slavery: first responders online training

This training, organised by the Home Office, provides guidance on how to spot the signs of modern slavery, and what to do when you come across a potential victim of modern slavery. The aim of the training is to provide all First Responders with a consistent knowledge basis on how to effectively identify and refer, where appropriate, potential victims of modern slavery to the National Referral Mechanism.

Access the training: [Modern slavery: First Responders](#)

Remote mental health interventions for young people

Youth Access has published a report on remote mental health interventions for young people. Findings from analysis of evidence from 50 academic studies involving young people aged 11-25 carried out across 9 countries including the UK include: remote forms of support can lead to positive outcomes amongst young people; remote interventions improved accessibility for those

who struggle to access face-to-face services; and remote interventions are not suitable for all young people, and should not replace face-to-face services.

Read the news story: [Remote mental health interventions work – but not as a replacement for face-to-face support](#)

Read the report: [Remote mental health interventions for young people: A rapid review of the evidence \(PDF\)](#)

Coronavirus: young people's mental health

Researchers at University College London, Imperial College and the University of Sussex have published a report looking at the mental health consequences experienced by young people aged 16-24 in the UK during first months of the coronavirus lockdown. Findings from an online survey of 1,507 respondents, 61% of whom reported previous mental health problems, carried out between 11 May and 29 June 2020 include: moderate to high symptoms of anxiety were reported in 69.6% of the participants with previous mental health problems and in 45.7% of those without previous mental health problems: 94% of the participants expected changes in their lives to some extent once the current crisis is over, of whom 6% expected a complete change in their lives with those who expected more changes in their lives experiencing higher levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms.

Read the news story: [You-COPE: Youth COVID Response Personal Experience : tracking health and wellbeing amongst 16-24 year olds in the UK during and after the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

Read the report: [Disruptions experienced by young people aged 16-24 during first months of the COVID-19 lockdown \(PDF\)](#)

Coronavirus: moving forward

The Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) has published a discussion paper on the impacts of the coronavirus on children and their families. The paper considers: what is needed to restore and reset the support services children and families rely on; the challenges and opportunities created by the pandemic; and the strategic risks that need addressing in order to ensure children are safe, cared for and thrive in education.

Read the news story: [Building a country that works for all children post Covid-19](#)

Read the discussion paper: [Building a country that works for all children post Covid-19](#)

Coronavirus: maternal mental health survey

University College London (UCL) is seeking participants for a survey of new mothers looking at how the experience of lockdown measures during the coronavirus crisis measures are affecting infant feeding practices and maternal mental health. UCL are inviting mothers living in the UK with an infant aged up to 12 months to fill out an online survey. They are particularly keen to hear about the experiences of mums from BAME backgrounds, and /or from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland as these groups are currently under-represented in the survey.

Read more information and take part in the survey: [COVID-19 New Mum Study](#)

See also on NSPCC Learning: [Adapting our perinatal mental health services during coronavirus](#)

Coronavirus: mental health and wellbeing

Barnardo's has published a report looking at the impact of the coronavirus crisis on children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. A key theme from a survey of more than 100 children and young people supported by Barnardo's; and a further 150 children and young people across the UK was that children and young people felt they were being ignored by decision makers during the pandemic. Recommendations to government include involving children and young people in 'recovery planning' and give them a role in national decision making on the policies that affect their lives.

Read the news story: [Young people call on government to prioritise mental health in UK's](#)

[coronavirus recovery](#)

Read the report: [Mental health and Covid-19: in our own words \(PDF\)](#)

Coronavirus: child suicide

The National Child Mortality Database (NCMD) has published a report looking at child death by suicide in England during lockdown. Analysis of figures show that in 2020, during the 82 days before lockdown, there were 26 likely child suicides and a further 25 in the first 56 days of lockdown. The report notes that: there is a concerning signal that child suicide deaths may have increased during the first 56 days of lockdown, and that amongst the likely suicide deaths reported after lockdown, restriction to education and other activities, disruption to care and support services, tensions at home and isolation appeared to be contributing factors.

Read the news story: [Briefing published: child suicide during COVID-19](#)

Read the report: [Child suicide rates during the COVID-19 pandemic in England: real-time surveillance](#)

Coronavirus: the experiences of children's social care

Researchers at Kings College London have published a report looking at the experiences of 15 local authority children's social care departments in England during the coronavirus pandemic to understand the changes put in place, how they had worked and what the legacy might be. Topics covered in the study carried out in late May and early June 2020 include; referrals of concerns about children's welfare; working with families in a pandemic; contact with families; child protection conferences; contact between children and birth families; foster care ; placements and disrupted placements; Care leavers and unaccompanied young people seeking asylum; residential homes; and multi-agency working.

Read the news story: [NIHR Health & Social Care Workforce Research Unit news](#)

Read the report: [Managing through COVID-19: the experiences of children's social care in 15 English local authorities \(PDF\)](#)

Consultation: changes to the adoption and children regulations: coronavirus (COVID-19)

The Department for Education (DfE) are consulting on proposed changes to the Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 that were introduced to provide local authorities and children's social care providers in England with temporary flexibilities during coronavirus (COVID-19). The amendments are temporary and will expire on 25 September 2020, however the DfE would like to extend number of these to manage future challenges. The consultation closes on 5 August 2020.

Read the news story: [Changes to the adoption and children regulations: coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

Coronavirus: impact on parents

Action for Children has released figures from a YouGov online survey of 2,001 parents of children aged 18 or under in Great Britain. The survey, carried out between 16–22 June 2020 found that; 36% of parents said that their children are feeling isolated and lonely; 43% of parents reported feel feeling anxious; and 33 % said felt out of their depth when it came to supporting their children during the lockdown.

Read the news story: [One in three parents 'out of their depth' as children struggle with pandemic fallout](#)