Safer Newsletter

During April the Dudley Threshold was revised and updated and on the back of that DSPP and partners launched an eLearning package to support the embedding of thresholds as practice within Dudley.
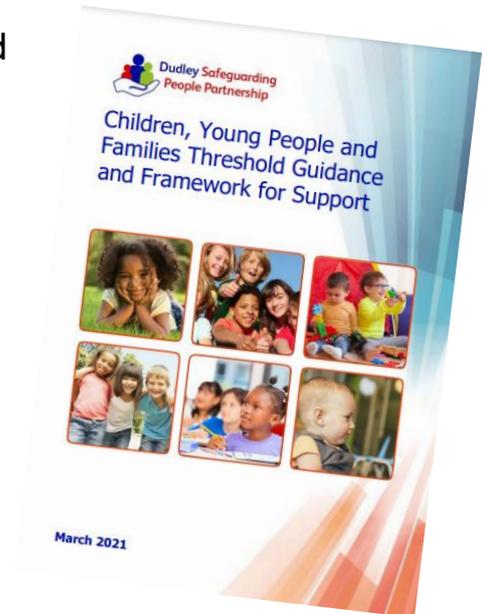
The course should take about 2 and half hours to complete and is available now on the Learning Zone. We will be launching a virtual/face to face version as soon as possible in spring/summer.

Don't forget we also have the Understanding Early Help Assessments course for you to complete too.

Did you know that the Resolution and Escalation protocol can support you with your work, especially if you are unhappy with the progress of referrals?

Links: Thresholds Framework | Thresholds eLearning | Early Help Assessments | Early Help Assessments eLearning | Resolution and Escalation Protocol

In other news:

NEW report from the National Child Mortality Database (NCMD)

Child Mortality and Social Deprivation links the risk of child death in England to deprivation has been published by the National Child Mortality Database (NCMD); details (and the full report) can be found using the link below:

Commissioned by the Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership (HQIP) on behalf of NHS England, this report includes analysis of 3,347 children who died in England between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020, as part of NCMD's remit to learn from child death data in order to reduce the number of children who die in the future.

Link: http://www.ncmd.info/2021/05/13/dep-report-2021

Domestic Violence - Practice Guidance for Social Workers (BASW)

In March 2021, the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) launched new guidance for child and family social workers supporting victim-survivors of domestic abuse.

The publication of the guidance comes at a critical time, during the pandemic Refuge saw a 61% increase in calls and contacts, as perpetrators used lockdown conditions to further assert control.

Although this guidance is aimed at social care practitioners, it is always useful for other professionals, including schools, to be aware such documentation.

Links: https://www.basw.co.uk/basw-england-domestic-abuse-guidance-launch-video | https://www.basw.co.uk/resources/basw-england-domestic-abuse-guidance-social-workers-april-2021

Children's Code (Information Commissioner's Office)

The Children's Code (or Age Appropriate Design Code to give its formal title) is a data protection code of practice for online services, such as apps, online games, and web and social media sites, likely to be accessed by children. The came into force on 2 September 2020 with a 12 month transition period to give organisations time to prepare.

The code aims not to protect children from the digital world, but instead protect them within it by ensuring online services are better designed with children in mind.

Link: https://ico.org.uk/about-the-ico/news-and-events/news-and-blogs/2021/03/ico-urges-businesses-to-act-now-as-children-s-code-comes-into-force-in-six-months/

Case Reviews Update from NSPCC Learning for April 2021

The NSPCC Library hosts the National collection of case reviews. This update highlights case reviews recently added to the collection and features one of our Learning from case reviews briefings.

They have added eight case reviews to the Collection this month featuring a number of issues including Fabricated or induced illness (FII), child criminal exploitation, child sexual abuse, medical care, and parents with a mental health problem.

Link: http://library.nspcc.org.uk/HeritageScripts/Hapi.dll/retrieve2?SetID=7F827729-CEA0-4252-9B07-38376EF640F4&DataSetName=LIVEDATA

Understanding attachment in children

NSPCC Learning has published new content on understanding attachment in children. The content looks at: why attachment is important; how children develop attachment; attachment and behaviours to look out for; how trauma can affect attachment; and ways to support parents and carers to develop a bond with their child.

Link: Attachment and child development

Talking to children about abuse

NSPCC Learning has published findings from a pilot study of "Talk to Me", an interactive learning tool produced by Attensi in collaboration with the NSPCC, that aims to: boost adults' confidence in talking to children about abuse, build the child's trust and help children talk about their experiences. A survey of 287 users found that: 95% of respondents either "agree" or "strongly agree" that the training made them more confident in talking to children about abuse; and 98% felt the content was relevant to their work.

Link: Pilot shows interactive learning tool boosts adults' confidence in talking to children about abuse

Safeguarding and sport

The NSPCC's Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) has published a new animation looking at how sport can safeguard children.

Topics covered include: the difference between child protection and safeguarding and how children and young people can be further protected beyond their time at training sessions. Separately, CPSU has also published an article looking at lessons that can be learnt for the sports sector following the publication of the Sheldon Report into the non-recent child sexual abuse allegations in football. CPSU has also updated the briefing on responding to information about possible risks to children to help sports clubs and organisations risk assess any concerns around the membership of people with criminal records.

Links: Animation: How can sport safeguard children? | Responding to information about possible risks to children

Sexual harassment in schools

The House of Commons Library has published a briefing paper on sexual harassment in education in England.

This briefing provides an overview of the relevant policies schools and colleges are expected to have in place on sexual harassment including recent policy developments.

Link: https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8117/

Independent review of children's social care
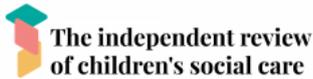
The Independent review of children's social care in England has announced two new advisory groups. The evidence group, made up of academics and other experts, will ensure the review is incorporating the most appropriate research and the design group, made up of individuals from local government, policing, the judiciary, health and education, will guide how the review designs its recommendations. The review will also be supported by What Works for Children's Social Care (WWCSC) who will produce and commission evidence summaries, rapid reviews and new analysis.

Links: https://childrenssocialcare.independent-review.uk/review-update-evidence-and-design-groups/ | https://whatworks-csc.org.uk/blog/wwcsc-to-provide-research-support-to-the-review-of-childrens-social-care/

Tackling child sexual abuse

During January 2021, the government published its strategy for tackling child sexual abuse. This strategy is the first of its kind in setting out the government's vision for preventing, tackling, and responding to child sexual abuse in all its forms.

It doesn't matter whether it is committed in person or online, in families or communities, here in this country or overseas. It is based on 3 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.

Link: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-child-sexual-abuse-strategy

Independent Child Trafficking Guardians
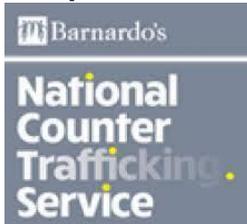
An independent Child Trafficking Guardian (ICTG) provides independent advice and support to potentially trafficked children and can advocate on their behalf. Delivered by Barnardo's, the ICTG service is provided in addition to statutory support, with ICTGs working closely with local authority safeguarding professionals.

An ICTG Direct Worker provides support where there is no parental responsibility for the child in the UK, while an expert ICTG Regional Practice Co-ordinator provides support where there is someone with parental responsibility.

Link: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-trafficking-advocates-early-adopter-sites

Border Force work on tackling modern slavery

With tackling modern slavery, human trafficking, and child sexual abuse and exploitation all leading priorities for Border Force, operational staff at locations across the UK implement a range of measures to identify victims and perpetrators as well as safeguarding and supporting adults or children at risk of being exploited.

Link: https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/border-force

Coronavirus: impact on children and young people's mental health

The All Party Parliamentary Group for a Fit and Healthy Childhood has published a report, compiled by 41 academics, charity sector experts and children's play specialists, looking at the impact on the mental health of children and young people during and after the coronavirus pandemic. Recommendations include: a cross-government department commission on the funding of children and young people's mental health provision to encompass NHS and other budgets; and the adoption of a multi-sector approach to improve the mental health and wellbeing of the current cohort of children and young people.

Link: https://fhcappg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/THE-COVID-GENERATION-REPORT-April2021.pdf

Domestic abuse

The Ann Craft Trust has released a podcast discussing domestic abuse and coercive control and how this abuse affects the physical and mental health of the whole family.

Link: Domestic abuse and coercive control: telling untold stories: safeguarding matters

Domestic Abuse Act

The Domestic Abuse Bill received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021. The Domestic Abuse Act explicitly recognises children as victims if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse and includes a legal definition of domestic abuse which incorporates a range of abuses beyond physical violence, including emotional, coercive or controlling behaviour, and economic abuse.

Links: Domestic Abuse Bill receives Royal Assent | Domestic Abuse Act

Bullying during the coronavirus pandemic

The Anti-Bullying Alliance has published findings from a survey of pupils, school staff, and parents and carers in England about bullying and relationships, carried out during the week 1-7 February 2021, when some children were in school but most were taking part in learning at home.

Findings include: 68% of young people said they felt less connected to their friendships than before the pandemic; 75% of young people learning from home were not given opportunities to communicate with other pupils during online lessons, and where they were allowed to use the

chat functions these were often used to say unkind and bullying things; and children and young people reported bullying about their home life and access to technology.

Link: https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachment/Bullying%20in%20the%20pandemic.pdf

Online safety

The UK Safer Internet Centre has published a report looking at the reach of Safer Internet Day 2021 and the impact it had on children, young people, parents, carers, and teachers. The report finds that 51% children aged 8-17 years across the UK heard about Safer Internet Day, of which: 82% said they felt more confident about what to do if they were worried about something online; 85% said they know what to do if they or someone else see misleading or unreliable content online; and 63% had a conversation with a parent or carer about online safety.

Link: https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/safer-internet-day-2021/safer-internet-day-2021-impact-report

Ofcom, Children's media use and attitudes

Ofcom has published a report looking at the media use and attitudes of children and young people aged 5-15. Findings show that in 2020: nearly all children aged 5-15 went online; just over half of 12-15s have had some form of negative online experience, the most common of which was being contacted by someone they did not know who wanted to be their friend.

Link: https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/media-literacy-research/childrens

Online grooming

The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) has published figures from the IWF Annual report 2020 which shows the growing risk of children, particularly girls aged 11-13, being targeted online by criminal sex predators.

New analysis shows that 11- to 13-year-old girls were victims of online grooming in 80% of the 68,000 cases of self-generated imagery identified. The IWF has launched a Gurls Out Loud campaign which aims to empower teenage girls and warn parents about the risks posed by online predators targeting children.

Link: https://annualreport2020.iwf.org.uk/

Latest Safeguarding Pressures report from ADCS published

The Association of Directors of Children's Services' (ADCS) latest Safeguarding Pressures report states, last year there were fewer referrals from schools last year, traditionally one of the largest sources of referrals, due to the closures.

DFE data of Local authorities shows that during the first national lockdown referrals from schools decreased by 77 per cent compared with 2018 levels.

Online Grooming New Campaign (Internet watch Foundation)

A new IWF safety campaign aims to help parents have conversations with their children about keeping their 'door' closed to child sexual abusers. The campaign includes a booklet for parents, explaining the risks, explaining why children are vulnerable, and suggests practice steps that parents can take.

The mnemonic used in the campaign is TALK:

- TALK to your child about online sexual abuse. Start the conversation – and listen to their concerns.
- AGREE ground rules about the way you use technology as a family.
- LEARN about the platforms and apps your child loves. Take an interest in their online life.
- KNOW how to use tools, apps and settings that can help to keep your child safe online.

Link: https://talk.iwf.org.uk/

Child and Maternal Health (Public Health England)

If you are interested in data and how your area compares to others, you can access a rich information seam on childhood by going to the Public Health England website.

The Child and Maternal Health hub will enable you print pdfs of relevant data including:

- Child Health Profile
- Health behaviours in Young People
- Teenage pregnancy and young parents

Reports for Dudley can found here: https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/child-health-profiles/data#page/13/ati/302/are/E08000027

New ways to prevent child exploitation

The Economic and Social Research Council are funding a new research project to study the safeguarding risks faced by young people outside their home and explore new ways of combating threats such as sexual and criminal exploitation and gang affiliation.

The £1.9m Innovate Project by the University of Sussex, will explore the work of six organisations each using one of three different frameworks for safeguarding and trauma-informed practice.

The three year project will involve researchers observing meetings and practices, interview young people, parents and professionals. The study will also examine organisational processes,

systems, costs and outcomes to determine the current effectiveness of frameworks and the factors which lead to more innovative social care practice. The study will also engage stakeholders in turning the findings into policy recommendations and guidelines for good practice.

The three frameworks included are:

- Contextual safeguarding, as adopted by Devon Children's Services and Partners and the charity Safer London
- Trauma-informed practice at Brighter Futures for Children in Reading and North Lanarkshire Education and Families Service
- Transitional safeguarding with the Safeguarding Adults Board for Hackney and Sheffield Children and Families Services

Link: https://theinnovateproject.co.uk/

County lines- emerging new models & exploitation threats

New research published by the National Youth Agency (NYA) has shown that the Covid-19 pandemic has changed the methods criminal gangs use to exploit children and young people. Gangs exploiting them to carry out criminal activity have adapted their approach, creating new risks. Such gangs have traditionally targeted children outside school gates however, in response to the national lockdowns and school closures, there has been an increase in the use of social media channels to target children.

As the report highlights, grooming via traditional apps, e.g. Snapchat and WhatsApp, where messages are encrypted or disappear presents a real difficulty in tracking contacts locally and across county lines.

Platforms that offer 'secret chat' functions or where one account can be used simultaneously across multiple devices also present tracking difficulties.

The latest statistics present a worrying picture of child exploitation:

- There are over 2,000 county lines gangs across the UK (National Crime Agency)
- Police closed 102 county lines in September 2020 (National County Lines Coordination Centre)
- 27,000 children at high risk of gang exploitation have not been identified by services (Children's commissioner for England, February 2021)
- 2 million young people have vulnerabilities triggered by Covid-19 (NYA)

Link: Between the lines

If you have Safeguarding news or updates of your own that you would like to be considered for inclusion in the next Safer, then please email: **Mark Wilson**, DSPP Learning and Development Coordinator via **mark.wilson@dudley.gov.uk**