

Darlington Safeguarding Partnership

Protecting Children and Adults



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Welcome to our December 2023 Newsletter

In this newsletter, the last one for 2023, we bring together information which we hope you will find useful and we highlight how the Partnership continues to communicate and keep in touch with all our agencies and provide guidance to support you in your role working with children and adults. In this edition, we bring you information in the spotlight about domestic abuse and also information about Partnership work, important safeguarding updates and new training dates.

Me Learning

Coming soon... in the New Year we will be launching our new training learning management system. All of our training sessions and our new e-learning modules on offer will all be accessed in one place by registering on our new system. Session information, bookings, evaluations and certificates can all be accessed here and your e-learning profile will keep you updated with your training history and up-coming sessions. Further information will be sent out via email in the coming weeks and there will be more in next month's newsletter.

Season's greetings to all of our colleagues, friends and family across the Darlington area. We wish you a happy and healthy break and look forward to working together in the New Year.



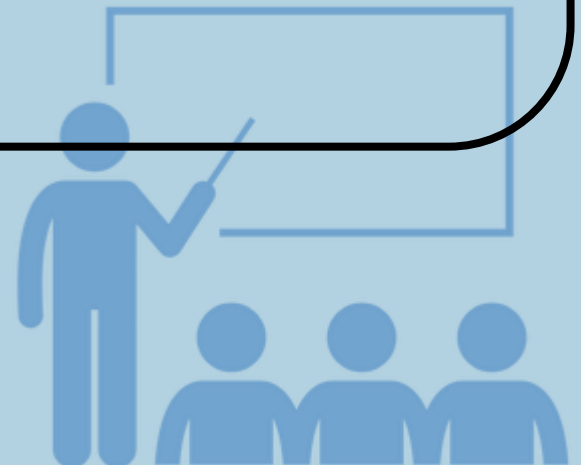
Ofsted Focused Visit to Darlington Children's Services

Ofsted conducted a focused visit to Darlington Children's Services in October 2023 and the inspectors looked at the local authority's arrangements for children in need and children subject to a protection plan. The inspectors found that senior leaders have ensured a relentless focus on continuing to improve the experiences of children who need help and protection in Darlington and have developed a workforce culture that is helping to develop and sustain high quality social work practice. The inspection identified that relationships with partner agencies are a particular strength and enable professionals to engage in effective multi-agency information sharing which informs decision making and sound planning for children and robust child centred responses to identified risk and need. Senior leaders have created a workforce culture which promotes collaboration and effective relationships with parents, carers and professionals and enables good social work to flourish. The full Ofsted report can be accessed here: files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50233986.



Darlington Safeguarding Week 2023

Thank you to all who participated in our annual Safeguarding Week event this year. We hosted a range of excellent presentations and workshops and we were delighted to welcome over 130 professionals and volunteers onto those sessions. The feedback we received about the sessions was extremely positive and we hope that all who took part have taken away some new learning and made some new links with other professionals. We look forward to hosting other training events in the New Year.



In the Spotlight..... Domestic Abuse

During the festive period an increase in alcohol consumption and financial pressure within families can lead to increased risk of domestic abuse within relationships. It can also be a catalyst for psychological abuse with coercive and controlling behaviour creating fear in relationships and homes. This week we spotlight some of the organisations across Darlington and the Tees Valley that are working to support the victims of domestic abuse and to reduce the risks of incidents occurring.

The HALO Project— this week we invited The HALO Project to deliver a session hosted by the DSP focussing on a range of aspects including the work they do to support both women and men who are victims of domestic abuse. In some communities, it can be more difficult for victims to seek support due to cultural pressures, beliefs and honour-based values, therefore sensitive support is needed in order for changes to be made and lives to be saved. <https://www.haloproject.org.uk/>

Spotlight on Coercive Control—this week a large number of Darlington professionals and volunteers had the opportunity of attending a virtual conference hosted by Durham colleagues focussing on coercive control. This excellent series of presentations and discussions explored this topic from a variety of perspectives. Coercive control is a act or pattern of acts designed to intimidate, harm, punish or frighten others. Increased awareness of practitioners in all agencies has meant that families can seek support however there is still work to do around identifying this behaviour and understanding the complexities that surrounds this abuse. Read more about coercive control [here](#) on the Refuge website.

Number 40— Supported by the Darlington Safer Streets Partnership, this is a town centre safe space on Skinnergate which will provide a haven for people on a night out who feel vulnerable, unwell or have been a victim of crime. It is staffed by security staff and paramedics it is open until 3am and provides support for those who need it.

The multi-agency response to children and families who need help

Local agencies struggle to prioritise early help for children and families

Ofsted, the CQC and HMICFRS have published a joint report on the multi-agency response to children and families who need help. This report is based on 5 joint targeted area inspections of the multi-agency response to children and families who need help. We reviewed the practices of individual agencies, as well as the effectiveness of multi-agency working arrangements, including across children's social care, health services, schools and the police. The inspections took place between December 2022 and March 2023. All the areas were different in the way they were thinking about and delivering family help. The findings in this report consider the extent to which agencies work collaboratively with partners to identify children and families who need help, as well as how they intervened to support these children and deliver this help. This report is part of the programme of joint targeted area inspections, which examine how well agencies are working together in local areas to help and protect children.

Read the full report [here](#).

Darlington Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report

The 2022-23 Darlington Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report has been published this month. The report summarises and reflects on the work of the Partnership over the past year, drawing upon a range of data and information to outline the progress made and to illustrate the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding partnership arrangements across Darlington

Read the full report [here](#).

Concerned about a child?

Contact the Children's Initial Advice Team
Professionals on **01325 406252**

Concerned about an adult?

Contact the Adult Contact Team
on **01325 406111**



Statutory Safeguarding Partners

Ann Baxter, Independent Chair/Scrutineer

James Stroyan, Group Director of People

Dave Ashton, Detective Chief Superintendent

Jean Golightly, Director of Nursing and Quality