

# DECEMBER

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## Welcome to our December 2024 Newsletter

In this newsletter 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 focus on two aspects of children's safeguarding. There is also information about Partnership work, safeguarding updates and new training dates.

DARLINGTON

# The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel

## Protecting children and responding to child sexual abuse within the family environment review November 2024

The independent Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's national review into the Child Sexual Abuse within the Family Environment has been published. It outlines the main practice and systems issues that featured in the 136 incidents covered by the review, which professionals may find useful to reflect on. It sets out 10 national recommendations for improving child protection policy and practice across England, in response to this kind of abuse. Additionally, it sets out 6 specific recommendations for safeguarding partners. Read the full review report [here](#):

The review fieldwork analysed 136 serious child safeguarding incidents, and 41 related serious case reviews (SCRs) and local child safeguarding practice reviews (LCSPRs), including the Family H LCSPR conducted by Darlington Safeguarding Partnership in February 2023. The review included discussions with 107 practitioners across England, one-to-one interviews with 2 of the children at the heart of these reviews, discussions with experts by experience, and interviews with 5 people who had been convicted for sexually abusing children in these reviews.

Learning from the serious incidents considered in the review:

- Professionals from across multi agency system struggle to identify and understand when there is risk of harm
- There must be better join-up between the criminal justice and child safeguarding responses to child sexual abuse
- Children and families are not receiving the support, help and protection they need throughout sexual abuse investigations
- We must improve assessment of people presenting risk of sexual harm to prevent further offending

Questions which professionals might wish to reflect upon:

- What are the key lessons in this national review for your organisation and your practice, including working with other agencies (including with probation services, education settings, police, health)?
- Looking at the learning from this national review, do you have any reflections on whether you and your colleagues could have acted differently when responding to instances of child sexual abuse?
- Looking at the key messages below for safeguarding partnerships, what are the immediate steps you and colleagues can practically put in place with respect to the identification and response to this form of abuse?  
Working with children and families
- How does your practice need to change so that the needs, voices and experiences of children who are sexually abused or at risk of being sexually abused are better addressed?
- How well are the specific needs of children from Black and minoritised communities understood and addressed with respect to child sexual abuse within the family environment?
- How well do you seek the views of children and non-abusing parents and carers?

The review made six recommendations which must be considered by all Statutory Safeguarding Partners and ten recommendations which must be considered nationally. To see the recommendations and read the full report visit: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-review-into-child-sexual-abuse\[1\]within-the-family-environment](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-review-into-child-sexual-abuse[1]within-the-family-environment).

## Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive

The publication of Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive sets out the model which government office hopes will redress the imbalance between a growing social care bill, which has risen by £4.4 billion over the last ten years, and depleted preventative services in order to reduce the number of children in care.

Whilst the model prioritises keeping families together, it also importantly recognises the current imbalance in the level of high quality supportive care placements available; particularly the lack of available local placements. When children and young people are not placed in care locally, they often lose access to their existing support network of extended family members. This support is crucially important for children and young people recovering from trauma, abuse and neglect.

The proposed changes also recognises the important role social care has in supporting the wellbeing of disabled children and their families. This includes early help, community based short-term breaks and longer-term regular care and support.

The model is based on four key reform principles:

- **Children to remain with their families**- wherever possible children should remain with their families and be safely prevented from entering the care system. This will include new child protection legislation, such as the introduction of family group decision making, and legislative reform to current child protection practice.
- **Focus on kinship care and fostering**- Where it is not possible for children to remain at home the new model's focus is on utilising kinship care or fostering families rather than residential care. The success of this model will rely on the willingness and availability of kinship support together with a substantial increase in the recruitment of more foster carers. From a financial perspective, there is no doubt this model aims to greatly reduce the reliance on costly residential care however, for kinship and foster care to be effective this will require great investment in support services.
- **Fix the broken care market**- as the proposals state 'the Competition and Markets Authority, and the Independent Review of Children's Social Care, identified that the levels of profit made in the care placement market were above those that would be expected in a well-functioning market.' Through further legislation HM Government plan to bring 'a swift end to excessive and exploitative profit making' and 'greater visibility to the prices local authorities are paying'. The big unanswered question here though is - Will this lead to a shortage in provision if current providers bow out of the market
- **Investment in key enablers**- which includes investment in the workforce and evidence-based support programmes. It also includes improved data and information sharing, with the proposal to legislate for the introduction of a new Single Unique Identifier (SUI) which will be used across all multi-agency services. At first glance this presents as a logical solution to ensure effective tracking and audit of service provision but, as the proposal acknowledges there are significant barriers to effective implementation across services, such as clarity on information sharing, capacity and resources to support such a monitoring system.

To access the whole document, click [here](#)

# ☆ NEW PODCAST EPISODE ☆

Darlington Adult Social Care – Meet the Safeguarding DoLS Team  
In this episode we meet Clair, Jill & Sara who tell us what the team do and discuss their responsibilities.

Available via the website or Spotify –

[Darlington Adult Social Care - Meeting the Safeguarding DoLS Team](https://open.spotify.com/episode/OBlgwaRpkw7Hlk7dYo8Pg0si=dc76552599b742c7)

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/OBlgwaRpkw7Hlk7dYo8Pg0si=dc76552599b742c7>



**Concerned about a child?**  
Contact the Children's Initial Advice Team  
Professionals on **01325 406252**  
Public on **01325 406222**  
Emergency Duty team **01642 524552**

**Concerned about an adult?**  
Contact the Adult Contact Team  
on **01325 406111**  
EDT **01642 524552**

**Darlington Safeguarding Partnership**  
Protecting Children and Adults

## OUR PLEDGE

To be confident in having open and honest conversations with each other as multi-agency partners in order to do the very best we can for children, adults and their families in Darlington. Multi-agency working is vital to maintain a focus on children and vulnerable adults while also keeping them at the heart of all decisions.

Our Pledge is an opportunity to:

- Seek out professional conversations with each other at the earliest opportunity
- Have a shared understanding of the strengths and risks within a family
- Actively listen to each other and share important information
- Respect each other's expertise
- Be open and empathetic to the professional views of others
- Be professionally curious and evidence what we say
- Use common language that everyone understands





## Statutory Safeguarding Partners

Ann Baxter, Independent Chair/Scrutineer

James Stroyan, Group Director of People

Dave Ashton, Detective Chief Superintendent

Chris Piercy, Director of Nursing and Quality