

# Safe to Learn

## Northumberland Strategic Safeguarding Partnership with Northumberland Virtual school

Half termly bulletin for Governors, Headteachers/Principals and Designated Safeguarding Leads  
in Schools, Academies and Alternative Providers

Issue 48: 12/10/2020

### Extra Edition



Based on the quantity of information we are receiving, both locally and nationally we thought it best to keep you informed more regularly and not save everything for a bumper end of term edition. This edition provides you with updates on some of the information we have received from colleagues across the local authority and also focusses on some of the themes we have discussed in recent training for designated safeguarding leads.

### Signs of Safety



We have been discussing Signs of Safety at all of our recent training sessions and included here is an update from Mel Atkins and Paul Thonpson, who are the lead practitioners for this work.

“The Signs of Safety approach is a relationship-grounded, safety-organised approach to child protection practice, created by researching what works for professionals and families in building meaningful safety for vulnerable and at-risk children. The approach focuses on the question, ‘How can the worker build partnerships with parents and children in situations of suspected or substantiated child abuse and still deal rigorously with the maltreatment issues?’ The approach expands the investigation of risk to encompass family and individual strengths, periods of safety and good care that can be built upon to stabilise and strengthen a child’s and family’s situation. A format for undertaking comprehensive risk assessment — assessing for danger, strengths and safety — is incorporated within the one-page Signs of Safety assessment protocol or mapping tool. The approach is designed to be used from commencement through to case closure in order to assist professionals at all stages of the child protection process.

The main assessment tool we use is the mapping process, I’m sure those of you who have been to Children’s Services meetings will be familiar with it and it asks 3 main questions, what is going well, what are worried about and what needs to happen next. This is only one tool, there are many others to work with parents, carers and children to build effective and robust safety planning for families such as the safety house, 3 houses and plan rules.

Northumberland have bought a new IT system to help us with this implementation which will go live in April 2020 but you should start to see changes in process and procedures before then as Paul and I support the teams across the service to implement the model and changes in practice.

To support the implementation there is an extensive training programme for social workers, we are also increasing the numbers for the 1 day (now a 3hr virtual session) for agency partners and these are running up until April next year and beyond. We are also looking at more bespoke training for agency partners who work directly with children and would welcome feedback about what support you think would be helpful.

Please get in touch if you have any questions or need any support”

[Mel.atkins@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Mel.atkins@northumberland.gov.uk) and [Paul.thompson03@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Paul.thompson03@northumberland.gov.uk)

The LA Signs of Safety newsletters will be saved in the Information for DSL’s folder

## Virtual School Training Programme – update

The latest training programme from the Virtual School is now ready to take your bookings through Microsoft! Using the link below you can book on your DSL refresher, training for new DSLs and also training for Designated Teacher’s for Looked after Children. All training will take place ‘virtually’ until we are notified that we can deliver face to face. You will receive a confirmation and log in details when your booking is confirmed.

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=3gkTu5CC8EKpgNw73-cPQOmyLnPOyglHpqllw8SoF99UMzc0WFA3TIU4SFJUSEJMS0tBT1ZQWTdYMi4u>

## Self Harm And Suicide

The outbreak of COVID-19, lockdown and self-isolation has created a lot of additional pressures on parents and their children. Like adults, children and young people might feel concerned or upset by the news, or by things they hear or read about COVID-19. They might feel isolated, lonely, angry or depressed about the future. Some may express these feelings by engaging in self-destructive behaviours, such as self-harm. If you are worried that a child might start to self-harm or is already self-harming, or that they seem upset, withdrawn or irritable, it is important to know that you can still get the right support and help during. We know that, with the right support, many young people can be helped to stop self-harming.

You can find more [information for parents and carers on self-harm in young people](#) in a resource available on the Royal College of Psychiatrist’s website. This explains what self-harm is and contains advice for carers on how to support children and adolescents who are self-harming. It also lists coping techniques.

The Northumberland Strategic Safeguarding Partnership has recently consulted on a refreshed multi agency Suicide and Self Harm Pathway and once this has been fully ratified with the all partner agencies we will ensure schools receive an update.

## Links to Local Teams

1. Children’s Centres

Please follow [this link](#) for updated information about Northumberland Children’s Centres and their updated webpage.

2. Early Help

All resources linked to Early Help are available on the Supporting Families webpage, located [here](#)

## County Lines



**Northumbria Police have produced a leaflet** for parents and carers to recognise the signs of criminal exploitation/potential involvement in County Lines activity. It includes some signposting to support services. the poster can be located in the Information for DSLs folder

Additional resources to help schools include sessions about county lines in their PSHE lessons can be found on the Fearless website

These include a new, powerful film about County Lines to help prevent young people getting involved in county lines drugs gangs. Here's the link to the website and film

<https://www.fearless.org/campaigns/running-the-lines>

Additional resources for professionals (lesson plans), are free for anyone wishing to use them, here's the link; [https://www.fearless.org/en/professionals/news/running-the-line-\(1\)](https://www.fearless.org/en/professionals/news/running-the-line-(1))

## And Finally

Remember your main safeguarding guidance from September 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 will be [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020](#).

Please ensure all previous versions are removed from staff noticeboards and websites. Part 1 and Annexe A must be read by all staff and remember Ofsted will often ask you to evidence how you know your staff and governors have read and understood the document.

Prior to the summer break we provided you with a set of slides, showing all of the key changes in Keeping Children Safe and notes to support you deliver this update to your staff.

Your Child Protection and Safeguarding policy must be updated, to reflect the changes in KCSiE and you can find our template on the Virtual School webpages along with a checklist which you can use to check your school/trust/ academy policy.

## Contact us

Please contact us with any queries you might have by phone or by email.

**Carol Leckie, Schools' Safeguarding Team Manager, 01670 622720**

**[Carol.Leckie@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Carol.Leckie@northumberland.gov.uk)**

If you cannot make contact with a member of staff directly then please use these generic details. Your query will be logged and you will receive a response by the end of the working day or within 24 hours.

- If you have a query for the Education Welfare team please email - [educationwelfare@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:educationwelfare@northumberland.gov.uk)
- If you have a query for the looked after children's team please email - [eslac.info@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:eslac.info@northumberland.gov.uk)
- If you have a query for the Safeguarding team or children educated other than at school team please email - [eotashealth@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:eotashealth@northumberland.gov.uk)
- If you have a more urgent query or request please telephone 01670 622787.