

Bexley Safeguarding Partnership for Children and Young People e-Bulletin

January 2019



Update on the partnership's first priority: missing children and young people

Learning Hub members have now finished auditing selected case studies and collecting feedback from various practitioners, agencies, young people and families regarding our first priority: *to reduce the number of children and young people who are missing and are at risk of criminal or sexual exploitation*. This has helped to highlight various successes and challenges surrounding multi-agency practice, and this learning will be fed back into practice through the safeguarding partnership board, which is next scheduled for 28th January 2019.

System learning event - 29th January 2019

We will be holding a system wide learning event on 29th January between 13:30 – 16:30.

In the first half of the event, we will be sharing the findings and recommendations from the partnership's first priority: *to reduce the number of children and young people who are missing and are at risk of criminal or sexual exploitation*, led by the Police. This will include special guests Nigel Richardson (Bexley independent scrutineer), David Akinsanya (freelance journalist and care leaver) and Ben Westwood (singer, writer and ex-runaway).

The second half of the event will launch the work on the partnership's second priority, *to respond effectively to the mental ill health of parents during the perinatal period so that they are supported to give their children the best start*, led by the CCG. It will also feature a presentation by Dr Susan Pawlby from the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience at King's College London.

If you would like to book a place at the event, please respond by clicking [here](#).

The partnership's second priority: Parental mental ill health

Respond effectively to the mental ill health of parents during the perinatal period so that they are supported to give their children the best start

The Partnership Board has agreed to explore three priorities in its first year. Priority 2 will be led by the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). This will focus on how the Partnership responds to the needs of parents experiencing mental ill health to ensure they are well supported to provide their children with the best start in life. In the context of mental health, the priority will focus on parents identified as having mild to moderate depression/anxiety.

Rationale

During pregnancy and in the year after birth parents can be affected by a range of mental health problems including anxiety, depression and post-natal psychotic disorders. These are collectively called 'perinatal mental illnesses'.

Perinatal mental illnesses increase the likelihood that children will experience behavioural, social and learning difficulties and fail to reach their full potential. The onset and escalation of anxiety and depression can often be prevented through early identification and help. Even if the illness itself is not preventable it is possible through support and appropriate services to prevent some of the negative effects of depression and anxiety on children. Emerging evidence suggests that the quality of parents' interactions with their babies and the quality of attachment relationships can be improved through effective interventions.

The partnership's second priority: Parental mental health (continued)

Aim

The partnership aim is to determine the efficacy of current practices in place for identifying parents who have mental health issues with children 0-1 years (inclusive of the antenatal period), and that they are:

- robust
- effective in providing early help to parents and their infant
- provide appropriate early emotional and psychological support
- reduce referrals into statutory child protection services.

Success Measures

- Parents who at risk of, or suffering from mental illness are identified at the earliest opportunity
- The tools used to monitor improvement are effective
- Increased community and professional awareness of services and support to families.
- Effective integrated working through information sharing and assessment. where relevant leading to effective multi agency interventions
- A reduction in the numbers of families referred into MASH for statutory child protection assessment.

Work commences on this priority on 29th January with the first Learning Hub session. As mentioned above, there will also be a system-wide learning event on the afternoon of 29th January to launch the priority with the following programme:

- Overview and success measures
- Presentation by Dr. Susan Pawlby (King's College London, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience)
- The experience of parents
- Feedback from Nigel Richardson, our independent scrutineer.

To book a place at the event, please book [here](#).

Helpful guidance ahead of priority 2

The NSPCC has recently published a report on perinatal mental health care in Northern Ireland. This report, published in November 2018, looks at the perspectives of health visitors and midwives in Northern Ireland who provide a universal service to women and families during the perinatal period. It describes their experiences of identifying and responding to women and families affected by perinatal mental illness. It highlights the considerable challenges that are impacting on the primary care services being provided to women and families in Northern Ireland.

[Time for action on perinatal mental health care in Northern Ireland](#)

The Children's Commissioner for England has published a briefing on child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) provision, analysing spending, numbers receiving treatment, waiting times, and number of children not accepted into treatment.

[Children's Mental Health briefing](#)

Professional curiosity and Working with fathers

As part of our work to implement the recommendations from the [Bexley SCR John](#) and in particular, the recommendation around practitioners routinely considering the role of and including fathers in their work with families, we are re-publicising a [September 2017 e-bulletin article on professional curiosity/inclusion of fathers and male partners](#). This includes some pointers on identifying absent fathers, how to engage fathers and top tips for managers. There is also a recent [fact sheet on professional curiosity](#) from Greenwich Safeguarding Children Board. This mentions the need for professionals to maintain an attitude of respectful uncertainty and includes sections on barriers to curiosity and how to be curious.

We hope you will find these resources useful in your work with families.

Safeguarding champion events – 14th Feb and 7th March

Booking is now open for the upcoming safeguarding champion events in February and March!

The focus of these workshops will include learning and feedback from Priority 1: Missing Children and Young People. Here, champions will be invited to take part in reflective discussions on the key learning from the first priority.

The workshops will also feature:

- Updates on the new partnership – Where are we now?
- Updates on national and local learning reviews

If you are a safeguarding champion, please book your place on one of the four workshops by clicking [here](#).

Young Carers Awareness Day – 31st January 2019

Each year the Carers Trust organises Young Carers Awareness Day. This year's [Young Carers Awareness Day](#) will take place on Thursday 31 January 2019. The purpose of the day is to raise public awareness of the challenges faced by young people because of their caring role, and to campaign for greater support for young carers and their needs. This year's theme is the mental health of young carers.

Support services for young carers in Bexley is provided by [Imago Young Carers](#). Imago Young Carers delivers a support service to anyone aged 8-18 living in Bexley who is taking on caring responsibilities for a family member with a long-term illness, disability, mental health or substance misuse issue. Imago Young Carers will enable Young Carers aged 8-18 to receive some respite from their caring responsibilities, socialise with their peers and receive tailored support and information. They also provide social groups for Young Carers called Chill Clubs.

For further information, including how to make a referral, please contact the Imago Young Carers Hub:

Website: <https://www.imago.community/Children-and-Young-People/Bexley-Young-Carers>

Phone: 0300 111 1110

Email: hello@bexleyyoungcarers.org.uk

If any schools or community groups are interested in hosting an event for Young Carers Awareness Day 2019, please contact the Imago Young Carers Hub for materials, resources or support.

National protocol on reducing unnecessary criminalisation of looked-after children and care leavers

The Department for Education (DfE) has published a [national protocol to reduce the unnecessary criminalisation of looked after children and care leavers](#) in England. Key principles include: a strong corporate parenting ethos recognises the care system is not just about keeping children safe, but also about promoting recovery, resilience and wellbeing; professionals should understand the impact of trauma and abuse on the emotional and behavioural development of children and young people; all local agencies should contribute to the understanding of factors that can increase children and young people's risk of being criminalised and use this to inform their practice.

Link to previous e-Bulletins

Previous e-Bulletins are available [here](#).