

# Education Safeguarding Child Protection Newsletter

**July 2023**

## Welcome

Welcome to the 6<sup>th</sup> and final Child Protection Newsletter for 2022-23.

We are aware that there is lots of information but recommend that you try to find time to read and digest its contents as it will help you in your role as a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). If you have any questions regarding any of the articles, or the need for safeguarding advice, please contact the service directly.

In the articles below we include links to external websites. These will be in blue text for you to click on and read further information. We try and provide useful resources but cannot be responsible for their content and advice. Please tell us if you have any issues with any of the links provided.

The Education Safeguarding Service publish and issue this newsletter for schools, early years providers and local authority staff. For this newsletter to be effective, please ensure that it is shared with staff, including all Designated Safeguarding Leads.

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## Education Safeguarding Service Updates

As you should all now be aware, from 1st April 2023, we returned to Kent County Council to deliver our services alongside the other key teams within the Council. We continue to offer the same training and support as before and will also continue to collaborate closely with our colleagues in The Education People. Please be aware that much of our training content and product branding will continue to look the same until we update our materials over the summer ready for September 2023.

### Updated contact information and links

Please be aware that our email addresses and telephone numbers have now changed to KCC contacts so you will need to update any previous contact information, for example in your child protection policy and other related documents. Telephone calls and emails to our old Education People accounts have been auto forwarded but this is expected to end at the end of June. Please ensure you update documents/address books and use our new contact information to avoid any delays or missed enquiries.

Our content has moved to a new home on the [Education People website](#) so please update your bookmarks/favourites. The Education People team are working to update broken links that have occurred because of this move, but updates may take some time. In the meantime, if you cannot find any of our content, please email us at [edsafeguardinghq@kent.gov.uk](mailto:edsafeguardinghq@kent.gov.uk)

### ESS Safeguarding and online safety consultation process reminder

If you have a query or need safeguarding advice from our service, please call the new numbers relevant for your area or the online safety number listed at the end of this newsletter. Your consultation request will then be passed to the duty officer/online safety advisor for that day. Any consultations requests sent via email to our generic inboxes or emails/calls directly to advisors will be asked to call their area or online safety number. By calling your area phone number or the online safety number in the first instance, we can ensure a quicker response to any queries.

### Updates to ESS child protection policy templates, DSL training packs and other resources

The team have begun to review and update our content to reflect the updated 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2023 guidance. We anticipate this work will take place throughout July and August and updated documents will be published on the Education People website as soon as possible.



Our child protection policy templates and DSL training packs will be our first priority; we are aiming to have those published on the Education People website before the end of July and all other content will be updated over the summer ready for use from the 1st of September 2023.

## Education Safeguarding Service survey 2022-23

Following previous surveys in 2020-21 and 2021-22, we would like to invite DSLs to complete a short survey to provide feedback and views on the services and support we offer. Please click [the link](#) or scan the QR code to access the survey.

Designated Safeguarding Lead  
Survey 2023-24

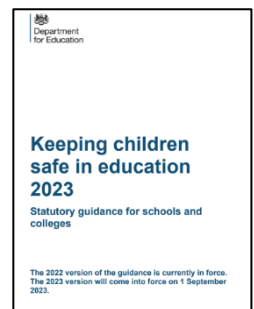


We welcome comments and feedback on our Kent County Council funded work, as well as our commissioned training and support offer. Please note, this survey is anonymous; if you wish to discuss this survey or have specific feedback you would like to discuss, please contact [EdSafeguardingHQ@kent.gov.uk](mailto:EdSafeguardingHQ@kent.gov.uk).

## National Safeguarding Updates and Consultations

### ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ 2023 now available

The Department for Education (DfE) has published an updated version of the statutory safeguarding and child protection guidance for schools in England, ‘Keeping children safe in education’ (KCSIE). This guidance will replace KCSIE 2022 when it comes into force on 1 September 2023.



Updates made in 2023 include:

- clarification around the roles and responsibilities of education staff in relation to filtering and monitoring, including the role of the DSL
- clarification that being absent, as well as missing, from education can be warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns, including sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or child criminal exploitation
- additional information on online pre-recruitment checks for shortlisted candidates
- information on responding to allegations related to organisations or individuals using school premises.

The NSPCC has published a [summary of key changes](#) and the Education Safeguarding Service has produced a document and blog post regarding the specific [online safety changes](#) for DSLs and leaders.

### ‘Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners’ consultation

#### CONSULTATION



The Department of Education have launched a consultation on the ‘Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners’ guidance. The aim is to gather a range of views to help ensure that the information sharing advice provides more clarity, is easily understood, and instils confidence to share information appropriately amongst practitioners.

This is a subject that comes up on numerous consultation calls and from delegates on our training so please look and make comments if you wish. The deadline for responses to this is 6<sup>th</sup> September: [Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/information-sharing-advice-for-safeguarding-practitioners) ([www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk))

### **‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ consultation**

This significant document often shortened to WTSC was last updated in 2018 and was mentioned in our last newsletter as being primed for a 2023 update. The guidance ‘Working Together’ applies at every level from senior leaders to those in direct practice with families, and across all agencies and organisations that come into contact with children. The consultation process has begun, and the link below sets out what is planned, including live consultation events.

[Working Together to Safeguard Children: changes to statutory guidance - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/working-together-to-safeguard-children-changes-to-statutory-guidance) ([www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk))

Key elements of the consultation include

- recognition that education leaders should also have greater involvement in local multi-agency arrangements to reflect the significant role that schools, colleges, early years and other education providers play in children’s lives.
- changing wording in paragraphs 51 – 60 and 61 – 66 to emphasise the role of education in safeguarding arrangements, reflecting the importance they play in children’s lives and the value in involving them in strategic decision-making. Strengthening Working Together is the first step before exploring whether further legislative changes are needed.
- WTSC is proposing to include a dedicated section on the role of education and childcare settings to draw together key considerations when identifying a child who may need early help support such as attendance, behaviour and mental health.

Following this, the DfE will explore whether legislative changes are needed and will consult on how and whether to make education a fourth safeguarding partner; the response to this consultation will be used to build an evidence base so the education sectors views on this possibility are essential. We would encourage you to comment and share your views on this suggestion.

## **End of Term Preparation**

As you approach the end of the academic year for 2022-23 you should ensure that you are confident you are supporting children with additional

safeguarding/welfare concerns over the summer holidays and beyond. Additionally, for children who are transferring from your setting to another, you

need to ensure that you have done all you can to make that transition as smooth as possible and ensure safeguarding files are transferred promptly and appropriately.



Now is a good time for DSLs and their teams to review the children and young people they have had concerns about over recent months:

- Have you liaised with parents/carers or other professionals where appropriate?
- Have you considered all the information you hold holistically, considering all concerns, risks and all protective factors?
- What is your analysis of need; are there supports that need to be put in place for the duration of the break, have you spoken with the child/young person and heard their views wishes and any worries they may have?
- Are there [services](#) you can refer families to, such as foodbanks, Citizens Advice and similar local or national charities if they have financial worries.
- Do parents/carers need to know about services available to protect and support where alcohol, mental health or domestic abuse is involved?
- Are child/young people and parents/carers aware of services such as the Samaritans, Childline or other listening services for those who are experiencing poor mental health or emotional wellbeing?

In addition to the above checks, this is the time to review your safeguarding approaches for the upcoming academic year to ensure they reflect the 2023 KCSIE requirements:

- Review and update your child protection policies and any other associated safeguarding policies or information (such as staff handbooks etc.) to ensure they reflect local and national guidance and expectations.
- Communicate any policy changes and/or updates to your community, for example, sharing updates with staff and parents/carers.
- Ensure your website is up to date; for example, your policies reflect the current guidance and contact information to report any concerns is clearly available.
- Review your staff training programme to identify how/where/when you will be providing child protection updates to all staff, as well as induction training for any new starters.
- Check if any DSL training is due to expire this year, and if so, make a note to book your refresher training!
- Revisit any risk assessments, safety plans and/or safeguarding audits/reviews to ensure they are up to date.

## Violence Against Women and Girls

Through The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (and subsequent legislation) statutory responsibility was given to local authorities, the police, and key partners to reduce crime and disorder in their communities as well as tackling anti-social behaviour, substance misuse and reducing reoffending. The Kent Community Safety Partnership (KCSP) operates at a county level, with the overarching purpose to manage the Kent Community Safety Agreement (CSA) on behalf of the responsible authorities and to effectively and efficiently deliver the priorities outlined in the [agreement](#).



One of the primary issues facing many local authorities is the need to make communities safe for all but especially concerning is the risk of violence against women and girls. This is often shortened to an acronym of VAWG. There was a recent conference held in Kent with speakers from a variety of organisations detailing how they were seeking to improve the safety and welfare of women and girls through initiatives they were putting into place. The Police and Crime Commissioner set up a [VAWG inquiry](#) to create a legacy of partnership-working, designed to make Kent safer for Women and Girls.

Below are some short videos and resources which could be used in a classroom scenario with students:

- [Enough](#) – Home Office
- Video (1.5mins): [Is This OK](#) – Greater Manchester Combined Authority
- Video (1.5mins): [#ISayItsNotOK](#) – Plan International UK
- Video (2mins): [Have a word](#) – Mayor of London
- [White Ribbon](#) is the UK's leading charity engaging men and boys to end violence against women and girls



Kent police want to encourage people to be aware of victims' rights. [My Community Voice](#) is a messaging service that helps Kent and Medway residents, businesses, and community groups to keep in touch with their local policing teams. The service sends updates about your local area directly from the police officers themselves. My Community Voice also allows you to share information, reply to updates or tell the police officers about issues affecting you. This would be a good way for settings to share any concerns they may have about specific areas where young people may be going where you have concerns.

'[StreetSafe](#)' is a national service for anyone to anonymously tell Police.UK about public places where you have felt or feel unsafe, because of environmental issues, e.g., street lighting, abandoned buildings or vandalism and/or because of some behaviours, e.g., being followed or verbally abused. Please note: 'StreetSafe' is not for reporting crime or incidents.



## Early Years and Childcare

### EYFS Consultation

The proposed changes to the EYFS 2023 [consultation closes](#) on the 26/07/23. A [Summary of changes - early years foundation stage regulatory changes consultation](#) is available.

We would like to draw your attention to some of the main proposed changes in section 3 (welfare requirements) which are not huge, but early years providers will need to be aware of:

- There are some clarifications around childminders and their child protection responsibilities.
- Section 3 has additional proposals around Evacuation and the DfE intends to add more detail regarding emergency evacuation procedures.
- The Protect Duty (Martyn's Law) is due to come into force (timeline TBC) requiring



organisations to prepare for terrorist related evacuations.

Any changes will be incorporated to our training when the consultation closes, and the final version is published.

### **Access to FREE online Solihull Parenting courses**

KCHFT Health Visiting have purchased the online Solihull Parenting Programmes; the 4 Courses include:

- Understanding pregnancy, labour, birth and your baby
- Understanding your baby aged 0-12 months
- Understanding your child aged 0-18
- Understanding your teenager's brain

To access, go to [inourplace.co.uk](https://inourplace.co.uk) and apply the access code 'Invicta' and register for an account. The link and password can be shared with families to be able to gain access. Solihull will record the number of courses accessed and provide data to KCHFT.

## **Core Training for DSLs in Schools, Colleges and Early Years Settings**

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) need to undergo appropriate training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out this essential role. As a reminder, our '[Frequently Asked Questions' on The Education People's blog](#) explores some common queries which may be helpful for new and experienced DSLs.



We are continuing to provide a blended training offer for 2023-24; face to face training is our preferred and recommended delivery approach for DSL/EYDSL/DSL/RYDSL training, however if delegates are unable to attend face to face training, virtual options are available. Our training dates for 23-24 are currently with the CPD team and term one dates should be published shortly. We have increased the number of virtual new to role DSL courses for early years settings as feedback has suggested this delivery approach is more flexible for early years staff. For any training queries, please contact your Area Safeguarding Advisor or our [Training and Development Manager](#).

### **CPD website updates: Download your certificates now!**

Our colleagues over at the Education People are currently working behind the scenes creating a new training platform. These [changes](#) will bring a much-improved customer experience, with all training and services now being available on one site. Whilst the changes take place [CPD Online](#) will still be available for booking courses up to the end of the academic year (July 2023). Term One courses (from September 2023 onwards) will be available to book on the new training platform hosted on [The Education People website](#) as soon as it goes live; The Education People will be keeping customers informed of these changes.

No changes are required to your existing CPD account, as this will be migrated across to the new platform and your booking history (for the last three years) will also be migrated over and be available in the 'My Account' area. Although training records for the last three years will be migrated across to the new system, unfortunately certificates will **NOT** be migrated over. If you wish to keep copies of any certificates or course materials, you will need to access your current CPD account and download them by **Friday 4 August 2023**. We encourage DSLs to ensure they have downloaded and saved copies of their DSL/DSLr training certificates from CPD online before this date, to ensure you have proof of attendance on training for your records. Please be aware that our service does not have copies of individual certificates and we will be unable to provide replacements if they are lost. If you need support with downloading your certificates, please contact the [CPD team](#).

## Online Safety

### Generative Artificial Intelligence in education

The Department for Education have [set out their position](#) on the use of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI), including large language models (LLMs) like ChatGPT or Google Bard, in the education sector. Generative AI is not new, however recent advances mean that the general public can now use this technology to produce content, answer questions and respond to prompts in a human-like way. In addition to the DfE guidance, the SWGfL have also launched an '[Artificial Intelligence and Online Safety](#)' hub which includes a number of considerations for schools.



Key things for schools and senior leaders to consider with regards to generative AI:

- It is important to be aware of the data privacy implications. Personal and sensitive data must be protected and therefore must not be entered into generative AI tools.
- Schools must continue to protect their students from harmful content online, including that which might be produced by generative AI. Senior leadership should conduct a thorough risk assessment prior to using generative AI in the classroom, and staff should use professional judgement to check appropriateness and accuracy of any generated content.
- Education institutions should review and strengthen their cyber security, particularly as generative AI could increase the sophistication and credibility of cyberattacks. It would also be appropriate for settings to review their filtering and monitoring approaches.
- Schools and colleges may wish to review homework policies, to consider the wider availability of generative technology which can produce fluent and convincing responses to questions and may be misused to facilitate homework and other forms of unsupervised study.

The education sector needs to prepare students for changing workplaces, including teaching them how to use emerging technologies, such as generative AI, safely and appropriately; this may include exploring the limitations, reliability, and potential bias of generative AI.



When considering approaches with parents and learners, [Childnet's Trust Me resource](#) may be a good starting point for teaching about generative AI, by focusing more generally on inaccurate and pervasive information online and opening discussions to develop critical thinking skills. Internet Matters have produced a comprehensive [parent's guide to using AI with kids](#) which explores some of the key platforms and terminology to aid them in having discussions with their children about generative AI tools. Childnet have also produced a [guide for parents](#) about ChatGPT.

## **Appropriate filtering and monitoring definitions updated for 2023** UK Safer Internet Centre

The UK Safer Internet Centre (UKSIC) has published its ['appropriate' filtering and monitoring definitions for 2023](#) to support senior leaders in understanding what is considered 'appropriate' when making decisions for their school or setting. This updated guidance from the UK Safer Internet Centre explores a variety of features and strategies schools and colleges may wish to consider when deciding on the most appropriate approach to filtering and monitoring to effectively safeguard their community.

In the last newsletter we highlighted the new [Filtering and Monitoring Standards](#) published by the DfE in March, which outlines the four standards to meet:

- You should identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage your filtering and monitoring systems.
- You should review your filtering and monitoring provision at least annually.
- Your filtering system should block harmful and inappropriate content, without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning.
- You should have effective monitoring strategies that meet the safeguarding needs of your school/college.

[The UK Safer Internet Centre](#), on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE), is also delivering a series of [online webinars on filtering and monitoring](#). The sessions will cover:

- [An introductory look at what filtering and monitoring systems are.](#) (10th July – 4:00pm)
- [An overview of DfE's new filtering and monitoring standards.](#) (10th July – 4:45pm)
- [How school leaders can effectively risk assess to make decisions regarding filtering and monitoring.](#) (11th July – 4:00pm)
- [Considerations for those responsible for safeguarding, including Governors.](#) (12th July – 4:00pm)
- [How to identify and assign roles and responsibilities.](#) (13th July – 4:00pm)

Kent schools can also contact our service for further advice and support relating to the safeguarding requirements and implications for filtering and monitoring.

## Online safety and LGBT+ young people

[Childnet International](#) have announced that they are collaborating with [Galop](#), a leading LGBT+ anti-abuse charity, on a new project to support LGBT+ young people. Together, they have created a series of animated short films with the aim of empowering and advocating for the rights of LGBT+ young people in the online world, providing them with the knowledge and tools to navigate safely and confidently online.



The 4 videos, which can be accessed via TikTok and Instagram, address online issues such as: online hate, misinformation, sex education, and online grooming. They focus on 5 main areas impacting LGBT+ young people online, including:

- Combating online hate in the LGBT+ community
- Combatting Misinformation by Thinking Critically
- Navigating sex and relationships in the online world
- Making positive online connections
- Projecting LGBT+ youth voice

Childnet have previously partnered with [Stonewall](#) to produce a resource for professionals supporting LGBT+ children online. You can also find a [free downloadable poster](#) to print and display in school to empower LGBT+ pupils to embrace being themselves online and prioritise their digital wellbeing.



For advice to share with parents and carers on how best to empower and support their children to be safe and connect, share, and explore their LGBT+ identity online, see the [Inclusive Digital Safety hub from Internet Matters](#).

### New online safety teaching resources from Internet Matters



[Internet Matters](#) have produced a new online learning platform called [Digital Matters](#). This free online safety resource is designed to help keep children safe online with interactive activities and dynamic storytelling on a range of online safety topics from cyberbullying to media literacy.

These free online teaching resources have been quality assured by the [PSHE Association](#) to ensure it aligns with the national expectations for safeguarding education. The teacher's pack includes:

- Lesson plans and slides, with additional reflection questions and 'Stretch & Challenge' tasks, enabling teachers to adapt the lesson to suit learners' needs.
- A companion guide to support teachers in developing their own understanding of the lesson and prepare to answer any questions that may arise.
- Printable assessments to gauge pupils' understanding of the topic prior to the

lesson and their progress.

- Cross-curricular links to help you use Digital Matters across subject areas such as English, computing and PSHE.
- A letter for parents to encourage them to continue the online safety lessons by using the platform at home.
- Offline handouts which can be used to support screen-free teaching time and allow pupils to apply their knowledge on paper.

Educators must [register for free](#) with Digital Matters in order to access these resources. Parents can also access the platform for free, to support their child's learning at home, explore different outcomes and help reinforce the key online safety lessons their child has been learning in school.

## Updates and Resources

### Opportunity to participate in pilot PSHE project with the Kent VRU

The Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) would like to announce a new pilot opportunity for secondary provisions across Kent and Medway to test a different delivery of PHSE. The VRU are looking to fund 30 provisions from all sectors; mainstream, selective, special and faith schools, to take part in this pilot to support the implementation of '[Life Lessons](#)'. This is an enhanced trauma-informed PHSE approach to aid a trauma-responsive whole-school culture, building resilience in young people which also supports positive messages around being an active bystander both inside and outside of the school gates.

The project is fully funded by the VRU and offers relatable age-appropriate materials, lesson plans, additional resources and support to help staff facilitate meaningful discussions and education around relevant and topical issues. The premise of the pilot will be to ensure schools are confident in the PHSE delivery throughout the next academic year which can then support the transition of pupils from year 6 into your existing formal transition programmes for secondary life, enabling robust inputs at an earlier stage in a CYP's schooling which also supports the beginnings of the adolescent brain development. The program includes resources on:

- Critical thinking to make good decisions
- Skills to conduct healthy relationships
- Knowledge of how to support personal safety, mental and physical health
- Understanding Inclusion and Diversion

[Life Lessons](#) is an award-winning video-based platform with full spiral curriculum of lessons for year 7-13 which covers all statutory requirements plus bespoke creation of content which is editable to suit your setting. Teacher CPD is included with live training and bitesize videos to support best practice. For examples of the content are available on [the Life Lessons website](#).

Schools who are keen to develop and enhance their existing PHSE, with an understanding that robust education in SEMH and contextual issues is valued as a key prevention strategy to risks of harm are encouraged to take part in this pilot. If the following attributes below are considered key for your pupils and the school community as a whole, please contact [VRU.Programme.Delivery@kent.police.uk](mailto:VRU.Programme.Delivery@kent.police.uk) with your expression of interest. For those schools interested in taking part in this opportunity, there will be workshops to explain the funding timescales, programme of delivery model training and support on offer.

## KSCMP Child on Child Sexual Abuse Toolkit



This free toolkit has been in existence since January 2022 designed by the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership (KSCMP) and the Education Safeguarding Service. We collaborated with the aim to help schools and colleges assess strengths that can be built upon, as well as weaknesses that should be addressed, to tackle child on child sexual abuse and inappropriate sexual behaviours.

The number of consultations that we receive through where child sexualised behaviour is the issue has increased significantly in the last 18 months. We encourage you to use this audit toolkit so that, as a school, you can be assured you are being as robust and thorough as possible when addressing any issues relating to harmful sexual behaviour and child on child sexual abuse. Feedback from schools that have been inspected by Ofsted, primary and secondary have indicated that it will be something that will be explored on an inspection. The link to this document can be found [here](#).

## Support when children take their own lives

Sadly, there continues to be occasions where young people are taking their own lives and the impact of this on professionals and families cannot be underestimated. The organisation **Amparo** provides intensive practical and emotional support to all individuals (parents, siblings, girlfriend, schoolteachers etc) who have been bereaved. We encourage you to do referrals for all those that can benefit from this service. Attached on this link is a flyer which explains more detail, and anyone can make a referral or self-refer via: [Amparo](#)

KSCMP are in the process of producing a SWAY document entitled - Support and Guidance for Kent Schools after the Suspected Suicide of a Pupil. Once live it can be accessed here. [Safeguarding in Education - Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership \(kscmp.org.uk\)](https://kscmp.org.uk)

## When Girls "Go Country"

Child criminal exploitation through county lines has often focused on young men and boys, however, the Open University Policing blog has published analysis of recent research that revealed young women and girls are beginning to replace young males as the "foot soldiers" of county lines. The [article](#) states "*The relative 'invisibility' of girls and young women allows them to travel largely unnoticed on rail networks across the country, making them ideal targets for drug dealing gangs.*"

When a child or young person returns from being missing, you may be required to participate in return interviews. In partnership with the NWG Network, Missing People has published a new [resource](#) to support professionals involved in the return interview process.

## **Why language matters: why you should avoid labelling allegations as ‘malicious’ – NSPCC Blog**

The NSPCC has recently published a useful [blog post](#), which explores the risks around labelling an allegation as ‘malicious’ before properly assessing the situation. Key points identified in the blog post are:

- Recording allegations as ‘malicious’ impacts the way professionals perceive and respond to concerns
- Allegations of abuse should be fully investigated before a decision is made about their validity.
- The focus of investigations should be on evidence of harm or risk of harm to a child and what is in the child’s best interests.
- By sharing information with other agencies working with the family, it’s possible to identify whether there is a pattern of false allegations, which might require a safeguarding or criminal justice response.

Other useful blog posts for DSLs in the ‘[why language matters](#)’ series are:

- [Domestic abuse is broader than domestic violence](#)
- [How ‘toxic trio’ is unhelpful and inaccurate](#)
- [In need of attention, not ‘attention seeking’](#)
- [Why we should never use ‘child pornography’ and always say child sexual abuse material](#)
- [‘Sexting’ or ‘sharing nudes’?](#)
- [Harmful sexual behaviour: labelling actions, not children](#)



## **Talk Relationships: delivering sex and relationships education training from the NSPCC**

Until the end of July, the NSPCC are offering free access (RRP £25) to their eLearning courses to support people working in secondary education to overcome any challenges they may face when delivering sex and relationships education. There are two courses available, one for teachers which will support staff delivering sex and relationships training and help develop their confidence, and one for school leaders which explores implementing a whole-school approach to sex and relationships education, and how best to support teaching staff. For further information, please visit the [NSPCC website](#).

## Failed and Forgotten - Experiences of Disabled Children

Post-covid, children with disabilities face delays and backlogs to much needed health and social care services. The Disabled Children's Partnership has published a new report, [Failed and Forgotten](#), which reveals the concerning state of affairs for disabled children and their families in England.

Key findings of the research include:

- Only one in three disabled children has the correct level of support from their education setting.
- Only one in five felt their family received the support needed for their child to fulfil their potential.
- Seven out of ten parents said their disabled children's health had deteriorated because of lack of support

## A Longer Read: Disguised Compliance

'Disguised compliance' involves parents and carers appearing to co-operate with professionals to allay concerns and stop professional engagement (Reder et al, 1993). Families can develop skilful strategies to keep professionals at 'arm's length'. Disguised compliance occurs when parents want to draw the professional's attention away from allegations of harm and unsafe parenting with the aim of minimising or avoiding agency interventions in family life.

### What might it look like?

Parents may do the following:

- Focusing on one particular issue to distract from another such as improved school attendance whilst abuse at home (for example in the case of Daniel Pelka).
- A sudden increase in attending appointments, coming to meetings, cleaning the home when professionals challenge more. But it isn't maintained.
- Criticising professionals and blaming them for things not happening again. This can happen when families complain about the social worker to school and vice versa.
- Failure to engage with services where parents promise they will take up services but don't attend appointments due to other problems.
- Avoiding contact with professionals when parents agree to targets in meetings and then avoid further contact with agencies.

### What can you do?

- **Retain that professional curiosity or respectful uncertainty** when they tell you something, you don't disbelieve them, but you will seek out other information from other sources to corroborate what has been said. This is sometimes called triangulation
- **Look at the past patterns** even when there are no apparent concerns being voiced by pupils, school staff should consider historic information and be more curious when exploring presenting issues. This includes thinking contextually using a 'Think Family'



approach. A [Think Family approach](#) refers to the steps taken by professionals to identify wider family needs which extend beyond the individual they are supporting them. Small achievable steps will be easier to build on and will make them feel that problems are not insurmountable. Be direct and clear with the task so it cannot be challenged later down the line.

- **Watch and learn- keep the child in focus** create some opportunities to see parents and their children together. What do you see? What gaps are there? Look to uncover the reality of the child's life in that family; talk to the child (ren). What is it like to be a child living in that household? Feed this back to a parent in an open and honest way.

### What not to do

- **Don't take any deception personally!** It is hard when you think you have a good relationship with a family not to be a little hurt. Think about why a parent may lie, they may fear that telling the truth will lead to you imposing sanctions or actions that will possibly break up their family. As a professional be aware of the power imbalance that may be in play here, disguised non-compliance could be seen as an attempt by parents to cope with the fear of challenging those in a position of power. Your role is to help and work in partnership.
- **Don't ignore social factors in why parents may act a certain way** If some individuals are more vulnerable to experiencing shame through inequalities and other social disadvantages, they are more likely to be labelled as disguised non-compliant than another. This does not imply that individuals living in more affluent areas are incapable of experiencing shame, but these experiences could be more poignant when exacerbated by poverty and deprivation. Parenting does not operate in a bubble and will be impacted by numerous external factors. Whatever the reasons behind their actions they will still need to be challenged but it will help you understand why.
- **Don't help too much!** It can become tempting to plug the gaps where parents are not doing what is expected of them. This will be done with the best intentions in mind to ensure the child doesn't suffer but think carefully about how much you are intervening. When parents are struggling, if a school is intervening significantly it can serve to 'parent' the children on the parents' behalf, potentially obscuring from the wider professional network the extent to which that parenting was being 'propped up' or 'supplemented'. Ask yourself if you took a step back what would happen to that child? Would the care being given by the parent be 'good enough'? If not, then action may need to be considered.

### What else can I do?

- Keep chronologies to establish any patterns of behaviour and engagement.
- Identify clear outcomes in plans which can be used to measure progress and reduce drift.
- Assess parents/carers capacity to change and avoid being over optimistic when initial improvements are made, especially where evidence suggests previous changes were not sustained.

- Never assume and, be wary of assumptions already made.
- Pay as much attention to how people look and behave as to the attention paid to what they are saying.
- Consult with your DSL team about next steps and/or call us at ESS.
- Schools and settings need to ensure that they are proactive in passing on and receiving safeguarding files and that there is a detailed handover for any vulnerable pupils. This is especially important when the child is vulnerable or keeps moving between schools/settings.

#### **Further guidance**

- [3.7 Non-Compliance \(proceduresonline.com\)](https://proceduresonline.com)
- [Learning from case reviews: disguised compliance \(nspcc.org.uk\)](https://nspcc.org.uk)
- [Sue Woolmore talks about disguised compliance and the importance of professional curiosity - Bing video](#)

## Education Safeguarding Service Contacts

<b>Head Office: Room 2.30 Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone ME14 1XQ</b>	
<b>Claire Ray</b> <b>Head of Service</b>	<b>03000 423 169</b>
<b>Rebecca Avery</b> <b>Training and Development Manager</b>	<b>03000 423 168</b>
<b>Robin Brivio</b> <b>Senior Safeguarding Advisor</b>	<b>03000 423 169</b>
<b>Online Safety</b>	<b>03000 423 164</b>
<p><b>For advice on safeguarding issues please call your area office on the numbers listed below.</b></p> <p><b>If a child may be at risk of imminent harm, you should call the Integrated Front Door on 03000 411 111 or the Police on 999</b></p>	
<b>Ashford</b>	<b>03000 423154</b>
<b>Canterbury</b>	<b>03000 423157</b>
<b>Dartford</b>	<b>03000 423149</b>
<b>Dover</b>	<b>03000 423154</b>
<b>Folkestone &amp; Hythe</b>	<b>03000 423154</b>
<b>Gravesham</b>	<b>03000 423149</b>
<b>Maidstone</b>	<b>03000 423158</b>
<b>Sevenoaks</b>	<b>03000 423149</b>
<b>Swale</b>	<b>03000 423157</b>
<b>Thanet</b>	<b>03000 423157</b>
<b>Tonbridge &amp; Malling</b>	<b>03000 423158</b>
<b>Tunbridge Wells</b>	<b>03000 423158</b>

## Other Kent County Council Contacts

**Integrated Front Door: 03000 411 111** (outside office hours **03000 419 191**)

**Early Help Contacts** (district teams) can be found on [www.kelsi.org.uk](http://www.kelsi.org.uk)

**LADO Team contact number: 03000 410 888**

**Email: [kentchildrenslado@kent.gov.uk](mailto:kentchildrenslado@kent.gov.uk)**

**If your call is urgent i.e., a child is in **immediate danger** and you cannot be connected to the team, call the Integrated Front Door on 03000 411 111**

**Kroner House, Eurogate Business Park, Ashford, Kent, TN24 8XU**

### Area Education Officers

**South Kent** – David Adams 03000 412 309

**East Kent** – Marisa White 03000 418 794

**West Kent** – Nick Abrahams 03000 410 058

**North Kent** – Ian Watts 03000 414 302

### Prevent Education Officers

**North/West/ Medway** - Sally Green [sally.green2@kent.gov.uk](mailto:sally.green2@kent.gov.uk) 03000 413 439

**South/East** - Jill Allen [jill.allen@kent.gov.uk](mailto:jill.allen@kent.gov.uk) 03000 413 565