



Cheshire West and Chester  
Safeguarding Children  
Partnership

Covid-19 Newsletter 5:  
Safeguarding Children  
Partnership  
24.4.2020

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As we enter week 6 of lockdown the national and local message remains unchanged in respect of Safeguarding. It is as critical during COVID-19 as it is statutory at other times. This is particularly important as we begin to see a decline in reports about abuse, which we will say more about below. If you are a volunteer or employee and you are not sure how to report concerns about a child, please ask your supervisor or Line Manager. You can also access more information at [REPORT SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS](#).

If you've missed earlier editions of our weekly newsletters you can find copies and content on our website [COVID-19 Guidance for Professionals](#)

## Weekly round-up from the Covid-19 Safeguarding Leads Meeting

Safeguarding Leads from a wide range of statutory and commissioned services continue to meet weekly to share agency updates and test the impact of the Covid-19 Multi-Agency Practice Standards so that we can respond swiftly to any emerging areas of concerns. Here's the key points from this week's meeting:

- **Covid-19 Multi-Agency Practice Standards** – these remain unchanged so everyone should still be working from this version [COVID-19 Multi-Agency Practice Standards 01.04.2020](#)
- **Multi-Agency Safeguarding RAG Rating for Children and Families** – a significant number of services have responded to Covid-19 requirements by developing a Red, Amber, Green (RAG) approach that governs the frequency and form of contact they have with their service users. When it comes to Safeguarding it's important that there is a multi-agency agreed RAG rating in place and this will also enable partners to have discussions about who is the most appropriate practitioner to maintain contact with a child or family during this period. We're aspiring to have a one worker, one child/family approach throughout this pandemic so that we minimise duplication of resource for services that are already stretched and fulfil Public Health guidance to limit contacts where possible. This work is being progressed by group members and an update will be provided next week.

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Contact [SCP@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:SCP@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)

- **Vulnerable Children Accessing School Places** – The group discussed the vulnerable children eligible for a school place but not accessing them. At next week's meeting further information has been sought about the numbers in attendance and assurance that those not attending are maintaining contact with services.

**If you would like the group to explore any other areas of practice that give you concern because of COVID-19 please let us know by contacting [SCP@Cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:SCP@Cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)**

## National Guidance Updates

- [Supporting Vulnerable Children and Young People during the Coronavirus Outbreak](#)  
The Department for Education updated its guidance to Education Settings and Local Authorities on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2020. Eligible children and young people (those open to Children's Social Care; on EHCP Plans or considered vulnerable by their setting) are encouraged to attend their educational setting unless they have underlying health conditions that put them at severe risk and reasons for non-attendance should be followed-up by Settings and the Local Authority. Also relevant is the DfE guidance [Coronavirus: SEND Risk Assessment Guidance](#)
- [Support for victims of Modern-Day Slavery](#) - The Home Office has published updated guidance for professionals which includes signs of abuse, how to report concerns and identifying victims to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM)

## Emerging trends for vulnerable groups

**Reduced contact with iART** – As might be expected given children and young people are not as visible, there has been a significant reduction in contacts to our front door by Professionals and the public. This gives us cause for concern. The SCP are exploring ways to raise awareness with the public about the signs of abuse and how to report concerns.

**Domestic Abuse** – The anticipated rise in domestic abuse cases is not at the levels predicted, although a small increase has been seen over the course of this week. The ability of victims to find an opportunity to seek support is diminished as a result of lockdown so it continues to be important that we promote how and where they can seek help. [Open the Door](#) website contains all the information you need.

**Child Exploitation** – We've seen a significant reduction in the last month of new referrals for children where there are concerns about exploitation. The same is true of children being reported missing. These young people are unlikely to be accessing school settings and as a result are even more vulnerable. We're exploring ways to raise awareness with public and parents about the signs of exploitation and how to report concerns, but below is a reminder and some useful resources.

## Child Exploitation and materials for use

Exploitation in all its forms doesn't stop because the country has gone into lockdown, but restrictions on movement could provide communities and safeguarding services with an opportunity to identify young people who are being exploited if they are seen in places that appear out of context.

**How to report concerns** - You may have noticed that the Child Exploitation Tools you are familiar with have a revised title – 'Contextual Safeguarding'. The tools contain the same information as before but reflect the shift at a Pan Cheshire level and locally to develop a wider safeguarding response to young people who are at risk from sources outside of their homes, i.e. within the contexts that they go about their daily lives.

**Contextual Safeguarding Screening Tool** – Use this tool to report concerns about a child or group of children if you have limited information or do not have the opportunity to do a more detailed assessment with the young person/people.

**Contextual Safeguarding Assessment Tool** - Use this tool to report concerns about a child that you are working with or have a professional relationship that enables you to gather more detailed information.

On completion these tools should be shared with [i-ART@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:i-ART@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)



Listen

**An introduction to definitions of County Lines, Criminal Exploitation and Cuckooing** – now that many of us are used to working with technology and in the absence of our usual training, this is a really great listen if you have a little time to spare. Thanks to Research in Practice and Great Manchester for sharing their work. [Podcast](#)

**Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)** – Devon and Cornwall Police have created a short video and information to enable parents and carers to identify [Online Abuse and Child Sexual Abuse](#)

## Other Useful Resources

- NSPCC Learning has published information to help organisations keep their safeguarding policies and procedures up to date during the coronavirus outbreak [Coronavirus: 5 steps to update your safeguarding policies and procedures](#)

**Stay safe**

**From your Safeguarding Children Partnership Team**

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Contact [SCP@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:SCP@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)