



SAFEGUARDING UPDATE

WITH SANDRA WISEMAN

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Mermaids link removed from DfE Mental Health guidance

The government has removed a reference to the Mermaids advice line from its list of mental health and wellbeing resources. The DfE told Schools Week that they removed the link as a precautionary measure following the ongoing investigation of Mermaids by The Charity Commission.

Multi-agency safeguarding and domestic abuse

NSPCC Learning has published a CASPAR briefing summarising the key findings and learning for improved practice from the Children Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's analysis of case reviews that featured domestic abuse and a literature review of recent research into domestic abuse.

Read:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-safeguarding-and-domestic-abuse-paper>

NSPCC Summary:

https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2022/multi-agency-safeguarding-domestic-abuse-caspar-briefing?utm_source=Adestra&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Multi-agency%20safeguarding%20and%20domestic%20abuse%3A%20CASPAR%20briefing&utm_campaign=20221017_KIS_CASPAR_October17

Early help inspections guidance

Ofsted has published guidance for inspections of multi-agency responses to children and their families needing help in England. The guidance is aimed at inspectors who will carry out joint targeted area inspections (JTAI). **Information is included on:** notifying about inspections; selecting children's cases to audit; and evaluating evidence.

Guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/joint-targeted-area-inspection-of-the-multi-agency-response-to-children-and-families-who-need-help/joint-targeted-area-inspection-of-the-multi-agency-response-to-children-and-families-who-need-help>

Read:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/joint-targeted-area-inspections-to-focus-on-early-help-for-children-and-families>

Polish families and children's services

Community Care has published a blog focusing on how children's services can support Polish families with concerns. It highlights cultural and language barriers that can prevent families and children getting the support they need.

Read:

<https://www.communitycare.co.uk/2022/10/10/how-social-workers-can-better-support-polish-families/>

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) refers to the range of neurodevelopmental problems caused by pre-natal exposure to alcohol. The effects are diverse and impact on the individual throughout their life course. Government guidance document 'Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder: health needs assessment', says that FASD requires alcohol exposure during pregnancy to occur. As the fetus develops in the womb, it is particularly vulnerable when exposed to substances that can affect its development.

As example of the impact, the University of Salford's UK prevalence study [of FASD] found that between two and five percent of babies in Greater Manchester may have FASD meaning between 619 and 1,258 children start life impacted by the disorder. Alcohol can have characteristic impacts on development that persist after birth and throughout life.

Read:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fetal-alcohol-spectrum-disorder-health-needs-assessment/fetal-alcohol-spectrum-disorder-health-needs-assessment>

In September 2021, Sheffield Children Safeguarding Children Partnership hosted a FASD conference. Please find resources below.

Resources:

<https://www.safeguardingsheffieldchildren.org/scsp/campaigns/fasf-fetal-alcohol-spectrum-disorder-awareness>

Forthcoming free safeguarding webinars for Autumn term 2022

Pupil's Mental Health - Tuesday 8th November at 10am

Depression - Tuesday 15th November at 10am

Anxiety - Tuesday 22nd November at 10am

Self-harm and suicidal ideation - Tuesday 29th November at 10am

County lines - Tuesday 6th December at 10am

Knife crime - Tuesday 13th December at 10am

For further information, please contact Jodie Richard.

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Online harm risk factors

Revealing reality has published a report on risk factors that may lead children to harm online. Forty-two children aged between 7 and 17 from the UK, and their caregivers, took part in the research. **Findings include:** children felt it was difficult to disengage from online platforms; the impact of experiencing online harm varied from emotional upset to severe psychological and physical harm; content that children were exposed to online was the most likely to lead to harm; and where safety measures do exist, children are not incentivised to engage with them.

Read:

<https://www.revealingreality.co.uk/2022/10/11/research-into-risk-factors-that-may-lead-children-to-harm-online/>

Protecting children online

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and Ofcom commissioned research into parents' and children's attitudes towards methods used to estimate or establish a user's age to prevent children from accessing harmful or inappropriate material. Eighteen families with children aged from 8-17 from across the UK were involved in the research. **Findings include:** parents and children felt that the most effective age assurance method was 'hard identifiers' like passports; children were able to circumnavigate age assurance methods themselves; and some raised privacy concerns around sharing data with platforms.

Read:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/families-attitudes-towards-age-assurance-research-commissioned-by-the-ico-and-ofcom>

Families and homelessness

Channel 4 has released a new Dispatches episode focusing on families at risk of eviction in England. The documentary looks at the impact of homelessness on children.

Watch:

<https://www.channel4.com/programmes/britains-evicted-kids-dispatches>

Mental health in school

The Anna Freud Centre and Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) have created a toolkit to help **secondary school staff** support students with their mental health. The resource, aimed at schoolteachers and other staff, covers five strategy areas on: building supportive relationships; responding to stress; and preventing bullying, cyberbullying and sexual harassment.

Resource:

<https://www.annafreud.org/schools-and-colleges/resources/classroom-wellbeing-toolkit/>

Prevent Duty: Act Early Stories (LGfL/Counter Terrorism Policing)

LGfL and Counter Terrorism Policing have developed a new educational resource, 'Act Early Stories'. The toolkit is aimed at DSLs, PSHE/RSHE leads and youth leaders in secondary schools and out of school settings.

The activities and lessons aim to raise awareness of exploitation, spark discussion with young people around extremist narratives and promote critical thinking. This new resource hopes to help build staff confidence to promote dialogue to address this difficult subject with young people.

Resource:

<https://national.lgfl.net/digisafe/actearlystories>

Challenging victim blaming language and behaviours when dealing with the online experiences of children and young people (DfE)

Victim blaming is any language or action that implies (whether intentionally or unintentionally) that a person is partially or wholly responsible for abuse that has happened to them. It is harmful and can wrongfully place responsibility, shame or blame onto a victim, making them feel that they are complicit or responsible for the harm they have experienced.

This newly launched guidance helps professionals to understand that children can never be expected to predict, pre-empt or protect themselves from abuse, and irrespective of the content or circumstance, the responsibility always lies with the person who abused the child or young person. The guidance also offers practical steps to help professionals practice and advocate for an anti-victim blaming approach, in a constructive and supportive way.

Guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/challenging-victim-blaming-language-and-behaviours-when-dealing-with-the-online-experiences-of-children-and-young-people>