

# We are leaving winter behind and entering the spring season, with the anticipation of the wonderful spring flowers.

**“Where flowers bloom, so does hope.” – Lady Bird Johnson**

The HSCP and HSAB are refreshing their priorities and plans, to ensure they align with national and local concerns and developments. These will be finalised at the end of March 2025 and published early April 2025.

In early March 2025 the HSCP and HSAB held their Learning & Development Stakeholders event, to review the training needs of partners and to align our training offer with the proposed priorities. It is always useful to hear from our partners to gauge what practitioners need to help them work more confidentially with adults, children and families in Hertfordshire. Additionally, we continue to add to our training programme, looking at themes raised in case reviews and audits.

In Jan/Feb 2025 the HSCP/HSAB held joint Learning Hubs, on the topic of Cultural Competences. These events were very well attended and covered unconscious bias, microaggression, adultification and was attended by GATE Herts who presented on the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Community.

In March to June 2025 the next round of Learning Hubs will be on the topic of Children



Missing Education and will be facilitated by our Independent Scrutineer, Nicky Pace, representatives from the HCC Elective Home Education Team and Jenny Coles, National Panel member. Some of you may remember Jenny was our Children’s Services Executive Director before Jo Fisher and it will be a pleasure that she is joining us for these events. You can book onto the Learning Hubs via this [link](#).

In October 2024 there was a Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) focusing on Domestic Abuse. The Partnership is now busy implementing the findings from this review.

The HSCP have refreshed their [Continuum of Need](#), which can be found on our website. There is also a useful [flowchart](#) for Professional Referrals to Children's Services.

HSAB have undertaken a successful piece of work in respect of raising awareness of cuckooing across the partnership. This concluded with a professionals and public survey in December.

The HSAB have been reviewing partnership work in relation to older people and dementia and domestic abuse. We will report our findings to the Hertfordshire Scrutiny Panel in March 2025. The HSAB have been successfully recruiting staff and have now got the following staff in place:

- **Freya Rymer** HSAB Business Manager
- **Kirsty Stanford** HSAB Senior Business Support Officer
- **Janine Veldman** HSAB Business Support Officer

**Natalie Hammond**

Chair, Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

**Liz Hanlon**

Chair, Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board

## Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive

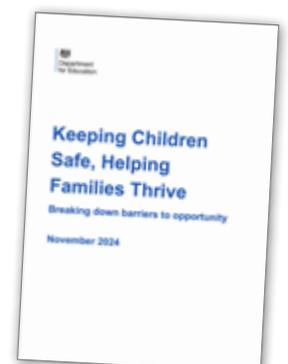
**On 18 November 2024, the Department for Education (DfE) released a policy statement titled "Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive: Breaking Down the Barriers to Opportunity".**

This document outlines the government's strategic vision for overhauling children's social care. It sets out a framework for collaboration between national and local authorities, prioritising a child-centred, whole-system approach.

Among the significant changes introduced are strengthened multi-agency child protection partnerships, heightened regulation of profit-driven care providers and enhanced cooperation between schools, families and other safeguarding entities.

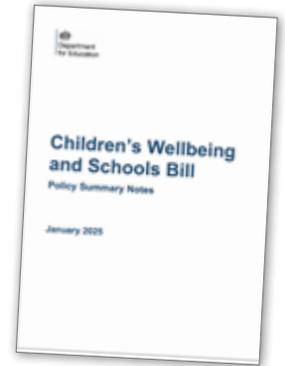
These reforms also aim to shape policies and practices that safeguard children and support families more effectively.

[Keeping children safe, helping families thrive](#)



## The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill was introduced in Parliament on 17 December 2024

The Department for Education (DfE) has published a press release on the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill being debated in Parliament. The press release outlines how the new measures in the Bill will help protect children and young people from exploitation, grooming and abuse.



The Children's Charities Coalition, made up of five charities including the NSPCC, has published a response to the Bill. The response outlines the need for the Bill and welcomes the child protection measures it sets out.

Read the DfE press release: [Children's bill to keep children safe from exploitation](#)

Read the Children's Charities Coalition response:

[CEOs from the Children's Charities Coalition respond to The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill](#)

### What is the purpose of the Bill?

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill is a key step towards delivering the government's Opportunity Mission to break the link between young people's background and their future success. It will put in place a package of support to drive high and rising standards throughout our education and care systems so that every child can achieve and thrive. It will protect children at risk of abuse, stopping vulnerable children falling through cracks in services, and deliver a core guarantee of high standards with space for innovation in every child's education.

### What are the main benefits of the Bill?

The ambitions of the Bill are set out in seven key parts:

- Making a child-centred government
- Driving high and rising standards for every child
- Keeping families together and children safe
- Removing barriers to opportunity in schools
- Supporting children in the care system to thrive
- Creating a safer and higher quality education system for every child
- Cracking down on excessive profit making

[Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill 2024: policy summary - GOV.UK](#)

## **The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel– Protecting children and responding to child sexual abuse within the family environment.**

This report was commissioned by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel to explore the challenges in identifying, assessing and responding to child sexual abuse within the family environment.

It draws on rapid reviews and serious case reviews received by the Panel between 2018 and 2023, one-to-one interviews with children who had been sexually abused by a family member, one-to-one interviews with people who had sexually abused a child, and group discussions with practitioners, senior leaders and people with lived experience of child sexual abuse.

The NSPCC have done a briefing which summarises the findings and recommendations from the report, including:

- **the importance of speaking to and listening to children**
- **the need to understand parents' vulnerabilities and challenges**
- **the need for robust risk assessments**
- **how to effectively respond to concerns of intrafamilial sexual abuse.**

[Download the briefing](#)

**NSPCC**  
**'Learning'**

## **Child sexual abuse and exploitation**

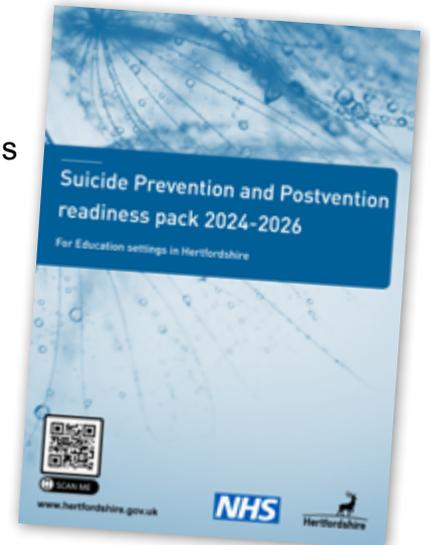
**The Home Office has published a statement made by the Home Secretary to Parliament outlining the Government's commitment to tackling grooming and child sexual abuse.**

The statement discusses recommendations from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) and commits to setting up a victims and survivors panel to help shape new proposals and plans on child sexual abuse and exploitation. It confirms that the Government will act on three key IICSA recommendations: making it an offence to fail to report or to cover up child sexual abuse, with professional and criminal sanctions; legislating to make grooming an aggravating factor in the sentencing of child sexual offences; and making reforms related to the information and evidence gathered on child sexual abuse and exploitation, including a new performance framework for policing. **Read the statement:** [Tackling child sexual abuse](#)

## Suicide Prevention and Postvention Readiness Pack 2024/26 For Education Settings in Hertfordshire

This pack has been developed in partnership with Children and Young People (CYP) Mental Health Services, and system professionals to provide education settings in Hertfordshire with information and resources required to support the wellbeing of any member of the school community, students, and staff in the event of suicide attempts and deaths by suicide.

The pack can be access [here](#)



## Safer Sleeping

### Reducing deaths in infants linked to unsafe sleeping practices

Over the past two years, Hertfordshire's Safeguarding Children's Partnership, along with local health and family services, has been working to reduce unexpected infant deaths during co-sleeping. This collaboration has led to the development of the ['Health in all Policies' \(HiAP\) framework](#), which provides detailed guidance to help reduce these tragic incidents.

There is concern about families dealing with bed poverty. Bed poverty includes broken and damaged beds that a family cannot afford to replace, sharing of beds and rooms, sleeping on the floor, or being unable to wash and dry bedding. All infants under the age of 1 years old should always have their own sleeping environment, even if a parent chooses to co-sleep with the infant.

By integrating safe sleeping messages into work with families, together we can significantly impact parents/carers' choices and help ensure safer sleeping environments for infants.

Some sectors may find it difficult to access Safer Sleeping training with the recommended trainer, Lullaby Trust. As part of the Safer Sleeping Week (10 to 16 March 2025):

- Public Health has funded 300 spaces on the Lullaby Trust Safer Sleeping training.
- This training will be prioritised to frontline health and care professionals
- To receive the link to the training, health and professionals will be invited to complete a 2-hour Stop Smoking Brief Intervention training (multiple dates available between Jan – Mar 2025).

At the time of publication, the Stop Smoking dates may not be available, so please email [Dee.DeBruin1@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Dee.DeBruin1@hertfordshire.gov.uk) to find out, or visit the link below to see if dates are still available. [Smoke free home session registration](#)

Once your attendance at a Smokefree session is confirmed, the links to the Safer Sleep training will be sent out.



### Parenting and relationship support courses

Hertfordshire County Council offer a range of parenting and relationship support courses, webinars and resources from managing anger to feeling safe. All support is free for Hertfordshire residents, to find out more about what is available in your area take a look at the following link:

[Parents and family support | Hertfordshire County Council](#)

## Prevent Awareness Training for Venue Hire Staff.

**HCC Adult's services want to make you aware of a training session aimed at staff who are responsible for taking bookings for venues/ rooms or who regularly book speakers and works alongside the guidance issued within your local area and your own venue hire policy. This includes staff from:**

- Local Authorities
- Town & Parish Councils
- Voluntary / Community Sector organisations
- Educational establishments
- This session is open to staff from across Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk County Council areas. Please note that this is open to the community/voluntary sector but is not open to staff from private companies.



### **The session will cover:**

- **Background** – An overview of CONTEST, The Prevent Duty, requirements for relevant authorities under the 'Reducing Permissive Environments' part of the Duty and why it is important for your organisation.
- **Ask, Check, Decide** – They key principles to follow when hiring your venue / arranging a speaker, questions to ask and the information to gather before making a decision.

### **There are sessions available on**

Friday 25th April      11:00-12:00  
Tuesday 20th May      10:00-11:00.

All sessions are held via MS Teams and calendar invite with the joining link will be sent to you upon registration. You can register onto one of the sessions via our [registration form](#)

## Thematic review re: Homelessness

**This thematic review explored learning from the lived experiences of four men and two women, all of whom experienced periods of homelessness and mental ill-health, alongside domestic abuse, coercive and controlling behaviour, substance misuse, physical ill-health and/or self neglect.**

All six human stories demonstrated the importance of a whole system wraparound response to people experiencing multiple exclusion homelessness.



### Some key learning included:

- Responses to multiple exclusion homelessness have seen the development of a more coordinated response
- Thinking about the impact of trauma, mental health and substance misuse on risk.
- The importance of professional curiosity and developing a psychological approach to practice.
- Challenges remain in bringing services together, especially in cases involving comorbidities.
- There were examples of positive practice in responding to domestic abuse and homelessness but also missed opportunities to discuss and assess safety. The impact of MARAC discussions was unclear and domestic abuse was not consistently referred as an adult safeguarding concern.
- There was some evidence of the use of psychological approaches to practice and professional curiosity but often work took the form of a crisis/reactive response.
- Some positive relationship-based practice occurred that enabled people to disclose their lived experiences, but some work was more episodic and crisis-driven. People's lived experiences alongside their wishes and desired outcomes were not always well-known. There were some persistent efforts to improve people's wellbeing, but repetitive patterns were not always explored.

See [sar-homelessness-7min-briefing.pdf](#)



**Save the Date for the HSAB Homelessness Workshop – 17th June 2025**

## Complex case guidance

We want to remind practitioners of the [HSAB Multi-disciplinary guidance for complex cases 2020](#). This is a guide for practitioners working with adults and outlines the importance of adopting a multi-disciplinary approach to practice, particularly when working with people with complex needs or circumstances.

The term “complex cases” can capture many life stories including multiple health conditions or care needs and often a combination of both. It can also involve criminal activity where adults at risk are targeted and exploited, often in an organised manner. People with complex needs or circumstances can be at increased risk of abuse or neglect necessitating support from a number of different professionals and agencies.

The policy is not intended to give an exhaustive list of scenarios of complex cases but provides guidance for practitioners on processes and tools available for effective case management where complexity and adversity of needs or circumstances may require a cohesive, multi-departmental and multi-agency approach.

It reminds practitioners that any agency concerned about an individual has the responsibility to call multi-agency meeting to discuss ways to progress the case.

HSAB is to undertake some focussed work on this area within 2025/26.



**If you have any queries on any items in this newsletter please contact a member of the Business Unit Staff**

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