

DSL newsletter w/e 9.10.2026

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[Safeguarding Bedfordshire Training](#)

[DSL Forum- safeguarding cluster session](#)

We look forward to seeing you at the DSL Forum on Tuesday 29th Sept. Lucy (CBSCP Business Manager) and Sophie (Safeguarding Bedfordshire Training Manager) will share partnership updates, and seek your views around the new mobile phone guidance for schools, and the incoming 'social media ban' for under 16's. To support this discussion, we have a [survey](#) for you to complete- if you cannot complete this ahead of the meeting, there will be an opportunity to share your views during the session, and the survey will stay open until Monday 12th October.

[Safeguarding Bedfordshire Training](#)

[Safeguarding Bedfordshire](#) is the multi-agency training provider for the Safeguarding Children Partnerships (SCP) in Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton. Training is aimed at those working or volunteering with children and young people across Bedfordshire. Our multi-agency approach ensures a shared understanding of the priorities held by each of the SCP's and promotes partnership working to safeguard children and young people with the ambition that they will lead safe, happy and healthy lives, with opportunities to learn, develop and fulfil their potential. [CLICK HERE](#) to sign up for an account, log in and view full course details and book your place. **[Costs, Terms & Conditions apply. Please ensure you read the T&C's and gain your manager/ budget holders agreement before making a booking. NOTE: Costs, where stated, apply to all agencies.](#)**

[Click here](#) for our full training programme

[Click here](#) for the DSL Training pathway.

FOR NEW DSL's/ DEPUTIES: [Designated Safeguarding Leads- Managing Your Roles & Responsibilities](#) (0930-1530) £75.00

- Fri 27th November (Priory House, Shefford)

- Thurs 4th February (Priory House, Shefford)
- Thurs 18th March (Priory House, Shefford)

FOR EXPERIENCED DSL's/ DEPUTIES: Designated Safeguarding Leads- Update/ Refresh (0930-1300) £37.50

- Tues 19th January (Priory House, Shefford)
- Thurs 4th March (Priory House, Shefford)

Working Together to Safeguard Children (0930-1600) £75.00 *Funded places may be available, subject to job role, for BBC, CBC, LBC, Bedfordshire Police or relevant Health agency. (Late cancellation/ non-attendance is still charged at £75.00)*

- Tues 1st December (Priory House, Shefford)
- Weds 9th December (Priory House, Shefford)
- Thurs 14th January (Priory House, Shefford)

NEW free safeguarding webinars

NSPCC Online Safety: Strengthening Safeguarding Practice in 2026 (1300-1400)

- Tues 13th October (TEAMS)

Audits, Rapid Reviews & Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (1000-1130)

- Weds 21st October (TEAMS)

Supporting Children & Young People who Smoke or Vape (1330-1430)

- Mon 25th January

London Safeguarding Children Partnership Training Sessions

Please note that these are not Safeguarding Bedfordshire courses.

Com Groups 04-Nov-26

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/com-groups-tickets-2002328674968>

Child sexual abuse material (CSAM) 01-Dec-26

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/child-sexual-abuse-material-csam-tickets-2002336287738>

Incels - A deep dive into extreme misogyny 09-Dec-26

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/incels-a-deep-dive-into-extreme-misogyny-tickets-2002339201453>

Manosphere and misogyny 17-Dec-26

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/manosphere-and-misogyny-tickets-2002340888499>

VEPP - Inclusion in Bedfordshire: What's Next? conference

We are pleased to share details of the upcoming Inclusion in Bedfordshire: What's Next? conference.

Inclusion in Action is Bedfordshire's first inclusion conference, bringing together school leaders, inclusion practitioners, safeguarding professionals, and local partners to explore how we can reduce exclusions and improve outcomes for children and young people across Bedfordshire.

Taking place on 17 November 2026 at The Rufus Centre, the event will bring together school leaders, Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs), inclusion practitioners, local authority colleagues, researchers and national experts to explore what effective inclusion should look like across Bedfordshire. With increasing expectations around inclusion, SEND, behaviour and attendance, the conference will provide an opportunity to hear about the latest research, share best practice and discuss practical approaches to reducing exclusions and improving outcomes for children and young people.

To support attendance, the event has been divided into two half-day conferences, allowing delegates to choose the session that best suits their availability.

The conference will feature:

- Findings from Bedfordshire's PRU research conducted by the Institute for Public Safety, Crime and Justice (IPSCJ)
- National expertise from Youth Endowment Fund RISE advisers
- Discussions on what effective inclusion looks like in practice
- Lived experiences shared by VEPP's Power Youth Action Ambassadors

Further details can be found below, with the booking link included below. We would encourage colleagues with responsibilities for inclusion, safeguarding, behaviour, attendance or SEND to consider attending and to share this opportunity with relevant members of staff within their organisation.

Please note that any questions relating directly to the event, booking arrangements, or conference content should be directed to VEPP. Register Below:

[Inclusion in Action Tickets, Tuesday, November 17 • 9 AM - 4:15 PM | Eventbrite](#)

HerSpace Bedfordshire Network Event 2026

Do you work in a role that supports women in Bedfordshire?

Whether you're in policing, health, social care, housing, probation, education, the voluntary sector, or another frontline service, the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire is inviting you to attend the **HerSpace Bedfordshire Network Event 2026**.

This event is an opportunity to learn more about the organisations, community groups and support services available to women across Bedfordshire, helping you make informed referrals, build local connections, and better support the women you work with.

By attending, you will:

- Learn about the wide range of support available for women across Bedfordshire.
- Meet local organisations and community groups.
- Build relationships
- Understand and strengthen referral pathways.
- Gain knowledge that can support you in your role and improve outcomes for women.

If you want to better understand the help available locally, we'd love you to join us.

📅 14 October 2026 | 9:30am - 1:00pm

📖 Book your free place here:

[HerSpace Bedfordshire Network Event 2026](#)

Please share with colleagues and partners who support women across Bedfordshire. Equally, if you know a community organisation that supports women and would like to showcase their services, please contact: PCC@beds.police.uk

Brook Professional training sessions

Upcoming professional training sessions being delivered by Brook Central Bedfordshire free for anyone working with young people in Central Beds.

We have a range of sessions coming up, covering trauma-informed practice, masculinity and misogyny, inclusion and RSE. They are designed for professionals working with children and young people and focus on practical approaches that can be used in day-to-day work.

Adopting a Trauma-Informed Approach

Thursday 15 October, 1:00pm

Monday 23 November, 9:30am

Gain a better understanding of the impact of trauma and explore practical ways to create safer, more supportive environments for young people.

Understanding Masculinity & Tackling Misogyny

Friday 23 October, 9:30am

Friday 20 November, 9:30am

Monday 21 December, 10:00am

Explore how gender norms can influence attitudes and behaviours and develop practical tools to support healthy relationships and positive cultures.

Fostering Inclusive Environments with Young People

Thursday 29 October, 10:00am

Develop practical strategies to help create spaces where all young people feel welcomed, valued and supported.

Managing Difficult Questions Around RSE

Monday 30 November, 3:00pm

Build confidence in responding to challenging questions and conversations around Relationships and Sex Education.

Reserve your place

You can view the full programme and book your place through our Eventbrite page:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/brook-central-bedfordshire-4586403>

If the above link doesn't work, you can also sign up using this online form
<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/6gKj8zE38H>

Places are limited, so please do book early if there's a session you'd like to attend.

Eastern Region Black History Month 2026 Programme

As part of the Eastern Region's ongoing commitment to anti-racist practice, we are pleased to be delivering a series of Black History Month events throughout October under the theme "**Honouring Our Communities.**" This programme celebrates the people, stories and contributions that have shaped our shared history and continue to influence our communities today. The events are designed to encourage learning, reflection and meaningful discussion around identity, heritage, belonging, social justice and anti-racist practice.

The Eastern Region remains united in its commitment to developing and embedding anti-racist practice across all 11 local authorities, with a shared vision of creating a region where equity, justice and accountability are at the heart of everything we do. The Regional Anti-Racist Leadership Forum plays a vital role in maintaining momentum and driving this work across the region.

We would be grateful if you could share the attached programme and booking links widely across your networks, including children's services colleagues, partners, voluntary and community sector organisations that you work with who may benefit from attending.

14 October | 14:00

Reclaiming the Richness of Black History

Speaker **King Simpson** [Book tickets](#) Black history is often taught through a narrow lens centred on slavery and colonialism. This thought-provoking session explores the rich histories, societies and achievements that came before and examines how these narratives continue to shape perceptions of Black identity today.

The session will consider how Black children and young people are understood and supported within care and professional settings and how professionals can develop more informed and equitable approaches to practice.

22 October | 13:00

We Built, We Served, We Changed: Black Achievement, Community and Social Work

Speaker **Ray Addai** [Book tickets](#) Moving beyond familiar historical figures, this session highlights the achievements of Black professionals, pioneers and communities and explores what their stories can teach us about identity, resilience, belonging and anti-racist social work practice.

Participants can expect thought-provoking discussion, critical reflection and opportunities to challenge how we understand and support the children and families we work with.

28 October | 13:00

From Tilbury to the Nature Island: Honouring the Communities That Made Us

Speaker **Dr Sylvia B Smith FHEA** [Book tickets](#) Through a blend of social history and personal storytelling, Sylvia reflects on the communities, experiences and heritage that have shaped identity and belonging.

Dedicated to her late mother, this powerful presentation celebrates the contributions of Black communities and supports the region's commitment to anti-racist practice. Each session offers a valuable opportunity to explore Black history beyond traditional narratives, deepen understanding of identity and belonging, and consider how we can strengthen anti-racist practice in our work with children, young people, families and communities.

We would also encourage colleagues to explore the Eastern Region Anti-Racist Practice resources and pledge, which can be found [here](#) and to follow the LinkedIn page for updates <https://www.linkedin.com/company/94275997/Improvement East Anti-Racist Practice>

To stay up to date with future events, blogs, resources and regional workforce development opportunities, please follow the Workforce East LinkedIn page: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/workforce-east>

Thank you for your continued support we hope you and your colleagues will be able to join us throughout October.

Community Safety

Community Safety Officers have planned a series of drop-in sessions for the public next month, see attached posters.

The details are as follows:

Please come along to a drop-in session at Saxon Pool and Leisure Centre in Biggleswade on Tuesday 3 November to talk about your community safety concerns. Our officer will be there between 1.30 and 2.30pm. No appointment is needed and everyone is welcome.

Please come along to a drop-in session at Biggleswade Library on Tuesday 3 November to talk about your community safety concerns. Our officer will be there between 3.30 and 4.30pm. No appointment is needed and everyone is welcome.

Please come along to a drop-in session at Sandy Library on Tuesday 10 November to talk about your community safety concerns. Our officer will be there between 3.30 and 4.30pm. No appointment is needed and everyone is welcome.

Please come along to a drop-in session at Shefford Library on Tuesday 10 November to talk about your community safety concerns. Our officer will be there between 1.30 and 2.30pm. No appointment is needed and everyone is welcome.

Please come along to a drop-in session at Shefford Town Council Chambers to talk about your community safety concerns. Our Community Safety Officer will be there between 9.30 and noon on

Wednesday 4 November. At the drop-in session, everyone is welcome to come along informally and meet our officer for advice and information.

Please come along to a drop-in session at Arlesey Library to talk about your community safety concerns. Our Community Safety Officer will be there between 13.00 and 14.00 on Tuesday 17 November. At the drop-in session, everyone is welcome to come along informally and meet our officer for advice and information.

Please come along to a drop-in session at Stotfold Library to talk about your community safety concerns. Our Community Safety Officer will be there between 11.00 and noon on Tuesday 17 November. At the drop-in session, everyone is welcome to come along informally and meet our officer for advice and information.

Andrew Hall

Online sexual abuse webinars - Marie Collins Foundation

The Marie Collins Foundation's ACCESS webinar programme helps people understand technology-assisted child sexual abuse (TACSA). It is told through the voices of victims and survivors. There are nine free webinars, organised into three series.

The first series, The New Reality of Online Harm, is for professionals and is available to watch now. It covers what TACSA is, how AI is being used to sexually abuse children, and Com groups. These groups are one of the fastest-growing online threats to children. Many DSLs will not have heard of them yet.

Recordings of the other two series, for parents and carers and for survivors, are due to follow.

<https://www.mariecollinsfoundation.org.uk/What-We-Do/Events/Access-Webinar-Series>

NEW COURSE Safeguarding for Governors and Trustees (On-demand)

Governors are accountable for safeguarding in schools. This two-hour on-demand course shows them what the governing body is responsible for, the questions to ask, and how to test whether safeguarding is effective rather than simply compliant.

This recently updated course covers the parts of KCSIE 2026 governors need to read, recognising abuse, online safety and AI, and the lessons from the Neil Foden case. Governors register with their own email address, watch when it suits them, and receives their own certificate. A useful, downloadable reference guide is included.

£59 + VAT per person, or included in Safeguarding Pro.

To book, go to: safeguardingschools.co.uk/governors

This course is included in Safeguarding.Pro. If you are not already a member, go to joinsafeguarding.pro

Teenage Steroid Abuse Resources - You and Your Hormones

Staff in secondary schools may hear pupils talk about whether someone is "natty" or "not natty". It means natural, or using steroids. Online content about [looksmaxxing](#) and bodybuilding often presents steroid use as normal, and some of it reaches children.

The risks are greater for teenagers. Their bodies are still developing. Products bought online can be fake, the wrong strength or contaminated. Doctors report that misuse often starts in adolescence.

The Society for Endocrinology has published four free videos for secondary schools on its *You and Your Hormones* website. Developed by a team of UK doctors, the videos explain what anabolic steroids are and how they mimic testosterone. They also cover side effects and the risks of misuse. They are designed for PSHE lessons.

<https://www.yourhormones.info/explore/resources/school-resources-on-anabolic-steroid-misuse/>

Question of the Week

Question

When people talk about cuckooing as "taking over the house", does the person who lives there still live there?

Answer

Usually, yes. That is what makes cuckooing so hard to spot.

Cuckooing is when criminals take control of someone's home and use it for crime. This includes drug dealing, sexual offences and offences involving weapons. The resident normally stays in the house. They may be pushed into one room. They may live alongside people they are frightened of. Some are made to leave for periods, but it is still their home. The criminals do not even need to move in. It is enough to be using a home as a drop-off point for parcels of drugs, cash or weapons.

It often starts with friendship. The criminals offer company, shopping, money, alcohol or drugs. Once they are inside, the "friendship" turns into control. The Home Office says victims are often targeted because they are vulnerable, for example because of "disability, drug or alcohol dependency, age or social isolation".

KCSIE lists being found in a "trap house" or "cuckooing" property as a possible sign of county lines involvement. The home being taken over could also be a pupil's own home, a vulnerable parent's flat, or a grandparent's house. Signs might include new "friends" of a parent or lots of visitors or unexplained parcels. A child may no longer want to go home, or may say they are sleeping somewhere different.

The Crime and Policing Act 2026 creates a new offence of cuckooing, although it has not yet come into force. The Act defines a person's home as anywhere they live, including when it is shared with others. It does not have to be owned or rented by them. That means a family home is also the child's home. The Act says a person under 18 cannot consent to their home being used in this way, so a criminal cannot say that the child gave permission.

Anyone can report concerns about cuckooing anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or at <https://crimestoppers-uk.org>.

More information: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/crime-and-policing-act-2026-factsheets/crime-and-policing-act-2026-child-criminal-exploitation-cuckooing-home-takeover-and-internal-concealment-factsheet>

Leeds University's School of Law has produced a professional toolkit:

<https://essl.leeds.ac.uk/downloads/download/250/preventing-and-disrupting-cuckooing-victimisation-professional-toolkit>

Anonymous Reporting Tools

We tell children to speak to a trusted adult. Some might not. They may worry that other pupils will find out. They could worry about making things worse, or not being believed. Whilst anonymous reporting will not fix this on its own, it can remove one barrier.

SWGfL's Whisper tool lets pupils report a concern through a secure website without giving their name. The report goes to the school's safeguarding team. The team can reply through encrypted live chat or two-way text messages, so the conversation can carry on without the child being identified. Pupils can report from school or from home.

Before implementing tools like these, we need to think about the practical side. An anonymous report still needs a response. Who will check it? How quickly? What happens in the holidays? Anonymity also limits what you can do. You cannot refer a child you cannot identify. That is a reason to plan for it, not a reason to avoid it.

SWGfL's Whisper tool:

<https://swgfl.org.uk/products/whisper/what-is-anonymous-reporting/>

Other products include:

<https://tootoot.co.uk/>

<https://thesharpsystem.com/>

Record Keeping: Ombudsman Findings

A recent Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman decision shows the importance of accurate recording and, in particular, how much a single word can matter.

In this case, a GP referred a young child to a London council after the child was found to have lesions in a private area. The council's note of the GP's phone call recorded that this was unusual at the child's age and "could" happen through sexual activity. The written referral said there was a risk of sexual abuse and that the child needed to see a specialist to rule it out. Three days later, the council recorded that the lesions "were" a sexually transmitted infection. That wording was carried into the strategy meeting, the assessment and the reports shared with other professionals.

The private doctors who saw the child raised no concerns, and a dermatologist suggested a common viral infection. At the child protection conference, most professionals said the threshold for a plan was not met. The case ended as child in need and was later closed.

However, the Ombudsman did find fault. Whilst accepting that children's services would still have needed to look into the concern, it said the inaccurate record caused the family distress and uncertainty, and left them asking whether they had needed to go through the process at all.

The council was told to apologise to the father, who had made the complaint, pay him £500, and write to every professional who had received the incorrect reports. It was also told to put in place a plan for checking that assessments accurately reflect the concerns raised.

Some things to think about:

Exact words Do staff record what a child or adult actually said, in their words, rather than their interpretation of it?

Fact and opinion Is it clear in your records what is known, what has been reported, and what is someone's view? "Could", "might" and "suggested" matter.

Summaries and referrals When you pull a concern into a chronology, a referral or a report for a meeting, check it against the original. Errors are easiest to make when information is copied from one document to another.

Correcting mistakes If you find an error, do you correct it, record that you have, and tell anyone you shared it with?

Something to think about: if someone read your records with no other information, would they get an accurate picture of what was known, and when?

Available Courses

Advanced Safeguarding for Designated Safeguarding Leads

"I just wanted to say that I thought today's training was absolutely fantastic. By a mile it was the most engaging training I have done."

Next live online Advanced Safeguarding Course:

[Book Online](#)

The on-demand version is available year-round and is regularly updated [Book Online](#)

DSL Forum- safeguarding cluster session

We look forward to seeing you at the DSL Forum on Tuesday 29th Sept. Lucy (CBSCP Business Manager) and Sophie (Safeguarding Bedfordshire Training Manager) will share partnership updates, and seek your views around the new mobile phone guidance for schools, and the incoming 'social media ban' for under 16's. To support this discussion, we have a [survey](#) for you to complete- if you cannot complete this ahead of the meeting, there will be an opportunity to share your views during the session, and the survey will stay open until Monday 12th October.

DSL Forum 2026-2027 Dates

The Education Safeguarding Team will be hosting a series of Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Forums throughout the academic year. These forums are designed to provide DSLs with up-to-date safeguarding information, professional support, and training relevant to education settings.

Each forum will feature a range of guest speakers from both internal and external agencies, offering valuable insight into current safeguarding issues and developments. There will also be opportunities to ask questions, share experiences, and discuss safeguarding practice with colleagues and professionals.

You do not have to commit to all dates, please book onto the dates that you are able to attend. A different agenda and range of topics will be offered each term.

Tuesday 29th September 2026 1.00pm – 3.00pm

Thursday 3rd December 2026 1.00pm – 3.00pm - In Person at Priory House

Thursday 21st January 2027 1.00pm – 3.00pm

Tuesday 16th March 2027 10.00am – 12.00pm

Thursday 20th May 2027 1.00pm – 3.00pm

Thursday 24th June 2027 10.00am – 12.00pm

The forum can be accessed through the Learning Central Learning Management System (LMS), which you can access through the Learning Central Webpage; www.mylearningcentral.co.uk. Once on the webpage, please select 'Log in/register to access learning offer.' This will then take you to the log in page. If you do not yet have an account on our Learning Management System (LMS), then you can register for one on the log in page.

Contacts

Education Safeguarding Team

Safeguarding.education@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk



Safeguarding Bedfordshire

Safeguarding.bedfordshire@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Learning Central

Learningcentral@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Early Help

Earlyhelp@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Email address only to be used for Community Early Help Assessments and Delivery Plans.

All other communications should be sent to IFD IFD@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Local Community Partners

Your community Partners are available for any queries regarding Community Early Help and can support you with the Community Early Help Process, including attending meetings and providing information and advice on services to families.

Community Partner Details

Dunstable & Houghton Regis

Victoria Gough (Tuesday-Friday)

0300 300 8602

victoria.gough@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Mid Beds & Leighton Buzzard

Amy Staton (Monday – Wednesday) & Amanda McDonald (Wednesday – Friday)

Amy - 0300 300 6270

Amanda - 0300 300 4147

amy.staton@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

amanda.mcdonald@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Ivel Valley

Natalie Good

0300 300 4513

natalie.good@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Domestic Abuse Support

bdap@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

or visit the BDAP website to view all support services available.

[Get Help | Bedfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership](#)

Bedfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership

Domestic abuse is an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and violent behaviour, including sexual violence, by a partner, ex-partner, a family member, or carer.

Bedfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership (BDAP) is a partnership of statutory and voluntary organisations who work with those experiencing/who have experienced domestic abuse across Bedfordshire. Many of our partners can work with people directly, offering advice and support programmes.

Please see the link below to BDAP website where you can search for all the different types of organisations that support.

Get Help | Bedfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership

BDAP also have a Support Service Directory – Our most up to date version is here on the BDAP website.

Bedfordshire-Domestic-Abuse-Support-Service-Directory-Updated-April-2026.pdf

If you require further information of local support services, you can also contact us by email BDAP@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk or reach out to national services below.

The BDAP Email Inbox is operational within normal business hours.

- Female victims: National Domestic Abuse Helpline on 0808 2000 247 <https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/>
- Male victims: Men's Advice Line on 0808 8010 327 <https://mensadviceline.org.uk/>
ManKind Initiative on 01823 334244 <https://mankind.org.uk/>
- LGBTQ+ victims: GALOP on 0800 999 5428 <https://www.galop.org.uk/>
- Mental health support is available from Samaritans on 116 123 <https://www.samaritans.org/>

Bedfordshire-Domestic-Abuse-Support-Service-Directory-Updated-April-2026.pdf

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