

Learning and Development Strategy 2023-2025

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# Introduction

The Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) is committed to ensuring that everyone working with children, young people and their families in the county, as either paid staff or volunteers, are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities, and have the appropriate skills and knowledge to fulfil them to a good standard. This in turn will promote good outcomes for children and families.

The purpose of this Learning and Development Strategy is to provide a framework for child safeguarding learning and development in the county. It sets out the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of those who support, engage and work with children and their families, and identifies the priority areas for the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and how these will be addressed through the learning and development programme.

The HSCP Learning and Development Strategy is underpinned by national, regional and local policies, protocols, research and practice, and is aligned to the HSCP Strategic Plan. The implementation, function and success of the strategy is dependent on multi-agency ownership, commitment, engagement, and support. This is a dynamic and flexible working document, influenced by changes to legislation, local, regional and national policy.

# HSCP Learning and Development Vision

Through providing multi-agency learning and development opportunities, the HSCP aims to create a multi-agency professional environment in Herefordshire, where:

**All professionals, paid or volunteer, working with or in contact with children, young people and their families, are competent and confident in carrying out their safeguarding responsibilities. Professionals will deliver quality, child-focussed and evidence-based interventions, and make a difference to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families.**

The HSCP learning and development programme will support professionals and volunteers to have the skills to enable them to identify abuse and/or neglect, know how to report concerns, contribute to child protection/child in need planning processes, and work with families with multiple and complex needs. It is anticipated that this will improve outcomes for children and young people and promote early identification and effective intervention, resulting the right help at the right time.

# Strategic Priorities 2023-25

In this 2-year period, the Strategic Priorities for learning and development, identified by the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership’s Safeguarding Partners are:

1. **Child Neglect**
2. **Child Exploitation / Contextual Safeguarding**
3. **Trauma-Informed Practice**

These priorities will adapt in the 2-year period, if required, depending on need and priorities identified in the HSCP Strategic Plan.

The HSCP will seek to improve practitioner’s competency in understanding, identifying and addressing child neglect and child exploitation, and to strengthen practitioners’ understanding of trauma, the effect that it has on people, and how to support children and families in a trauma-informed way.

The HSCP learning and development programme will address these priorities through the introduction of new courses, tools, and resources, which will be developed, implemented and evaluated for effectiveness by the Development and Practice Sub-Group. Training and development in these priority areas are offered in addition to the core multi-agency safeguarding courses.

# 4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Expectations of organisations – assurance of staff competencies

Legislation[[1]](#footnote-1) places duties on a range of organisations and individuals (Working Together; 2018) to ensure that their function, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. See **Appendix 1** for a guide to staff training requirements.

“Staff should be given a mandatory induction, which includes familiarisation with child protection responsibilities and the procedures to be followed if anyone has any concerns about a child’s safety or welfare” (Working Together, 2018)

With regards to training the duty is placed upon them to:

* Ensure staff are competent to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and creating an environment where staff feel able to raise concerns and feel supported in their safeguarding role.
* Provide a mandatory induction, which includes familiarisation with child protection responsibilities and procedures to be followed if anyone has any concerns about a child's safety or welfare.
* Provide practitioners with regular reviews of their practice, to ensure they have knowledge, skills and expertise that improve over time.

It is expected that organisations will:

* Identify training required for each role within their organisation.
* Develop a training pathway specific to their organisation and the needs of the workforce.
* Be able to provide assurance to the HSCP on the effectiveness of training.
* Keep accurate records of training attended by staff. Agencies that fall under the Section 11 (Children Act 2004) duty will be required to report their training records.

In addition, organisations should:

**Evidence impact:** Good practice includes being able to evidence that the training and learning development improves outcomes for children and families.

**Reflective supervision:** Organisations should provide opportunities for staff to reflect on their practice, their assumptions and unconscious bias, and how they apply professional curiosity in their work. This may be achieved, for example, through good quality supervision, reflective practice tools, group supervision or team discussions.

**Commissioning services:** Organisations are responsible for ensuring that any services they commission have provided/accessed safeguarding training, appropriate to role, for all their staff. This should be built into contracts and service level agreements so that it is clear what is expected of the service that is commissioned.

**Child Safeguarding Inductions**

HSCP partner agencies should provide safeguarding children induction training for their staff that includes the following:

* How to recognise child abuse and neglect
* How to respond to concerns
* Roles and responsibilities of the individual and of the agency
* Roles and responsibilities of other professionals and their agencies
* Familiarisation with child protection policies and procedures (in house, local, regional/national), including the awareness of their safeguarding designated lead.
* Multi-agency local, regional and national policies and procedures – <https://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk>
* Awareness of the HSCP website and Partnership Bulletin – [https://www.herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk](https://www.herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk/)
* Awareness of the HSCP Training Programme – [www.herefordshirecpd.co.uk](http://www.herefordshirecpd.co.uk)

4.2 Expectations of Staff – maintain competence and reflect on practice

Staff (paid or volunteer) should ensure that following training they implement the knowledge that they have gained and:

* Attend training relevant to their role and responsibilities.
* Reflect on their practice and make any necessary changes, considering the findings from learning activities such as audits, case reviews, service user feedback, compliments, complaints and reflective supervision.
* Recognise their own training development needs and discuss these with their line manager.

In addition, individuals should:

* Keep their learning up to date between training events via continuing professional development.
* Alert their line manager to any barriers to accessing training.
* Keep a record of their safeguarding training and any certificates received.

# Identification of training needs

A range of sources are used by the HSCP to identify multi-agency learning and development needs, including:

* findings from case reviews (rapid reviews and child safeguarding practice reviews, both local and national)
* findings from audits (multi-and-single-agency)
* findings of inspections
* emerging research and themes
* child death reviews
* training needs analysis
* feedback from training evaluations
* service user feedback
* self-assessment
* HSCP Strategic Priorities

Training needs that are identified by other HSCP Sub-Groups – for example Joint Case Review Group (case reviews), Quality and Effectiveness Group (case auditing, performance data), MASH Group – should be communicated to the Chair of the Development and Practice Group, who will work with Development and Practice Group members to plan the learning and development response.

# Learning methods and communication

The following learning methods will be used regularly:

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| **Learning Method/Tool** | **Description** |
| **Multi-agency training courses** | Professionals from a wide range of agencies are invited to attend these courses together. These courses may be organised by the HSCP, or by single agencies that offer their courses out to other organisations. |
| **Single-agency training courses** | As above (multi-agency training courses), however these courses are organised and delivered by a specific organisation, and only offered to professionals from that organisation. The HSCP may seek assurance that learning has been disseminated through this method. |
| **Live learning briefings** | Short verbal briefings (approx. 1 – 2 hour), normally online, arranged as needed to disseminate learning on a specific topic, for e.g. to share findings a recently published local or national case review. |
| **Recorded Webinars** | Webinars may be recorded and published online, so that they are available to be viewed by professionals at any time. |
| **“7-minute” learning briefings** | Written briefings in “7-minute learning,” one page format, to capture key points on a specific theme, for example, “professional curiosity,” or a summary of a case review. |
| **Practitioner Forums** | Practitioner Forums are events for front line professionals/volunteers and their managers. The Forums help to keep staff up to date on emerging safeguarding issues, good practice and updates from the HSCP, Safeguarding Adults Board, and Community Safety Partnership. Three Practitioner Forums will be organised per year. |
| **HSCP Leadership Summit** | The Summit is led by the Safeguarding Partners and is a forum to engage with those in senior leadership positions across the partnership. The Summit is a hosted twice a year – in the spring and in the autumn. |
| **Bespoke Conferences / Events** | Bespoke conferences and events may be organised to offer a more detailed focus on a specific theme (for e.g. child exploitation). |

In addition to the learning methods described above, the fortnightly Partnership Bulletin, Partnership Website, and HSCP YouTube channel, are used as communication channels to disseminate information and host learning resources. Partner agencies are also expected to facilitate dissemination of learning to their staff through their internal communication channels.

# Multi-agency Training Provision

7.1 HSCP Training Programme

With the contribution and support of partner agencies, the HSCP will offer a core set of multi-agency child safeguarding courses, as well as training and development opportunities in priority areas. HSCP learning and development opportunities should support, and are in addition to, those offered by single agencies. These courses are intended to enable professionals from a wide range of organisations to access relevant and good quality child safeguarding training. The content of courses will be regularly reviewed to ensure it reflects the most up to date policies, procedures, and learning from case reviews.

All courses are free of charge, with the exception of specialised commissioned externally purchased training where the training may be provided at a charge to cover the cost. This fee policy is intended to remove financial barriers for attending safeguarding training, and ensures courses are inclusive, including for volunteers.

The learning offer will be reviewed annually, in response to new training needs. See **Appendix 2** for the learning offer 2023/24.

7.2 Contribution of HSCP Relevant Agencies

For this learning and development strategy to be delivered successfully, HSCP relevant agencies[[2]](#footnote-2) are required to positively engage with the learning and development activities and support the objectives. In addition to delivering the single-agency organisational requirements, HSCP relevant agencies should:

* provide support and commitment to developing and reviewing course materials and other learning resources, to ensure that courses and learning resources are relevant to a wide range of multi-agency professionals, reflect latest legislation, policies, procedures, and learning from case reviews,
* provide child safeguarding trainers who have appropriate child safeguarding knowledge and specialist subject expertise, to join the multi-agency trainer pools for HSCP core courses, and present at learning events such as Practitioner Forums,
* participate in quality assurance of HSCP training courses and other learning resources and events,
* participate in reviews of impact and effectiveness of child safeguarding training, helping to identifying gaps and propose learning/development solutions.

7.3 Learning Management System (PHEW)

HSCP has procured a learning management system (PHEW LMS) to facilitate bookings and the administration of multi-agency training and events. The LMS also enables reporting of course attendance and facilitates the distribution of course evaluations, materials and certificates.

The Partnership Team is responsible for day to day administration of the LMS. Procurement costs of the LMS are paid through the partnership budget, with contributions from the three statutory safeguarding partner agencies.

All HSCP multi-agency course descriptions published on the LMS should define:

* Target audience
* Summary of the course
* Learning objectives
* Expectations on participants (e.g. duration of the course, completing evaluations and any requirement to provide longer-term impact examples)

Where there are booking spaces available, the LMS will be available for partner organisations to use the facility for single-agency training. Unless this is offered as a multi-agency course that sits within the learning priorities of the HSCP, a charge will be incurred by partner agencies to cover the procurement costs for booking spaces. Service Level Agreements will be used to define arrangements where single-agencies use the LMS to facilitate their own training.

# Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

8.1 Governance and reporting

The Development and Practice Group of the HSCP oversees the Learning and Development programme. The Development and Practice Group reports progress, challenges and raises escalations to the Executive Support Group and/or Safeguarding Partners through quarterly highlight reports. The Development and Practice Group also provides an annual report on training, learning and development for the HSCP Annual Report.

The Partnership Team will collate reports on training course activity. These reports will be reviewed as a standing item on the Development and Practice Group agenda. Training reports will cover:

* Course attendance
* Summary of evaluation responses
* Courses at risks, for e.g. insufficient trainer pool, or low number of bookings

Additional information, for e.g. attendance broken down by organisation, is available on request.

8.2 Post course evaluations

Each course and event will be evaluated for the purpose of practice improvement, using interactive electronic tools integrated in the LMS.

Attendees at multi-agency safeguarding training courses will be asked to complete an evaluation prior to receiving the course certificate of attendance.

Course evaluations will be monitored by the Partnership Team to identify any concerns about the content or quality of the course, so that this can be addressed swiftly. The evaluations will specifically identify how the course has increased knowledge and improved outcomes for children and young people.

**8.3 Evidencing impact and behaviour change**

Post-course evaluations will ask participants to identify what they have learned, and how they plan to implement the learning in their practice.

In addition, attendees will be contacted 3 to 6 months following the course to ascertain evidence of impact on frontline practice. For appropriate courses, a feedback form will also be sent to line managers, to seek evidence of impact on frontline practice. These post-course evaluations will be administered through the LMS.

Organisations will also be asked to provide evidence of the impact of training and learning activities through their s11 self-assessment returns.

8.4 Quality Assurance

In addition to reviewing post-course evaluations, the Development and Practice Group will quality assure course content by conducting annual observations of each course. These observations will focus on evaluating the effectiveness of the trainer and the course content. The observer will complete a short observation form and share their feedback with the course trainers and the Development and Practice Group.

# Appendix 1: Guide to Staff Training Requirements

The following table provides a guide for minimum levels of competence needed for staff or volunteers, depending on how much they engage with children and families.

Organisations should have their own policies detailing requirements for their staff. Professionals should check with their current employer to ensure that they fulfil requirements set by their own organisation.

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| **Competency Levels** | **Recommended courses** |
| **Induction / Introduction to safeguarding (Level 1)**  **All staff/volunteers who come in to contact with children/families, or with any adult that may pose a risk to children.**  These individuals should understand and be able to identify child abuse, neglect, and where children have additional needs. They should understand and be able to apply to correct procedures when there is a concern about a child or adult who may pose a risk to children.  To be completed during staff inductions. | **Organisational induction programme** (Required) |
| **Safeguarding Overview (Level 2)**  **Professionals/volunteers who have regular contact with children and their families, or with any adult who may pose a risk to children.**  These individuals must understand safeguarding legislation and guidance, multi-agency working, and communicating with at-risk children/individuals. They should be able to identify and handle safeguarding concerns and participate in a safeguarding enquiry, including applying appropriate responses if a child makes a disclosure of abuse or neglect.  **Refresher:** Individuals should refresh their training not less than once every 3 years. | NB – “Required” courses may be completed through the HSCP, or an equivalent course offered by the individual’s organisation or a different training provider.  **Level 1 courses as defined above (Required)**  **Working Together to Safeguard Children / Safeguarding Level 2 (Required)**  **Right Help, Right Time (Required)**  *Recommended:*  Domestic Abuse Courses (Various offered)  Early Help Assessment Writing Workshop  Early Help Assessment – How to run an effective Team Around the Family meeting  Child Neglect  Graded Care Profile 2  Exploitation and Vulnerability, or Get Safe / Contextual Safeguarding Child Exploitation Course  Signs of Safety  Solihull Approach  Delivering brief substance-use interventions for young people |
| **Safeguarding Lead (Level 3)**  **Staff/volunteers who are in a safeguarding lead role and/or who may support colleagues who have a safeguarding concern. These individuals could also be part of assessing, planning, providing support, etc.**  These individuals must have a thorough understanding of safeguarding and child protection legislation/guidance. They must understand and apply levels of need, child protection systems and pathways, multi-agency collaboration and information sharing.  **Refresher:** Staff should refresh their training at least once every 3 years. | NB – “Required” courses may be completed through the HSCP, or an equivalent course offered by the individual’s organisation or a different training provider.  **Level 1 and 2 courses as defined above** (Required)  **Working Together to Safeguard Children (Level 3) (Required)**  *Recommended:*  LADO – Allegations against professionals in a position of trust |

# Appendix 2 – HSCP Learning Offer 2023/24

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|  | **Course Name** | **Frequency / Duration** | **Description** | **Trainer** |
| Learning and Development Priorities 2023/24 | Child Neglect Overview **(NEW)** | tbc | An overview of child neglect, including understanding signs, impact on children, cumulative harm, tools and interventions. | Multi-agency trainer pool |
| Get Safe / Contextual Safeguarding and Exploitation **(NEW)** | tbc | New contextual safeguarding and exploitation course is expected to be introduced in 2023, to be implemented with the delivery of new Contextual Safeguarding model. | tbc |
| Trauma-Informed Practice **(NEW)** | tbc  e-learning and virtual or in-person offer |  | tbc |
| **Core safeguarding courses** | | | | |
| 1 | Right Help, Right Time | Monthly  2 hours | Introducing Herefordshire's Right Help, Right Time procedure and the thresholds need – 4 levels of need that services and professionals will use to ensure the right help is provided at the right time to the right children, young people and families. | Multi-agency trainer pool |
| 2 | Working Together to Safeguard Children (Level 2) | Bi-monthly  Half Day | An introduction to the different types of neglect and abuse, the legislative framework for child safeguarding, making a referral, challenge, curiosity, information-sharing, and much more! | West Mercia Police Vulnerability Trainers |
| 3 | Working Together to Safeguard Children (Level 3 DSL / Named Person) | Bi-monthly  1 day | A more advanced training on child safeguarding for Designated Safeguarding leads and Named Persons | West Mercia Police Vulnerability Trainers |
| 4 | Early Help Assessment writing workshop (**NEW – replacing EHA Stage 1 and 2)** | Bi-monthly  3 hours | A chance for practitioners to receive support to write an early help assessment and using the Early Help Portal. | Early Help |
| 5 | Early Help Assessment – How to run an effective team around the family meeting **(NEW – replacing EHA Stage 1 and 2)** | Bi-monthly  3 hours | This training will support practitioners to know the process of running TAF meetings, who to invite and how to make them an effective part of the support package for families and young people. | Early Help |
| 6 | Exploitation and Vulnerability | Quarterly  2 hours | Understanding child exploitation and modern slavery, how to respond, record and report, and the use of non-victim-blaming language | West Mercia Police Vulnerability Trainers |
| 7 | Graded Care Profile 2 | Quarterly  1 day | To understand, recognise and address child neglect, and to instruct delegates on the use of the Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) tool. | Multi-agency trainer pool, accredited for GCP2 |
| 8 | Meet the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) | Quarterly  2.5 hours | Herefordshire's LADO will explain his role, and the policies and procedures involved when an allegation has been made against an adult who is in contact with children while in a position of trust. | LADO |
| 9 | Signs of Safety Introduction | Quarterly  1 day | To get to know the Signs of Safety approach in children’s social care | Herefordshire Council |
| 10 | Domestic Abuse Awareness courses (various)  \_MARAC Awareness **(NEW)**  \_Curiosity Saves Lives  \_WM Women’s Aid  \_White Ribbon event | Monthly  Various courses – 3 hours to 1 day | Range of DA topics commissioned by the Community Safety Partnership. Courses delivered by Women’s Aid and an independent consultant | Women’s Aid or independent trainer (commissioned by Community Safety Partnership) |
| 11 | Delivering Substance Use Brief Interventions for Young People | Quarterly  2 x ½ day | A discussion-based course learning specific skills to engage young people around their substance use and work with ambivalence. | Turning Point |
| 12 | Solihull Approach | Bi-monthly  2 days | The Solihull Approach introduces a model for understanding the impact of relationships on health and wellbeing and the impact of adverse childhood experiences on health and wellbeing. | Public Health |

\*Additional courses may be added through the year, where needs are identified.

In addition, the Child Exploitation and Missing Strategic Group will continue to support the Herefordshire Council Licensing Department to roll out and deliver mandatory safeguarding awareness training for licensed taxi drivers.

1. Chapter 2 of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 defines the safeguarding responsibilities placed on a range of organisations and individuals. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Relevant agencies are organisations that the HSCP has named (as per Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018), who will are under a statutory duty to cooperation with multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. The relevant agencies of the HSCP are defined in the [HSCP Multi-agency Safeguarding Arrangements](https://www.herefordshiresafeguardingboards.org.uk/safeguarding-children-partnership), [↑](#footnote-ref-2)