



### In this issue:

The findings from an **audit of knife crime cases** are on page 2, followed by an example of **multi-agency good practice** on page 3. Some new initiatives are detailed on pages 4-5; the **Violence Reduction Unit**, some **SSCP learning events** planned for early 2020, and where to find the revised **Pre-birth Planning Toolkit**. Read on for an update on the **new safeguarding children arrangements**.

### New arrangements to safeguard children

The new safeguarding children arrangements took effect on 29 September, with the change from the Somerset Safeguarding Children **Board** to the Somerset Safeguarding Children **Partnership**, which has now merged with the Children's Trust Board. The final annual report (2018-2019) under the Safeguarding Children Board arrangements has now been published on the SSCP website and can be [found here](#).

In September, the partnership also saw the retirement of Sally Halls, who led the Board in her role as Independent Chair for the past seven years, and wished her well for the future. The **three key safeguarding partners** (Somerset County Council, Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group, and Avon and Somerset Constabulary) will now look to appoint an Independent Scrutineer to ensure activity in the first year of the partnership is effective in **keeping children in Somerset safe**.

The new SSCP will retain the four key priority areas of focus: **early help, multi-agency safeguarding, neglect and child exploitation**, and continue to deliver on these priorities through multi-agency subgroups (see structure chart on page 6 of this publication, or on the [SSCP website](#)).

Work is underway develop a framework to strengthen the voice of children throughout the partnership to ensure the **voices of all children and young people** are heard.

Caroline Dowson, Business Manager  
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# AUDIT SUBGROUPS

The SSCP has two **Audit Subgroups** (ASG) which meet on a regular basis to look at the quality of multi-agency working and adherence to child protection policy and procedures.

## The audits

The ASGs considered the cases of 8 Somerset young people who had been involved in an incident **of knife crime** eg carrying a knife or using a knife to threaten someone. The young people were all male, four of them were children looked after (CLA), three had a child in need plan, and one had not had involvement with statutory child protection services.

## Findings

- None of the knife crime incidents were found to have been due to **County Lines**.
- There had been a **decline in school attendance** for most of the young people prior to the knife crime incident, with most of the young people also having had **multiple school exclusions**.
- The four young people who are CLA had **significant agency involvement**. In some cases there is little evidence that this involvement is currently having an impact on their lives.
- The outcome for one young person has been particularly good following **positive interventions by agencies**—see the case study of 'Alfie' on page 3.
- Half of the young people had an **Education, Health and Care Plan** (EHCP) in place.
- There was evidence that the young people's **wishes and feelings** had been sought in all cases. Some young people did not engage with this.
- Several of the young people had a similar history with **much police involvement** and time **out of school**. For example one young person had over 100 contacts with the police by the age of 10, many of them for anti-social behaviour. It is believed that current practice, in particular the MAVE panels (see page 4) would help a young person much earlier.
- **Referrals** to other agencies did not always note the risk of violence. For example, three referrals were made to Route1 for advocacy for the young people, resulting in home visits being made. The referrals did not refer to the incidents or risk at all.

The Quality and Performance Subgroup oversees the audit work and is responding to the findings, including further work to investigate the action being taken to ensure that young people who are CLA engage in education.



# GOOD PRACTICE CASE REVIEW

## 5-STEP BRIEFING



### 1. The Background

Alfie\* is now 15 years old. He lives with his mother and step-father in Somerset. Alfie's father died suddenly before Alfie started school. Alfie has an older brother and older sister who are both in full time employment and lead pro-social lives.

### 2. Safeguarding concerns prior to the incident

Alfie was in full-time education and there were no safeguarding concerns. There is no evidence that Alfie was involved in previous criminal or violent behaviour.

### 3. The Incident

In spring 2018 Alfie robbed another young person on a high street, and whilst being searched by police was found to be in possession of three kitchen knives. This incident was linked to other local issues going on at the time. Alfie was sentenced to a Referral Order.

### 4. Multi-agency work since the incident

Just prior to the offence Alfie had started truanting from school, and Education Services were becoming involved. Alfie is now back in full time education and has aspirations to attend college on a vocational course.

Alfie worked with a YOT worker who focused their interventions around the impact of knife crime and Restorative work with the victim. A positive direct Restorative Justice Conference was held with the victim, supported by the YOT.

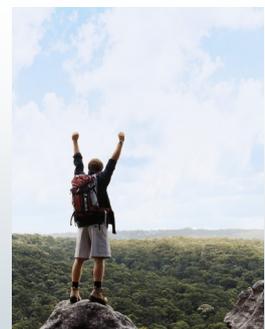
A referral to a substance misuse service was accepted and Alfie engaged with this. Family work was completed with Alfie's mother which helped to repair their relationship which had been affected by the offence.

### 5. What we learned from reviewing this case

Alfie was convicted of an offence involving a knife but there were no warning signs in this case; he did not have a history of crime or violent behaviour.

The right agencies are involved and contributing to work with this family. There is evidence of change:

- ☺ Alfie is in education
- ☺ Bereavement issues have been addressed in the family
- ☺ Improving relationship between Alfie and his mother
- ☺ Restorative work with the victim played an important part in allowing both victim and offender to move forward



*This case was one of a number of knife crime cases audited by the SSCB audit subgroups. The case has been anonymised and is shared to promote the good practice evident in this case.*

*\*Alfie is not this young person's real name.*

## New partnership



### VIOLENCE REDUCTION UNIT

Investment following the launch of the National Serious Violence Strategy resulted in funding being made available for Somerset to set up a Violence Reduction Unit, with the Safer Somerset Partnership acting as its Core Group. Since September, local agencies have come together to put in place a multi-agency team at pace as a great example of partnership working.

The aim of the Unit is to take a multi-agency 'public health' approach, using available evidence to:

- Target our most complex vulnerable adults, young people and families who are at risk of exploitation and/or involvement in serious violence
- Tackle the root causes of violence to prevent young people from getting involved in crime in the first place
- Focus on early intervention, education and awareness
- Drive systems improvement through advocacy and influence
- Engage communities effectively.

The Unit operates by consolidating data and intelligence, prioritising cases, and facilitates planning and support, working with existing services, and by considering complex children and young people at Missing and Vulnerable to Exploitation meetings (MAVE).

In addition, funds are also used to support a range of interventions across Somerset.

For more information contact [Lucy Macready](#) or visit [www.somerset.gov.uk/vru](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/vru)

### Contact the SSCP!

Please note our **new** email address: [SSCP@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:SSCP@somerset.gov.uk).

The SSCP has a circulation list to send alerts when new newsletters or learning bulletins are published. If you do not currently receive these alerts and would like to sign up to the list, visit our website

[sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk](http://sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk)



## Free learning opportunities—MAPIG

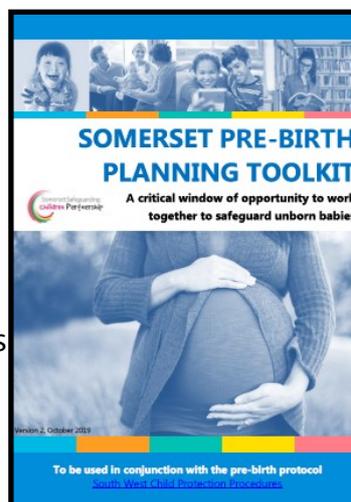


There will be learning opportunities in the form of **multi-agency practitioner workshops (MAPIGS)** in the New Year which will draw on learning from a **Serious Case Review** to be published after Christmas. The focus of these sessions, at various locations across the county, will be on the identification of neglect and intra-familial sexual abuse. **Dates and venues will be confirmed on our website.**

## Working with unborn babies

Working with families in the antenatal period is of vital importance, as there is an opportunity to prevent harm to the unborn baby and ensure that parents who are vulnerable or struggling receive the services and support they require in order to be able to parent effectively.

The **pre-birth planning toolkit** which supports this work has been updated and is available on the SSCP website, visit [www.sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/prebirth](http://www.sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/prebirth)



## Contacting the SSCP

Some of the contact details for the SSCP have changed:

Follow us on **Twitter**: [@Somerset\\_SCP](https://twitter.com/Somerset_SCP)

**Email** the Business Unit: [SSCP@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:SSCP@somerset.gov.uk)

**Email** the Training team: [SSCPtraining@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:SSCPtraining@somerset.gov.uk)

No change to the website and Facebook contact details:

**Website**: [www.sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk](http://www.sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk)

**Facebook**: [www.facebook.com/somersetscb/](http://www.facebook.com/somersetscb/)



## Children’s safeguarding arrangements in Somerset – December 2019

### Structure chart

