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## R29: Spring Conference – Safeguarding Network

**Date** Monday 20 May 2024  
**Venue** Mary Ward House, WC1H 9SN  
**Cost** IAPS members - £229

Safeguarding grows with our children... as do the demands on designated safeguarding leads. This conference will consider the changing safeguarding challenges that DSLs face across key stages 1 and 2, encouraging a strong bedrock of self-protection for pupils as they move on. Suitable for head teachers, DSLs, deputies and safeguarding governors the conference will explore how we ensure consistent oversight and understanding from staff working directly with pupils through to your setting's strategic approach to developing a sound safeguarding culture.

**Audience** Member heads, DSLs, deputy heads and safeguarding governors  
**Course Director** Safeguarding Network  
**Presenter(s)** Neil Pollock, Founder and Director, SchoolsMobile  
Chris Freestone, Director/Head of Supervisory Services at Safeguarding Network  
Mark Bentley, Safeguarding & Cybersecurity Manager - LGfL, The National Grid for Learning  
Dr Dickon Bevington, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist at Anna Freud National Centre



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Monday 20 May 2024	
0915	Registration and refreshments
0945	Conference welcome, <i>IAPS</i> , and introduction to <i>SchoolsMobile</i>
1010	"Holding the Many Ropes of the DSL", <i>Dr Dickon Bevington</i>
1110	Refreshments
1130	Workshops x 3 (30 max. per session)  <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Working with tools from AMBIT to improve communication and understanding across key relationships in Safeguarding, <i>Dr Dickon Bevington</i></li><li>2. Online safety fact or fallacy – are our messages missing the mark, <i>Mark Bentley</i></li><li>3. Reflecting upon safeguarding and children with SEND, <i>Chris Freestone</i></li></ol>
1230	Lunch
1330	"Growing child, growing (online) harm", <i>Mark Bentley</i>
1430	Workshops x 3 (30 max. per session)  <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Planning and conducting effective interventions where there concerns about abuse and neglect arise in privileged, affluent, or otherwise powerful families - <i>Dr Dickon Bevington</i></li><li>2. Ten steps to an effective online safety audit, <i>Mark Bentley</i></li><li>3. Reflecting upon safeguarding and children with SEND, <i>Chris Freestone</i></li></ol>
1530	Refreshments
1545	Safeguarding & Inspection, <i>Chris Freestone</i>
1630	Closing remarks, <i>IAPS</i>



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## SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

**Dr Dickon Bevington** is a child and adolescent psychiatrist with more than 30 years' experience working in frontline services in the NHS. He is also Medical Director and Designated Safeguarding Lead at the Anna Freud Centre, an internationally renowned charity developing next generation approaches to therapy and care, and with a specific focus on closing the gap between the extent of need and the availability of evidence-based support. Dickon is also a co-founder of the AMBIT approach and has published widely in the field of multiple needs and complexity, with a particular focus on developing systemic and organisational responses to risk that can support workers who are exposed to the pressures of frontline work to do that work safely, sustainably, and well. He regularly teaches all around the world and is known for his lively and engaging manner.

**Chris Freestone** has a broad experience of education and social care. A former head teacher, inspector, nurse and senior leader for children in care with a particular passion for working with SEND. She understands the vital role of front-line processes in education settings in keeping children safe and supporting staff in doing so.

**Mark Bentley** - LGfL, The National Grid for Learning – Mark leads on Safeguarding & Cybersecurity which provides broadband and a range of technical services to over 3,000 schools, and as part of its charitable aims, supports all schools in the country with free advice, training, policies and resources for these key areas. He sits on national bodies including the UKCCIS Education Working Group, helping to shape national policy and stay abreast of the latest issues to share with schools. He is also a safeguarding governor and delivers regular training to schools on a wide area of safeguarding topics.



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## SESSION DETAILS

### KEYNOTE SESSIONS

**“Holding many safety ropes: the role of the DSL”**, *Dr Dickon Bevington*

The talk will address the hard realities of acting as a Designated Safeguarding Lead, which involves holding multiple relationships in mind on a background of considerable (natural and understandable) stress. To make sense of how this tough context affects our minds and our capacity to communicate with one another accurately, the talk offers a basic description of “Mentalizing” (an eminently graspable and evidence-based framework for understanding human communication). This understanding can helpfully be applied in safeguarding contexts - in which accurate and proportionate communication is not only essential but is also frequently compromised, not least on account of the levels of professional anxiety and professional shame that stalk such settings. AMBIT, as an approach used in hundreds of teams worldwide, will be briefly outlined, and several applicable tools developed in AMBIT to help teams develop effective systems of help (especially where help-seeking is often, at best, unconventional) will be introduced.

**“Growing child, growing (online) harm”** – *Mark Bentley*

Find out the latest trends identified in online behaviours of children and young people as well as worrying findings about how children are being targeted. Mark will share key findings from Ofcom and IWF research that highlight how various ages of child have common but also unique risks, as well as explore the latest threats that schools have been sharing with us to help you examine whether your proactive and reactive responses are adequate. We will also look at the role that parents can play, from understanding the issues to rolling out safety settings and controls.

**“Safeguarding & Inspection”** – *Christine Freestone*

Within the ever more complex and challenging management of safeguarding within schools your safeguarding culture is key – represented in KCSIE and explored within an inspection. Can you define it? Is it understood by everyone, and can it be seen and tested? Are YOU happy that it is effective and secured with robust evidence?

We will explore how you could develop and evidence your culture of safeguarding within a whole school approach.

## SEMINAR SESSIONS

### **Working with tools from AMBIT to improve communication and understanding across key relationships in Safeguarding** – *Dr Dickon Bevington*

Following Dr Bevington's keynote, this workshop will give more space for attendees to learn about and practice using some key tools developed in the AMBIT programme to help workers in hard pressed settings to 'keep thinking alive.'

Child abuse and neglect are hard to 'make sense of', as are many of the communications and behaviours from the different people who become involved in such situations (victims, parents and carers, and professionals). How do we get into these tangles, and how can we minimise the impact they have on our safeguarding practices? Specifically, attendees will learn more about:

- a) Setting a framework for more helpful ('mentalizing') supervisory conversations between professionals to take place: "Thinking Together"
- b) Mentalizing multiple minds, especially in contexts where they are not yet particularly helpfully aligned, so as to facilitate more effective collaborative planning: "Dis-integration Grids"
- c) A mapping tool to help build higher quality understanding of a child/family's existing support and trust networks (the AMBIT Pro-Gram) with particular reference to how responding to a safeguarding concern may require changes (that can be achieved helpfully, or less so.)

The workshop will contain a mix of some didactic teaching, and opportunities to practice with these tools in a safe and supportive atmosphere.

### **Online safety fact or fallacy – are our messages missing the mark?** – *Mark Bentley*

Keeping children safe online is a complex matter, so are many of the pithy online safety messages we use actually unhelpful oversimplifications? The introduction of RSHE as a statutory subject over the past few years has not only given a new curriculum home to online safety but also given an opportunity to revisit some of the messages that we have all been repeating for many years. Come along to this session to be challenged on the effectiveness of the messages and language we use, with examples of messaging that is well intentioned but misses the mark. Expect to take away more questions than answers.

### **Reflecting upon safeguarding and children with SEND** – *Chris Freestone*

Events in SEND and 2022/2023 reports and reviews have reshaped some of the key areas of focus when working with children and young people who may have SEND.

We will review the impact of recent events as well how these changes will sit within your safeguarding culture.



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**Planning and conducting effective interventions where there concerns about abuse and neglect arise in privileged, affluent, or otherwise powerful families – *Dr Dickon Bevington***

Privately-educated children, like their less materially-privileged peers, are sometimes subject to abuse and neglect. There have been legitimate concerns that sometimes the predicaments for more affluent children go unseen, are under-reported, or may receive an inadequate response.

This workshop for DSL's in private preparatory schools will aim to give space for an exploration of how neglect and/or abuse causes psychological, neurodevelopmental and social harm in any children, but also how for children from particularly affluent backgrounds these harms are sometimes unhelpfully hidden or left unaddressed.

The workshop will allow participants to share experiences in a safe (confidential) environment with a view to creating a temporary 'Community of Practice'. There will be an opportunity to consider the particular challenges of working with disclosures or other concerns in these contexts, and how a 'mentalizing stance' might help in navigating this territory.

**Ten steps to an effective online safety audit – *Mark Bentley***

Since 2021, KCSIE has suggested schools carry out an online safety audit, but why, what, who and how? What principles should it be based on and what are your principles of online safety? Come and find out how to make it a success. This is far more than a tickbox exercise, bringing together safeguarding teams, senior leaders, curriculum leads and technicians. A policy that is not reflected in practice cannot be viewed as effective; in the same way, how can a school ensure it is keeping children safe if staff don't know what the approach is, or how curriculum, policies and technology settings align with the safeguarding needs of the children and young people in your care.



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