

# Paediatric Pearls

by Dr Julia Thomson, Paediatrician

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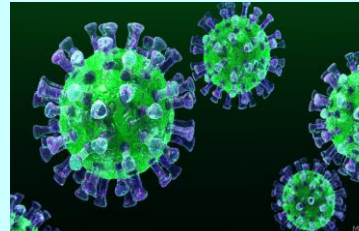
Monthly paediatric update newsletter for all health professionals working with children – put together by Dr Julia Thomson, Paediatric Consultant at Homerton University Hospital, London, UK. Housed at [www.paediatricpearls.co.uk](http://www.paediatricpearls.co.uk) where comments and requests are welcome!

## WELCOME to the first edition of Paediatric Pearls dedicated entirely to safeguarding!

Guest edited by: Dr Jacqueline Driscoll – Academic GP trainee in south west London and former paediatric registrar.

These special edition newsletters are produced to help you learn and keep up to date with all things child protection. Safeguarding continues to be a topic that provokes anxiety for all members of the healthcare team and across all settings from schools to primary and secondary care. Paediatric Pearls now has a dedicated team of paediatricians, primary care doctors and safeguarding nurses working to spread good practice in how we can learn from each other and share information. It is our hope that this will be another step towards a joined-up approach to safeguarding that centres on the child but sees them in the context of their family, their school and their neighbourhood.

Do send us topic requests at <http://www.paediatricpearls.co.uk/contact-paediatric-pearls/> or @PaedsPearls.



## What are the safeguarding issues raised by Covid-19?

We are all scrambling to understand and implement the ever-changing guidelines, adapt to new technologies and rise to the greatest challenge of our working lives. Social distancing and the current lockdown are not good news for the vulnerable members of our society.

UNICEF have taken the lead advising:

**Hundreds of millions of children around the world will likely face increasing threats to their safety and wellbeing – including mistreatment, gender-based violence, exploitation, social exclusion and separation from caregivers – because of actions taken to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.**

## Why now more than ever do we need to have safeguarding uppermost in our minds?

- As schools close, children lose their support system and access to a pool of trusted adults
- Caregivers are experiencing significant more stress, not least from additional financial uncertainty that the pandemic brings for many.
- We know from previous pandemics eg. Ebola in West Africa that this is a time when gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and teen pregnancy increases.

## What can we do?

- Continue to train staff on child protection risks and ensure all staff know the procedure for reporting concerns
- Continue to share concerns across sectors – now is not the time to let discharge summaries and phone calls slip down the priority list
- Engage children and adolescents in how Covid-19 is affecting them.
- Share resources that allow children to raise concerns
- Support young people's mental health at this difficult time. Have you considered alongside all the posters and messages about Covid-19 on windows and webpages, have you a message assuring young people that healthcare professionals are always here to listen?

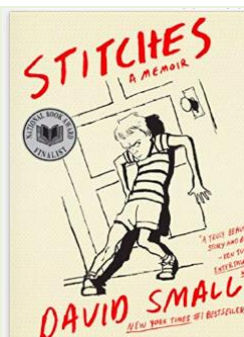
Visit <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/covid-19-children-heightened-risk-abuse-neglect-exploitation-and-violence-amidst> for more.

## What resources can we guide our young people to for self-care at this time?

- ❖ For podcasts, worksheets and guided activities on everything from drama to spirituality and sleep visit: <https://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/self-care/>
- ❖ For making sense of 'when bad things happen, try: <https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health/parents-and-young-people/young-people/when-bad-things-happen>
- ❖ Childline for managing anxiety about coronavirus and how to make a safety plan if things get too bad at home: <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/worries-about-the-world/coronavirus/>
- ❖ [Click here](#) for a cartoon for use when speaking to primary school age children about COVID.

**We are all going to be busy over the coming months but learning never stops. Please find the first of our book/podcast recommendations for another way to learn – safeguarding learning which can be logged for CPD/Reflections etc.**

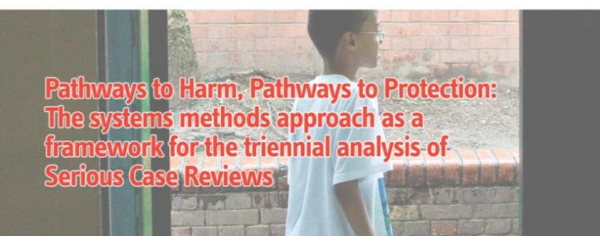
'Stitches' is a graphic novel that provides a visual education of what it means to grow up with distant, silent, frustrated parents, what it means to experience Fabricated and Induced Illness (FII) and conversely the devastating consequences of medical neglect. I can't recommend it highly enough and would love to hear what you think @PaedsPearls.



## Back to basics. What is a Child Safeguarding Practice Review?

Previously known as serious case reviews. the official term from '[Working Together 2018](#)' is **child safeguarding practice review**. Highlights from Chapter 4 of this document:

- They are convened **if abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected and the child has died or been seriously harmed**
- In thinking about harm, one should think of any serious and/or potential long-term impairment of a child's mental health or intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.
- Their purpose is to learn what happened but most importantly WHY it happened.
- They are not about discipline or holding individuals or organisations to account.
- They are about learning lessons and sharing this information to prevent another child suffering in the same way



<https://seriouscasereviews.rip.org.uk/> houses the triennial analysis (2014-2017) of 368 case reviews. The NSPCC library of these cases is freely accessible [here](#) and makes for powerful, if somewhat depressing, learning.

Every month, we will take a practice review and highlight the learning as a prompt for us all to reflect on our own practice as well as the policies and procedures in place locally to us – **ADVANCE WARNING – LOTS OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR QIP'S TO IMPROVE LOCAL PRACTICE IN LINE - TIME TO DUST OFF THOSE Quality Improvement Project SKILLS.**

LESSONS FROM PRACTICE REVIEWS (previously known as serious case reviews)