



## forum for SEND School DSLs

Share challenges, solutions and good practice related to safeguarding children with SEND


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## This forum

- ✓ NOT training. This is about networking & sharing.
- ✓ The quality of the sessions depend on you – please have cameras and audio on and participate
- ✓ Thematic
- ✓ Half termly
- ✓ Please look after yourselves
- ✓ Notes/Slides – <https://sendforum.lgfl.net>

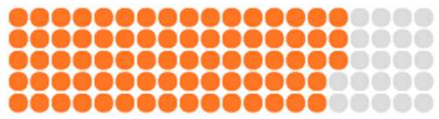
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## Teachers' Wellbeing

**78%**

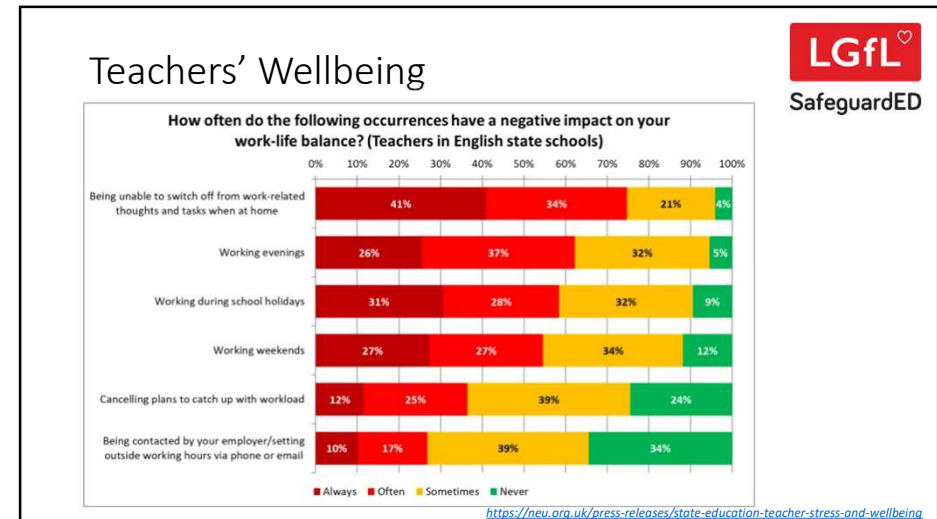


of all staff are **stressed**  
84% of senior leaders | 78% of school teachers

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<https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/media/twl04cs/twix-2024.pdf>

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## DSL Wellbeing



What are some of the things that most negatively impact your wellbeing as a DSL?

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## Specific challenges for DSLs



- ✦ Varied and many hats
- ✦ Burden of responsibility
- ✦ Hard to switch off
- ✦ Challenging conversations
- ✦ Isolation
- ✦ Budget pressures
- ✦ Time pressures including out of hours input
- ✦ Statutory time pressures e.g. refer within 1 working day
- ✦ Ever expanding remit
- ✦ Amount of training and updates to keep up to date
- ✦ Vicarious Trauma
- ✦ Physical impact of emotional pressure
- ✦ Heavy Workload
- ✦ Lack of time for self care
- ✦ Inconsistent leadership support
- ✦ Lack of supervision or reflective space
- ✦ Juggling multiple agency input for SEND children
- ✦ Social Care not offering service to as many so falling back to schools

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## DSL Wellbeing



1. Given the unique and often emotionally intense nature of safeguarding children, **what helps you to 'switch off' or decompress** after a particularly challenging day or week?
2. What **strategies do you employ** at work that particularly help you to manage the pressures of being a DSL?
3. How do you seek out and maintain a **support network**, (within your school, externally, or both) that understands the specific pressures of your DSL role?

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## Ways to switch off....



- Change of location
- Having a hard stop and turning computer off
- Doing something not related to work when need to
- Creative artwork
- Having a sanctuary to work from at home so even if WFH you go to a specific place not family space
- Setting clear work boundaries
- Creating end of day ritual as a transition between work and home life
- Physical decompression activities, Mindful walks in nature , even 20 minutes can reduce stress hormones
- Mental and emotional outlets are important. E.g. Journaling to process challenging days

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## Strategies that help



- **Calm training** offer debrief training for incidents in school which can help with staff wellbeing and culture of learning.
- Providers of **supervision** – Many different providers including some large organisations/charities and also individual consultants. We don't recommend any in particular, but do a search, speak to a few and see who you form a connection with.
- Informal supervision support network
- Using **Debrief** model
- Building **relationships** and knowing who to go to
- Allowance for **space/time in timetable** to connect/do things outside of usual role
- **Recognition** from Senior Leaders / Governors/ Trustees about the massive challenges of being a DSL
- Having colleagues (DDSLs) who can talk together and reflect
- **Electronic recording systems** can really help us to be organised – speak to your account manager to make sure your system helps you to best affect
- Local area DSL meetings / MAT DSL meetings / Cluster meetings for support

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## KCSIE



### Annex C: Role of the designated safeguarding lead

Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure an appropriate **senior member** of staff, from the school or college **leadership team**, is appointed to the role of designated safeguarding lead. The designated safeguarding lead should take **lead responsibility** for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place). This should be explicit in the role holder's job description.

The designated safeguarding lead should have the appropriate status and authority within the school or college to carry out the duties of the post. The role of the designated safeguarding lead carries a significant level of responsibility, and they should be given the additional time, funding, training, **resources and support they need to carry out the role effectively**. Their additional responsibilities include providing advice and support to other staff on child welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters, taking part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings, and/or supporting other staff to do so, and contributing to the assessment of children.

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## Working Together to Safeguard Children



26. Multi-agency expectations for **senior and middle managers** are as follows:

- **Collaborate:** decisions are based on a shared practice approach and constructive debate and analysis of information from all services
- **Learn:** managers **ensure their teams have time to engage in peer learning and knowledge exchange, peer audit, group supervision and observation**
- **Resource:** managers ensure children receive the holistic support they need, drawing in expertise from a wide range of agencies
- **Include:** managers support staff to identify and challenge discrimination, disparity, and negative stereotypes
- **Mutual challenge:** constructive challenge within and across agencies and disciplines is actively encouraged, independent judgements are valued and given space alongside collective decision-making to avoid groupthink

Expectations for multi-agency working

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## What is Safeguarding Supervision?

### Definition:

A structured, reflective space for DSLs to discuss safeguarding concerns, decisions, and emotional impact.

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### What is Safeguarding Supervision?

- A formal, regular, supportive process for DSLs
- Aimed at reflecting on safeguarding concerns, decisions, and emotional impact
- Different from managerial supervision

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### Core Functions of Supervision

- Structured reflection and review on cases
- Support with decision-making
- Emotional resilience building and well-being
- Action planning and accountability
- Professional development and confidence building

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### Benefits to the DSL

- **Clarity and confidence** in complex safeguarding decisions
- **Improved well-being and reduced stress**
- **Professional growth** through reflective practice
- **Better outcomes for children** through robust safeguarding

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### Models and Approaches

- One-to-one, group, or peer supervision
- Internal vs external supervision
- Frequency (e.g., monthly, half-termly)
- Record keeping
- Example frameworks: Kadushin Model, Morrison's Supervision Cycle

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## Common Challenges

- Time constraints
- Confidentiality concerns
- Finding skilled supervisors

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## What Other's Say...

*"I have found all of the sessions to be hugely beneficial...Sessions provide me with an opportunity to discuss challenging situations...In situations that are really challenging...Sessions serve as a great point of challenge; this challenge has helped me to improve internal systems and how we deal with specific issues in the future." - Seb Descrettes, Coldfall Primary School*

*"Sessions were peppered with useful and practical ideas on how to better my practice...and validation to help me navigate the challenging world of safeguarding." - Rivka Benarroch, Hasmonean High School*

*Kamelia recognises what's already in place and what needs putting in in a conversation about case management. I feel she quickly understood that I had enough experience working with children and schools-based safeguarding practice to know what to do in a situation with a child. Kamelia understood (possibly before I did myself) that what I needed was guidance through the referral process and working with multi-agency procedures." - Dr Richard Harrold, The American School in London*

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## Further Information and Contact

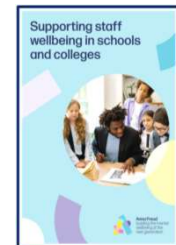


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## Further Support

- [mhwb.lgfl.net](https://mhwb.lgfl.net) – free training and resources
- Employee Assistance Programmes
- Anna Freud
  - <https://www.annafreud.org/resources/schools-and-colleges/supporting-staff-wellbeing-in-schools/>
  - <https://www.annafreud.org/resources/schools-and-colleges/>
  - <https://www.annafreud.org/resources/schools-and-colleges/5-steps/supporting-staff/>
- Education Support
  - <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/>
  - Helpline: 08000 562 561



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Want us to keep going?



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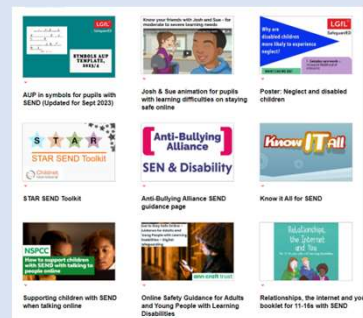


- Bruising & Injuries
- Exploitation
- Bereavement
- Self Injurious Behaviour
- Sexualised Behaviour
- Personal & Intimate Care
- Online Safety
- Child on Child abuse

<https://sendforum.lgfl.net>

Keep in touch

**Social Media:** @lgflsafeguarded  
**Newsletter:** safenewsletter.lgfl.net  
**Main portal:** safeguarding.lgfl.net  
**SEND Forum site:** sendforum.lgfl.net  
**IncludED site:** included.lgfl.net  
**Resources:** saferesources.lgfl.net  
**Training:** safetraining.lgfl.net  
**Email:** safeguarding@lgfl.net



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