

Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board News

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This newsletter is the first of what we intend to be regular circulations. We want to share key news items, new learning and developments in Safeguarding across County Durham, as well as messages from regional and national initiatives. We aim to pull together in one place a medium to keep staff informed about key decisions and the activity of both the Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board and all partner agencies.

The newsletter is also an opportunity to identify good practice and effective multi agency working as well as highlighting any new risks or issues which may arise. The Newsletter will also be a vehicle for getting wider messages out to staff, such as learning from child deaths and Serious Case reviews, so that staff can take account of the learning in their practice and be made aware

Message from Frances Gosling-Thomas, Independent Chair

of any changes to local policy and guidance.

Safeguarding means not only protecting children from harm, but also preventing harm from happening. This could be at school, in the community, as well as at home. Priorities the Board are currently working on include accessing early help, better information sharing, child sexual exploitation and parental mental health. This latter issue is a response to more than one third of child protection plans in the county having mental health as a key feature.

In the next edition we will also be sharing findings from the recent Ofsted Inspection of Durham's Safeguarding. This will provide an important opportunity to take stock and confirm next steps for further improving the effectiveness of the LSCB and the wider

safeguarding agenda in Durham.

We want all agencies to contribute to this newsletter. In pursuing this work, the Board is seeking to incorporate the views of children, young people and families, as consultation and feedback helps us improve outcomes within our local communities. This newsletter will be another way in which we will communicate the work of the Board to the public and those working with children, young people, parents and carers.



Launch of the Durham Child Protection Procedures 5th Edition

On 5 September 2011, the Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board launched the 5th edition of the Child Protection Procedures. A copy of the procedures is available to download from the Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board's website, along with a document highlighting the key changes.

This edition has been fully updated in line with recent changes to statutory guidance and local practices. This will be followed by the annual LSCB revision in September and will include national revisions which will be completed during 2012

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LSCB Priority on Information Sharing

Information Sharing features in every Serious Case Review undertaken in Durham. Consistently reviews found that agencies had information which could have protected a child but did not share it appropriately.

Much work has already been undertaken to address this issue involving a LSCB conference last year and the development of an Information Sharing Action Plan developed from issues raised at the conference. Over recent months meetings have taken place with managers from 18 partner agencies to evaluate how agencies have made a difference.

There have been a variety of actions taken across agencies including:

- Briefings and written information to all staff and managers clarifying expectations to share information in order to safeguard. This included the Eight Golden Rules and 'Information Sharing Pocket Guidance, produced by HM Government 2008. **For more Information see [LSCB Website/Information Sharing](#)**

- Police, Probation and Health have promoted the need to view the situation they are dealing with "Through the Eyes of the Child" when dealing with adults.
- Multi-agency conferences, workshops and briefings to raise awareness with staff, supported by protocols and procedures. (LSCB)
- Introduction of Information Sharing Champions across several agencies including Durham Police, Housing Solutions and Hassockfield Secure Training Centre.
- Increased networking opportunities arranged by Safeguarding & Specialist Services, Adult, Wellbeing & Health and Youth Offending Service to discuss safeguarding issues including information sharing.
- Durham Constabulary has established a new central referral unit intended to improve information sharing and consistency of referrals to Safeguarding and Specialist Services.
- The establishment of the One Point integrated service is intended to improve access to inter-agency information.

Police and Probation provide more clarity at the point of handover.

- County Durham Youth Offending Service has amalgamated pre and post court services under the same management to improve the flow of information within the service.
- Tees Esk & Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust and North Tees & Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust are working with named nurses to develop and introduce more robust standardised documentation across hospital sites and the community.
- County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust are using paediatric liaison forms to prevent gaps in information that can arise through the use of separate electronic recording systems by GPs and Hospitals.
- Single points of contact have been agreed between Drug and Alcohol Treatment Centres, Domestic Abuse Services and Safeguarding and Specialist Services Teams to improve information sharing.

Agencies have made a significant contribution to this priority and work like this will continue.

LSCB Priority on Child Sexual Exploitation

Nationally there have been a number of police investigations involving children targeted for sexual abuse by gangs or from inappropriate relationships with older people. Whilst all children could be exposed to this risk, there are confirmed links to children who are "looked after," with many in residential care, as well as children reported as missing from home or care.

For all LSCB's there has been a steer from the Government that an assumption should be made that child sexual exploitation exists in local areas and that work is undertaken to tackle it.

Our LSCB work follows on from the development of police and local authority procedures for missing children, with the police undertaking a timely investigation and return interviews are completed with the missing child, to establish the risks the child may have been exposed to. We now have a Missing and Exploited group, consisting of senior managers from several agencies, who monitor these arrangements.

Our new work will involve:

- Police analysts linking with other agencies to scope the extent of child sexual exploitation in the County.

- Prioritising training requirements for all professionals, to help them identify both victims and offenders and understand the next steps to be taken.
- Introducing revised child protection procedures.
- Improving information sharing around potential victims or offenders.



The LSCB has completed its initial scoping of the work to be taken forward through the priority on early intervention, following the recent review of child protection by Eileen Munro, which emphasised the importance of providing help early to families before problems escalate. The work of the LSCB will build on the existing Preventative and Think Family strategies, progressed through Safeguarding and Specialist services and One Point but will focus largely on the promotion of early help and evaluating how this is working in Durham.

Specific LSCB work will include:

- Raising agency awareness of the need for early help and evaluating the effectiveness of agency performance.
- Providing specific training for early years providers (nursery staff and childminders)
- Promoting the use of the common assessment framework (Caf) and monitoring agency performance for Caf through the LSCB
- Continuing to promote joint working between safeguarding services and mental health, drugs, alcohol and domestic abuse services
- Ensuring that feedback from children is heard and included in our work.

LSCB Priority on Parental Mental Health

Parental mental health risk factors feature in approximately 40 % of all initial child protection conferences in Durham. Often parents exhibiting these risks also experience drug, alcohol or domestic abuse problems. The LSCB is now prioritising its work on mental health to further develop front line practice.

Staff from Safeguarding, Pathfinder and mental health teams have already been consulted to help in identifying areas for development which would help them in their work. This consultation has raised some consistent themes:

- Understanding organisational structures and the need for single points of contact
- Understanding thresholds and referral routes to access support for parents
- Sharing information, clarifying recording practices and identifying when joint working is needed
- Understanding the respective roles of children's and mental health services when working with families
- Improving opportunities for networking across teams
- Staff safety and understanding of risk assessments

These themes will now be discussed with service managers to identify what actions should be taken forward to help frontline practitioners.



The role of LSCB in training

All agencies working with children, either directly or indirectly, are required to provide single agency training to their staff to recognise and raise child safeguarding concerns. The LSCB role differs in that it builds on the training offered by single agencies by promoting the premise that only through agencies working together can children be effectively safeguarded by:

- A shared understanding of roles and responsibilities, including a common understanding of key terms, definitions and thresholds for action
- Improved communication between professionals and those working with children
- Effective working together based on sound working relationships
- Improved assessment and decision making.

Durham LSCB has a wide range of multi agency courses available to all partner agencies free of charge. For more information see our website on www.durham-lscb.gov.uk

Some comments from staff who have attended some of our training courses include:-
Neglect course from an education welfare officer “The training will make me more focused on the children’s needs and what is important to them”

Risk assessment course from a Special needs health visitor “this course made me think about gaps in information and its importance and balancing resilience and vulnerability of children.”



Level 2 Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility course from a Consultant anaesthetist “the training explained the process from referral to initial child protection conference and on to reviews which I found very useful.”

There are two new courses for 2012

Safeguarding deaf and disabled children

The impact on children living with parental mental ill health

Go on the LSCB website to see the training dates and venues and we look forward to seeing you.

Other Training Opportunities



County Durham and Darlington

In addition to the multiagency training courses offered by the LSCB the Safeguarding Children Training Team for health are pleased to be able to offer places on their courses to professionals from their partner agencies. A list of the courses available can be found below:-

½ Day – 9am-1pm

- Parent/carers capacity
- Recognising and responding to emotional abuse
- The internet, online grooming and abusive images
- Physical abuse
- Non-accidental head injury in babies

½ Day – 9am-1pm (cont.)

- Working with sexually active young people
- Learning from Serious Case Reviews
- Safeguarding children training for managers

Full Day – 9-4.30pm

- Safeguarding disabled children
- Fabricated and induced illness

Courses are held in a variety of venues and geographical locations across County Durham and Darlington.

Staff can book places on these courses by contacting Donna Featherstone on 0191 371 2526 or by e mail at donna.featherstone@nhs.net

Safer Internet Day

Nationally Tuesday 7th February 2012 is being promoted as [Safer Internet Day](#) by CEOP, the specialist team set up to investigate offending over the internet and other social media.

CEOP recognise that it can be difficult to get parents and carers interested in their child's online life, so on Safer Internet day CEOP are inviting adults to participate in what could be the largest interactive parent's and carer's event ever!!!

On that day, the CEOP website will be hosting the *Parents and Carers guide to the Internet*, ready to broadcast anywhere from schools and offices, to phone and homes. This will be a short TV style programme which can be downloaded live online from the [Thinkuknow](#) site. The programme will be an entertaining and light hearted look at what it's like to bring children up in the online world.



CEOP are encouraging all adults to tune in, get involved and learn at the same time.

The [CEOP](#) website is always available for guidance around protecting children in the online world.

Introducing the Durham LSCB Lay Member

Bill Worth was appointed as a Lay member to the LSCB in March 2011. Bill brings significant experience to the board following his background in NHS management. The appointment to the LSCB adds to the portfolio of voluntary work Bill continues to undertake in retirement, which includes being a trustee for a number of charities involved with the elderly, the disabled and people with long term neurological conditions, in addition to the provision of social housing. He is also a school governor.

Bill says, "Having now attended a number of LSCB meetings and serious case reviews I have come to recognise the breadth and complexity of the work involved in ensuring high standards for safeguarding and how this work involves a large number of organisations. I can see how the work of the LSCB is proactive in developing quality assurance of safeguarding procedures, backed up by evidence from audits and other sources."

Good Practice by Durham LSCB recognised by Ofsted



Ofsted have produced a national report to help Local Safeguarding Children Boards reflect on their practice, plan for improvements and learn from the experience of other boards. The report also analysed how boards are implementing improvements and assessing how they are beginning to develop methods to measure their impact.

The Ofsted report highlights two areas of good practice in Durham:

- Performance Management Locality Groups - using multi-agency auditing to improve practice on a local area or locality basis. These local partnership groups involve the LSCB Performance manager presenting safeguarding data relevant to that locality. This ensures that learning from issues in one locality is considered elsewhere.

- Serious Case Review actions – Durham LSCB has introduced a 'thematic tool' to ensure that actions identified by Serious Case Reviews were fully implemented and which focus on "hot spots" or themes across several reviews.

Ofsted has said that Durham's quality assurance arrangements are exemplars of good practice

As a result of the recognition in the national report, Durham LSCB has been asked by Community Care to speak at a conference in London in February 2012.

What's new in Safeguarding?

Here we signpost professionals about the publication of key reports, research and initiatives in safeguarding practice. In this edition we want to highlight:

- The Department of Education is promoting new research around parenting capacity and the links with, alcohol, drugs, mental health and domestic abuse, often referred to as “the toxic four.” The publication, [“Children’s needs – Parenting capacity 2nd Edition Child abuse: Parental mental illness, learning disability, substance misuse and domestic violence,”](#) signposts frontline staff to how these parenting issues affect children differently, depending on their age and individual circumstances. The knowledge from this research assists staff in undertaking assessments and is seen by the Department of Education as **“essential reading for practitioners, managers and policy makers concerned with improving the outcomes for children and families who are experiencing such problems.”**
- The Children’ Society reports [“Make Runaways Safe”](#) and [“Still Running 3”](#) make the links with missing children and child sexual exploitation, highlighting risk indicators professionals need to be aware of.
- The General Medical Council has issued draft guidance [“Protecting Children and young people.”](#) The guidance puts forward proposals for the standards expected of all Doctors dealing with child protection cases. This covers record keeping, communication, information sharing and partnership working. Final publication is scheduled for March 2012.
- The Govt. has produced its [national action plan to tackle child sexual exploitation](#). The plan is focussed on raising awareness with children, parents and professionals and helping child victims by coordinating multi-agency action from the initial complaint through to court.
- The Ofsted report [“Ages of concern: learning lessons from serious case reviews”](#) looks at the consistent findings emerging from serious case reviews over a 4 year period from 2007 to 2011. The report focuses on death and serious injury to babies under 12 months and reviews involving teenagers and highlights common lessons for all professionals to be aware of.

- The NSPCC report [“All babies count”](#) highlights the risks to babies, under 12 months, from parental alcohol and drug misuse and domestic abuse.

Proposed changes in legislation for consultation

- A bill is proposed to create an offence of “causing or allowing serious harm of a child.” This would close a legal loophole, as existing legislation only relates to “causing or allowing the death of a child.”
- Further restrictions on sex offenders are proposed which would mean that offenders will be required to notify the police when they are living in a household with a child under 18 years, even on a temporary basis.
- Legislation to allow authorities to disclose information about a partner’s previous domestic violence history is being considered. If enacted, this may mirror the existing disclosure arrangements for convicted child sex offenders, where the authorities can inform parents about offenders who may be in contact with their children.



Altogether Better Policing

New unit set up to improve information sharing

A new multi-agency Central referral unit, based at Police headquarters, has commenced work aiming to improve information sharing between agencies. The unit has both a child and adult focus.

Staffing of the unit includes 3 detectives and 6 police clerical staff together with one member of staff from the Initial Response Team. There are plans to recruit a social worker from Adult services and a social worker from Darlington shortly.

Following referrals, the unit screens all vulnerable person information held on both police and social work systems. This results in improved initial screening, more accurate risk assessments and improved decision making about the safeguarding measures that may be needed. The unit prevents duplicate information being submitted to partner agencies and drives up the quality of information from that initially supplied by police officers attending incidents.

Initial feedback is extremely positive about the quality of the work which is produced and is already improving efficiency

We want your views on safeguarding issues that are important to YOU. We welcome feedback, comments, and suggestions for future articles.

For contribution/information, please contact Ian Scott, LSCB Development Officer, at ian.scott@durham.gov.uk or 0191 383 3353

We want to hear from you?



We're on the Web! More information about Durham LSCB, training and guidance is available on the LSCB website:

www.durham-lscb.gov.uk

