

Peterborough Safeguarding Children Board Newsletter

Message from the Editor

Presently the work of the PSCB is under close scrutiny as are all Safeguarding Children Boards in the country following on from the Baby P case in Haringey and the subsequent Lord Laming Review "The protection of children in England, A progress report" (available on PSCB website). The government's initial response is to accept all of the 58 recommendations although we await their detailed response due by the end of April 2009.

The work of the board continues however and this newsletter aims to give an indication of how busy all the partner agencies of PSCB are.

Do please send any comments to me as follows: judy.jones@peterborough.gov.uk

Children missing from care and home

In the young runaways action plan published in June 2008, the government committed to updating guidance for local authorities on supporting children who go missing from home or care.

The previous guidance had been published by the Department of Health in 2002 and was clearly now out of date. Peterborough staff had already begun revising its local guidance.

A consultation was begun on 12 January 2009 for agencies to consider the revised statutory guidance. A small group of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough staff have responded.

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PSCB annual conference: “Understanding the Impact of Neglect”

“Excellent delivery from speakers and young people’s film. Insightful, thought provoking lectures which gave me new ideas to consider. It was a well organised day that delivered all that was promised on the day - well done” (delegate from health)

The Peterborough Safeguarding Children Board annual conference - “Understanding the Impact of Neglect” was held on the 25 March at Deafblind UK, Peterborough. The conference was part of the training plan to address some of the issues identified in a recent serious case review which had highlighted the continuing vulnerability of neglected children to further abuse.

The event was attended by nearly 100 delegates from a range of statutory agencies and voluntary organisations and charities from across Peterborough. It provided people with the opportunity to hear keynote speeches from three nationally renowned professionals in the field of neglect.

Prof David Howe, Professor of Child and Family Social Work at the UEA delivered an excellent session on the emotional impact of neglect and the importance of attachment between a child and its primary care giver. He stressed the importance of how parents own history of poor attachment will bring some impairment to the relationship with their children if issues relating to their own childhood remain unresolved. He also stressed “how professionals should never underestimate the damaging effect of neglect on a child’s development”

Dr Chris Hobbs, Consultant Community Paediatrician and Senior Clinical Lecturer in Paediatrics at St James’s University Hospital, Leeds looked at the physical impact of abuse. He talked about how neglect can damage children in ways that can not be fixed and reinforced why the issue of neglect needs to be taken seriously by professionals. Chris talked about “children who were frozen in both body and mind” and how families become involved in a cycle of neglect that can be broken through effective early intervention.

Ruth Gardner, Senior Research Fellow at the UEA talked about her recent research “Developing an effective approach to emotional harm and neglect” and how agencies can work together on cases of neglect. She considered key questions that professionals need to consider when assessing families to ensure that the intervention is effective.

A local young people’s drama group put together a short film on their views of neglect and key messages for professionals. This reinforced the messages from the key note speakers.

100% of delegates evaluated the conference as either very valuable or valuable. It was felt that the keynote speakers were of a high quality and professionals had been given the opportunity to reflect on their practice whilst also gaining further knowledge and ideas from the day which could influence their future working.

The PSCB would like to take this opportunity to thank all the delegates who attended the conference for their support.

New workforce development helpline

On 16/03/09 Children England launched a CWDC funded freephone advice, help and support telephone line, aimed at ensuring that the children's voluntary, community and faith sectors can receive support, signposting and advice on all aspects of workforce development, including qualifications, funding, regulations and policy information.

0808 168 3820 will be available 9 – 5 Mon - Fri and has an answerphone service when staff are unable to respond immediately. An email advice service will also be available at develop@childrenengland.org.uk

Audit

The PSCB Quality Assurance group are undertaking an audit to review the supervision arrangements within agencies involved in the safeguarding of children.

An external auditor has been commissioned to undertake the work on our behalf and it is anticipated we will receive the report in May 2009.

Safeguarding in Education Update (Jenny Parris)

The number of referrals to Children's Social Care has significantly increased since the death of Baby P in Haringey and the resulting professional anxiety. The Safeguarding Board will be taking the lead in the development of a multi agency referral form which should facilitate the referral process and clarify the expectations of the referrer.

In the meantime please note the following:

- Please refer to the Vulnerability Matrix to assist deciding when to refer. An electronic copy of this is available from Jenny Parris. Children's Social Care involvement is appropriate for children at level 3-4.
- Referrers should continue to seek clarification from the Attendance Welfare Advice Line or from Referral and Assessment as required
- Referrals should be made on a referral form and not a low level concern form and copied to Tricia Keogh
- Telephone referrals should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours
- PSCB procedures say that referrers should contact Children's Social Care again if they have not received written acknowledgement within 3 working days
- Referrers should record the outcome of any referral in school CP records

The ***Safeguarding Board Quality Assurance Group*** are currently undertaking a multi agency audit of safeguarding supervision and designated teachers may receive a copy of this to complete. The term supervision in this context relates to the kind of casework supervision which is common in Children's Social Care and other settings. The Board is aware that school designated teachers do not routinely receive supervision as it is known in Social Care and similar settings. However there are a number of avenues of support and advice available to staff such as the Attendance Welfare helpline and CPIN which partly fulfil this function and it might be helpful for these to be noted in your audit return.

Domestic Abuse: There is a continuing need for families who are experiencing serious domestic abuse to be referred to MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) Schools are asked for information on children often at short notice and their prompt co operation is much appreciated.

The **honour based violence support service** which started last year as a Cambridgeshire police initiative has also identified a number of significant cases. Honour based violence guidance for education settings was included in the Education Safeguarding Procedures Appendix 31. There is to be an additional police member of staff who will be promoting the issues in schools later this year.

Vetting and Barring – this new scheme will now be introduced from July 2010 and not 12 October 2009 as previously published. News on the latest developments can be obtained from the Independent Safeguarding Board website where anyone interested can register to receive the ISA newsletter.

Operation Staysafe

Operation Staysafe is based on a partnership between the police and the Local Authority's Children's Services and the Youth Offending Service using police intelligence to sweep anti social behaviour 'hotspot' areas late at night.

Children or young people considered to be at risk of significant harm because, for example, they are in possession of or have consumed alcohol, the child is too young to be out on the streets at night or a child or young person is involved in anti social behaviour (ASB) or in the company of adults who may be involved in crime/ ASB, are taken to a designated 'safe place' which will be a Local Authority owned building, where a multi-agency team assesses the risks presented.

In most cases the child or young person is given suitable cautionary advice and reunited with the parent or guardian who collects from the 'safe place'. Those that are more vulnerable, perhaps because of previous engagement with social care, would receive further support.

The intended outcomes are;

- To prevent youth crime and ASB in hotspot locations by responding to calls identifying examples of ASB during the life of the operation;
- To work with parents and guardians to improve parental care and supervision
- To gather evidence to support Acceptable Behaviour Contracts, Anti Social Behaviour Orders or criminal prosecutions;
- To work with partner agencies to divert children and young people from crime and ASB; and
- To reassure communities

Peterborough has run three **Operation Staysafes** this year and more are planned covering the whole of the city. At least a hundred other young people were spoken to by the police officers conducting the patrols. 18 young people were found in various vulnerable situations often associated with alcohol, and taken to the 'safe place' Without exception the parents or guardians of these children were both surprised at what their child was doing and always grateful for them being removed from danger.

After School Police Patrols

As with Operation Staysafe the ***After School Police Patrols*** is an initiative funded through the Youth Crime Action Plan for 2 years.

The primary purpose of the patrols is to provide a visible police presence to reassure school children and people in the area whilst also preventing anti social behaviour (ASB) and crime. School closing time can be a flashpoint for trouble, even if it does not occur directly outside the school gates.

This approach builds on Neighbourhood Policing which has been successful in improving public confidence by involving the community in tackling offending.

As the name suggests it is based on police patrols at school closing time, which could be in the vicinity of the school, any place where school children gather after school, such as a shopping centre, or on public transport used by school children.

The patrols respond to intelligence from the Neighbourhood Policing Team, Safer School Partnership or school staff, which may be about an area or individuals known to cause problems.

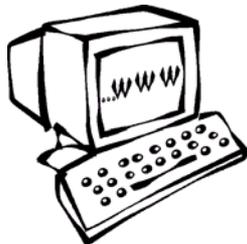
The Safer Schools officers who are attached to the schools have a key role in assisting with the patrols and providing the link with school staff to identify those individuals who cause disturbances and agree how that behaviour can be addressed jointly with the school.

Originally focused on those secondary schools which are part of the Safer Schools Programme, the Peterborough ***After School Patrols*** are now extended to cover all secondary schools based on reported incidents of ASB.

The patrols are held on at least 3 days a week during school time with some notable results in preventing confrontations and dealing with an act of graffiti where the officer supervised the removal of the graffiti by the persons responsible.

In the future it is intended that the Safer Schools programme will be expanded to cover all secondary schools and strengthen the benefits of the ***After School Patrols***.

E-safety



Cambridgeshire and Peterborough LSCB's have agreed to jointly fund an e-safety post initially for twelve months to raise the profile of e-safety by leading on the strategic plan and ensuring that all agencies polices and practices are embedded to safeguarding children and young people.

Policing the Internet (Detective Inspector Darryl Preston)

As a Detective on the Child Protection Unit I was one of the first Police Officers in Cambridgeshire to deal with a child abuse Internet case. A troubled partner came to the Police and indicated her husband had child abuse images on his computer. This was in 2001, only seven years ago. Needless to say, the Police have had to adapt to this new technology and accept the need for a multi agency global effort to combat crime on the internet.

Terms such as 'virtual' world sometimes undermine the issues involved. Images of children being physically or sexually abused are in fact real children being raped and assaulted and the collection or downloading of such material is integral to the commission of the crimes.

Children in the UK ranging from 0-18 have been victims of such crimes.

Research has shown that perpetrators are almost exclusively white males from developed western Nations i.e. the UK.

Another area of concern is that of sexual grooming. This was made a specific crime in 2004 and we have had several prosecutions in Cambridgeshire. Adults with a sexual interest in children will communicate in chat rooms, social networking sites and by mobile telephone. Often the suspect will purport to be a young person, though contrary to some views this is not always the case. In Cambridgeshire we have investigated cases involving children as young as ten years of age.

Cyber bullying has been labelled as the new phenomenon. This has received much media interest and is a very real issue for all of us in keeping children safe. To keep this in context, it is my submission that there is nothing new in bullying as with paedophiles making and sharing child abuse images and grooming children. The internet has merely provided another platform for abusers or bullies to commit these acts. In addition, the Internet has also provided a useful tool for evidencing such acts, prosecuting offenders and delivering safeguarding messages.

Most of us will be fairly clear with what to do with a 'real life' event such as bullying. My advice is to apply the same decision making to the electronic world. If it appears a crime is being committed inform the Police making sure to preserve any evidence

Child Rearing

Speaking at the annual forum of the **Teenage Magazine Arbitration** panel, Professor Tanya Byron said children are being 'raised in captivity' by parents who are afraid to let them go outside, but they are being led into taking risks online. Professor Byron, who was commissioned by the Prime Minister to investigate the effects of video games and websites on children, urged parents to find out more about the 'global playground' which they are allowing their children to access. She said adults in Britain are suffering from ephibiphobia - a fear of young people. She added, 'I despair for today's young people who are feared because of the actions of a minority population - the violent, aggressive and antisocial; a population that has always existed. We see young people as so pestilent that we create the Mosquito, a device only they can hear, designed to frighten them away'. Professor Byron delivered a lecture '*The Trouble with Kids*', at **Edge Hill University**, Ormskirk, on Tuesday 24 March



Developing Safeguarding Support for the Third Sector

£2.2m has been awarded to the NSPCC to establish a safeguarding unit for the Third Sector. One of its intentions is to develop a framework of child protection standards. The unit will be based within the NSPCC national training centre in Leicester.

As a first step, PSCB is taking part in a pilot to develop a set of safeguarding standards in the Eastern Region for the voluntary and community sector groups provide Local Authority Commissioned Services.

Child Sexual Offender Review Pilot

Child Sexual Offender Review (CSOR) Pilot is a Home Office initiative being delivered in four English Police Force areas. Cambridgeshire Police and their partners have been engaged in the pilot since its launch in autumn 2008. Peterborough Unitary Authority was chosen for a number of reasons to provide the first target area in the County.

As a result of the capacity issues, which until launch could only be guessed at, the Home Office in consultation with local partners has chosen to roll the programme out to the wider Cambridgeshire communities. The go live date for the roll out was 16th March 2009.

So what is CSOR? For a number of years there has been debate around the issue of allowing access to details relating to convicted sexual offenders. This debate surrounded the tension between the communities' right to know and the individuals' right to privacy, as enshrined under Human Rights legislation.

The Pilot attempts to reconcile these tensions by allowing specific individuals the right to request information about people who have access to children.

The main thrust of the Pilot is to allow Parents and significant others to make an application to the local police requesting information about someone they believe may be having access to children. This application is assessed to identify whether in the first instance any relevant information exists. Regardless of the outcome the applicant will receive feedback stating that their application sits outside the remit of the Pilot, there is no relevant information to share or in very rare cases a disclosure will be made.

The purpose of this information is not to outline in detail the processes but rather to raise awareness that individuals can now obtain information about individuals who may concern them due to their access to children. A number of Posters and leaflets are being provided to relevant public locations in the near future which will provide more detailed information regarding those eligible to apply.

Safer Parenting Guide



We are awaiting delivery of the revised Safer Parenting Guide. These will be distributed via the Maternity Unit to all new parents and Primary and Secondary Schools after the Easter break. A web based version will also be available so that individuals can download either the complete document or any required page. For more information contact Kay Mayor, PSCB Administrator at kay.mayor@peterborough.gov.uk.

Improving Safeguarding in Independent Schools

The Government is to accept Sir Roger Singleton's findings in his report *Keeping our schools safe – review of safeguarding arrangements in independent schools, non-maintained special schools and boarding schools in England* and will look at how best to implement his recommendations alongside those made by Lord Laming in *The Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report*.

Sir Roger was commissioned to look at how the current laws and guidance on safeguarding in independent schools, non-maintained special schools and all boarding schools is currently working. He found evidence of excellent practice but there is more to do to make this universal.

Recommendations included:

- Government should streamline the rules and regulations governing how schools protect the children in their care to ensure that safeguarding standards are clear, measured and easy to follow. Government will start this immediately.
- there must be independent scrutiny of a school's safeguarding arrangements, carried out by a governor or trustee, or someone fully independent of the school
- LAs and LSCBs should work with all schools to develop good practices for protecting children as well as to take action where problems arise
- Independent schools must inform LAs when a child leaves the school
- Schools should have access to clear information, support, advice and guidance about safeguarding requirements
- When schools are subject to different sets of requirements, the Government clarifies whether a member of staff can start work before their CRB checks come through
- All children who live overseas but go to school in England will be included on ContactPoint, the Government's online directory of children's services, so that no child slips through the net.

A more detailed action plan on the implementation of Lord Laming's and Sir Roger Singleton's recommendations will be published by the end of April.

National survey of child safety and victimisation

We have been advised that the NSPCC has commissioned BMRB to undertake a major survey on **Child Safety** between March and November 2009.

They will be interviewing around 6,000 parents and young people by random selection. They will be knocking on the doors of households where there is a resident under 24 years of age. The information will help in the understanding of how many young people in the UK today have experienced different types of dangerous or risky situations.

More information about the survey can be found at www.childsafetysurvey.org.uk