

Newsletter










Issue 1

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What does Solihull LSCB do?

Solihull LSCB has been in place since March 2006 and is the statutory multi-agency body responsible for ensuring all services work together to safeguard children and young people and that these arrangements are effective.

Our work includes:

-  Developing multi-agency procedures
-  Delivering multi-agency training
-  Conducting audits and analysing other performance management information
-  Reviewing every child death
-  Carrying out a Serious Case Review if abuse or neglect were a known or suspected factor in a child's death or other serious child care incident and it is considered that there are lessons for multi-agency working.
-  Communicating with the professional and wider community about how to keep children and young people safe.
-  Producing an annual report that identifies priority safeguarding areas to address in Solihull.

The LSCB is supported by a small team of staff and more information on our work, including many resources for those who work with children, young people and families as well as adults who are parents, can be found at www.solihull.gov.uk/staysafe



Hello colleagues and welcome to our new look newsletter

One of the key responsibilities of any Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is to raise awareness of, and improve understanding about abuse and how to tackle it. This newsletter is, therefore, primarily aimed at those with either a specialist and/or leadership role in the safeguarding of children and young people - and that includes those of us who work with adults who are parents or carers. Further, whilst the LSCB has an understandable and necessary focus on maximising the wellbeing of children and young people, it is also the case that our work is very closely related and often linked to adult safeguarding; it may be an obvious thing to say, but children live with adults and many of the risk factors that increase the likelihood of abuse (or lower levels) of harm are common to all age groups.

With this newsletter comes an exciting time of change (assuming you find change exciting). So, you will find updates on our local work: for example, a Case Review Pilot that we are undertaking in conjunction with the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) which is designed to examine and improve the way we learn by taking a so-called "systems approach". And there are significant national activities too that will have a local impact in due course. On the latter you will find articles on the Vetting and Barring Scheme, the progress of the "Munro Review of Child Protection in England", and the roll out of the Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme.

One of the LSCB's greatest challenges is increasing its reach in the voluntary and community sector. Unlike the public bodies, the third sector is dispersed and diverse and not a simple, single entity that you can invite to a meeting! So, I am really pleased to welcome Andrea Davies, Third Sector Development Officer, on to the patch whose workforce development role has safeguarding at the heart of it. We hope you really enjoy the challenge ahead!

Poignantly, there is also a beautiful and moving poem included in this edition from a Year 6 pupil who won a competition during Anti-Bullying Week held back in November. Our challenge is for every child and young person to know the answer to the question posed: "Who do I tell, what do I say, who can I trust to listen my way?"

And so to the closing remark: whilst we obviously fill every waking (and possibly sleeping) hour with thoughts of Working Together (whilst hotly anticipating a new, slimmed down version post-Munro), nonetheless, there is something much more important than guidance for us to remember (oh yes there is!!): listening to, and acting on the experiences of the children and young people we are here to serve!

Thank you for reading!
Best wishes,
Mark Rogers

Disclosure Scheme

Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme

In August 2010, West Midlands Police launched the Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme which allows parents, carers, guardians or another interested party to find out if a person who has contact with a child has a record for child sexual offences.

It is a separate scheme to the Criminal Records Bureau checks which are aimed at providing employers and organisations with information about potential employees and volunteers.

How does the scheme help?

The purpose of the scheme is to help to protect children from harm. The majority of child sexual offenders are known to their victims. They are often someone who has some form of access to a child, e.g. a friend of the victim's family, a friend of the victim, or a member of the victim's family.

Who is the scheme for?

The scheme is for any member of the public who wants to find out if an individual in contact with a child has a record of child sexual offences. They may have no specific reason to be worried but are just being careful. A single mother, for example, may want to find out a bit more about her new partner before introducing her children to her new partner.

If police checks show the individual has a record for child sexual offences, or other offences that might put the child at risk, the police will consider sharing this information with the person(s) best placed to protect the child, usually the parent, carer or guardian. The police will disclose information only if it is lawful, necessary and proportionate to do so in the interests of protecting the child, or children, from harm.

Every police force already has a public protection team to manage sexual and violent offenders and protect children from harm. The disclosure scheme is about ensuring people can speak to the police about their concerns in the knowledge that they will be taken seriously. It sets up a formal process for members of the public to register their concerns and to receive feedback on how those concerns were acted upon.

Culture of vigilance

The scheme and indeed non disclosure does not replace the need for those who care for children to be constantly vigilant about the safety of their children and the suitability of adults in contact with their children.

Where can parents get information?

As part of the national drive to protect children from harm, a new website has been set up by the Lucy Faithful Foundation. It is designed to raise awareness about child sexual abuse, to answer questions and to give parents and carers the information they need to help keep their children safe.

Click [here](#) to access the website

The website includes information about the Child Sex Offender Scheme.

Parents and carers in Solihull wishing to access the Scheme should make contact with their local police station.

What can you do?

As somebody working with parents/carers you may wish to promote the scheme and the website alongside the need for constant awareness of the need to take steps to keep children safe from sexual harm.

Review of Vetting and Barring Scheme

In February 2011, the government announced the outcome of its review of the Vetting and Barring Scheme.

Below is a summary of the headlines:

1. The Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) and the Criminal Records Bureau will be merged.
2. The existing duty on a 'regulated activity provider' to ascertain whether a person is barred before permitting that person to engage in regulated activity remains. There is a similar duty on a personnel supplier who provides persons to work in regulated activity (for example, a provider of agency teachers or care home workers) to ensure that any personnel they provide, knowing that they will be engaging in 'regulated activity', are not barred.
3. However, the definition of 'regulated activity' will be amended so that the range of posts falling within the definition is reduced.
4. The requirement to register (due to be implemented under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006) will be repealed and those undertaking 'regulated activity' will not be required to register under the scheme.
5. Whilst the scheme is being re-modelled, the existing duty to refer information to the ISA will remain in force, where the employer/regulatory body considers that an individual has caused harm or poses an ongoing risk to vulnerable groups.
6. Offences will continue of (i) a barred person working with vulnerable groups in regulated activity roles, and (ii) an employer/voluntary organisation knowingly employing a barred person in a regulated activity role.
7. Copies of a standard or enhanced CRB certificates will be issued to the applicant only, and not copied to the body countersigning the application at the same time. This allows the applicant to make representations to the CRB regarding the information released, without the disputed information already having been seen by the employer.
8. Certificates will be updated on a continuous basis, removing the need to make repeat applications. An applicant (or an employer) must subscribe to the updating arrangements at the time of the application and thereafter re-subscribe annually, paying a fee. Under the update arrangements the CRB will not, as such, provide any new conviction or other relevant information to the subscriber. Instead, in response to a request for update information, the CRB will advise the person making the request either that there is no new information that would be included on a new certificate or that a new certificate should be applied for (which would imply that a new certificate would contain new information.)

9. There will be revised eligibility criteria for CRB checks and employers will retain the option to carry out CRB checks for non-regulated activity. Decisions to carry out CRB checks should be based on degree of unsupervised contact with children as well as sustained length of time in contact with children and young people.

The LSCB will be working with partners over the coming months to consider the implications of the above changes and will also continue its work with the wider community to support parents/carers and young people to choose 'safe activities', and also to report any concerns.

The Munro Review: an update

In January, Professor Eileen Munro produced an interim report of the national review of the Child Protection System. The report is titled: "The Child's Journey" to help us focus on the child's journey from needing help to receiving it.

The key messages are:

- 😊 Think child and not bureaucracy, inspections or organisational design/needs.
- 😊 Think learning and evidence based practice and promote and value professional judgement as opposed to prescriptive responses.
- 😊 Accept risk and the need for constant review and adaption of the 'system'.

For a more detailed summary of the report including some of the possible changes to the system click [here](#).

Professor Munro will publish her final report in March and this will be available at: [Munro review of child protection: Better frontline services to protect children](#)

Pilot of New Model of 'Learning lessons'

As we reported in our last newsletter, Solihull LSCB along with 2 other LSCBs in the West Midlands have been working with the Social Care Institute of Excellence (SCIE) to trial the "systems approach" to learning from Case Reviews and Serious Case Reviews. This model of learning has been highlighted by the Munro Review as an effective way to promote learning as well as adaptive practice.

As this process come to an end, it is intended to share learning across the region through a one day event. The event will hear from the LSCBs who have participated in the pilot as well as from SCIE who have led on the development of the model.

The event will take place on Monday 9 May and is being hosted by West Midlands Police at the:

Lord Knight Suite Tally Ho
Persore Road
Edgbaston
Birmingham
West Midlands B5 7RN

Please register [here](#) to confirm attendance at this event.

The event will be free of charge to those who work within the West Midlands.

Further information on the local pilot can be obtained from [Liz Murphy](#).

Updated LSCB Procedures (including thresholds)

Following the revision to statutory guidance, the LSCB has updated its multi-agency procedures.

An important change has also been made to the threshold for accessing children's social work services. The revised threshold for when to make a referral to children's social work services Duty, Assessment and Referral Team (DART) are:

- 😊 Where targeted support services have been offered but there is refusal or reluctance by the parent/carer to engage or engage consistently with the support being offered and therefore the identified cause of concern/need is not being addressed, i.e. no improved outcome for the child.
- 😊 Where targeted support services have been in place but the parent or carer appears unable to make the required changes in order to improve outcomes for the child.
- 😊 Where a child has been identified as having suffered or likely to suffer Significant Harm.

This change reflects that improved outcomes for children and young people is dependant on the engagement and co-operation of the parent as well as their parenting capacity.

Where universal and targeted support services have been unable to address the additional needs of a child within a timescale that promotes the child's welfare, there is a risk that those needs will become greater and/or more complex.

Those working with children and young people are invited to contact children's social work services to discuss a case in order to explore the most appropriate course of intervention for each child and their family and to explore whether a referral to children's social work services is required. The decision as to whether to make a referral rests with the worker who has contacted DART.

The LSCB procedures can be accessed via our website www.solihull.gov.uk/staysafe

Working with third sector/choosing safe activities

The LSCB is delighted to announce that Andrea Davis will commence in post as a Third Sector Development Officer from April 2011.

She will be employed by SUSTAIN, and is funded by the LSCB and Children's Workforce Development Team, to work with approximately 80 local organisations to promote organisational and workforce development, including safeguarding, with these organisations.

These organisations have been identified because they are not part of a national organisation or affiliated to a regulatory or governing body and so are not linked into a safeguarding framework.

Andrea will work with settings and use the Safe Network toolkit to help settings fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities by having in place:-

- 😊 Child Protection Policy
- 😊 Managing allegations procedures
- 😊 Safer recruitment procedures
- 😊 Awareness raising procedures

The LSCB has produced publicity materials aimed at young people and parents/carers to help them choose safe activities. These materials will be made available to the 80 organisations and also faith groups to display so as to promote a whole community approach to safeguarding.

Click [here](#) to access more information regarding the Safe network toolkit.

Spotlight on West Midlands Fire Service

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE

Within the borough of Solihull, the West Midlands Fire Service now has specially trained Vulnerable Person Officers (VPOs). Part of their role is to carry out fire home safety checks with the more vulnerable members of our community. This might include people who have:

- Reduced mobility due to a physical disability/impairment
- Reduced awareness of risks due to a learning disability
- Reduced capacity to stay safe due to mental health needs
- Reduced capacity to stay safe due to substance misuse

The fire safety checks can be carried out with partner organisations who might have already built up a relationship with the individual or family.

The checks have evolved from just putting smoke alarms up to giving advice on overloading plugs, heaters as well as advice on a wide range of problems that cause fire.

The West Midlands Fire Service can also offer a presentation to staff/teams who regularly visit people at home so they can be alert to potential risk factors and proactively identify the need for a referral for a fire safety check.

A referral can be made via the contact centre on free phone 0800 389 5525 or direct to Jacqueline Jones, the Solihull Borough VPO Coordinator at Solihull fire station on 0121 380 6294.

In the last five years, deaths across the country from fire have been reduced from 500 to 280. It is believed this has been due to better education on fire safety including home safety checks.

What you can do

Please consider and discuss a referral for fire home safety checks with those you work with as well as inviting the fire service to attend your team meeting; this will help us all to work in partnership to keep the most vulnerable individuals and families in our community safe from fire.

Dates for your diary

Practitioners' Forum

The LSCB has set up a practitioners' forum to promote an effective multi-agency system to safeguard children and young people.

It is hoped the forum will allow all practitioners to explore and improve multi-agency working in Solihull. The aim is for 'solutions' to local challenges to be identified and to allow those who work at the 'frontline' to influence the work of the LSCB.

The forum is targeted at all practitioners who work with children and young people and families as well as those who work with adults who are parents/carers.

The date of the next forum is 19 April 2011 at 2pm-4.30pm and it will be held at The Loft, The Bluebell Centre, Chelmsley Wood, B37 5TN.

Please contact [Zoe Smith](#) by email or call 0121 788 4383 if you wish to attend or for more information.

LSCB Annual Conference

The LSCB has also agreed to hold its annual conference on Monday 7 November 2011. The theme will be neglect and information on the conference will soon be available on our website www.solihull.gov.uk/staysafe

Details of our multi-agency training programme can also be found on our [website](#).

For any queries regarding the conference, please contact [Chris Stait](#) by email or call 0121 788 4478.

Anti-Bullying Competition Winner

During Anti-Bullying week in November 2010, a competition took place in our schools to design a poster or leaflet that could be shared with parents and carers to enable schools to communicate with a wider audience about key anti-bullying messages. The key message for Anti-Bullying Week was 'taking action together'.

A poem produced by a year 6 pupil at Forest Oak School was judged by the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) steering group to be the winner. The poem is reproduced below:

The Bully

**Punching, kicking
Biting, even nasty finger flicking
Calling names
Being left out of games
Pinching little bits of skin
Trying to poke my eyes right in
Pulling hair and ripping clothes
No one sees and no one knows
The person who invades my space
Gets right up and in my face**

***Who do I tell, what do I say
Who can I trust to listen my way***

**Tell an adult, at home or at school
I'll prove to the bully that I'm no fool**

Year 6 Pupil, Forest Oak School

The poem carries a powerful message about what bullying is and what to do if it happens to you, your child or you see it happening to someone else.

The poem has been reproduced in its original format and was distributed to schools at the SEAL conference in February 2011.

The poster is also available on the Schools Extranet so that schools can download a copy.

Well done to all who took part in this competition and a big thank you to our winner for giving us a real insight into the experiences of children and young people and reminding us of our role to support children and young people who have been bullied.

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