

NEWSLETTER WINTER 2007



**SOLIHULL
LSCB**

**LOCAL SAFEGUARDING
CHILDREN BOARD**

www.solihull.gov.uk/staysafe

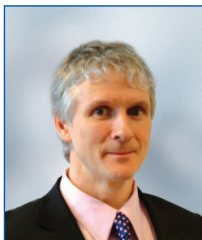
CONTENTS



	Page
Chair's introduction	3
Where do I fit in?	4
Revised Child Protection Procedures	5
Revised Safeguarding guidance for schools	5
SIB's team launched	6
CRB checks – the way forward	7
Procedures for managing allegations against people who work with children	7
MARAC: A multi-agency response to domestic abuse	8
Effective safeguarding practice: learning the lessons	9
Responding to childhood deaths: a preventative approach	10
LSCB Training Brochure now available	10
“What to do if you're worried a child is being abused” publication	11
Safeguarding children and young people: free resources	12



Chair's Introduction



Colleagues

Welcome to Solihull Local Safeguarding Children Board's second newsletter which is designed to keep you informed about the work of the Board, and also of regional and national developments in the world of safeguarding.

As you will probably be aware, there have been important local and national developments in recent months. Most importantly for Solihull, the Council has now made interim arrangements to cover the role of Safeguarding Children Business Manager, following Liz Murphy's departure in September, and I am pleased to welcome Yvonne Byrne and Debbie Davies who will be working as a job share to deliver this critical role. In recognition of the demands of the job, we have taken a decision that, for the duration of the interim arrangements at least (which last until April 2008), we will deploy Yvonne full-time and Debbie part-time to the role, ensuring that for the next six months there is added capacity to move the Board forward.

The other big news is the creation of the Department for Children, Schools and Families over the summer. This signals a significant shift in emphasis, creating what Ed Balls (the new Secretary of State) describes as a 'Children's Trust for Government'. We can perhaps now feel more confident that the safeguarding agenda will permeate all aspects of the Department's and, perhaps even, the Government's policy in relation to children and young people. And we should certainly feel more comfortable with the Government's claim that it is taking an holistic approach to Every Child Matters through a new Department that actually has children in its title!

These are, of course, just two of the many developments in our partnership working to protect children and promote their well-being. Life will not be dull in the coming weeks and months and, in order that we are as prepared as possible, I hope this newsletter helps by keeping you up to date with our key areas of work.

Best wishes

Mark Rogers
Chair of Solihull Local Safeguarding Children Board

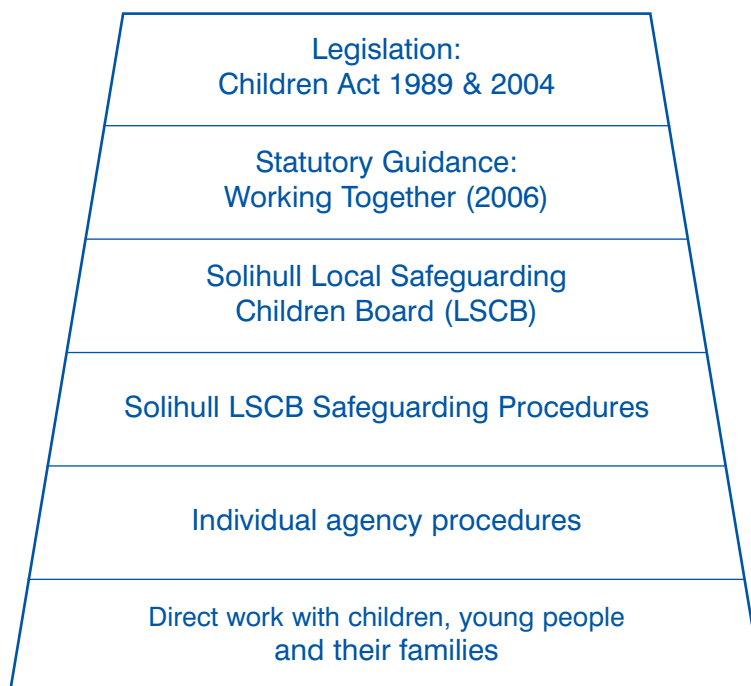




Where do I fit in?

Solihull LSCB is the statutory body charged with co-ordinating how agencies, the voluntary and private sectors and faith communities, work together to safeguard children and young people.

One of the key functions of the LSCB is to raise awareness of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. It is considered important that those who work with children and young people know where they fit in with the work of the LSCB.



The above diagram illustrates the framework within which we deliver services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children & young people – particularly those at risk of significant harm. We all operate under the relevant legislation and the statutory guidance: Working Together (2006). This document is divided into two sections, the first section is statutory and so we all have to follow it, including independent and voluntary sectors and faith communities. The second is non-statutory and so can be seen as best practice guidance. One of the requirements in the first section of Working Together (2006) is that each area sets up a Local Safeguarding Children Board which has responsibility for local joint working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. This includes developing local procedures which reflect the first section of Working Together (2006). These are known as Solihull LSCB Safeguarding Procedures and must be followed when any individual is concerned that a child or young person may be at risk of abuse or neglect.

Individual agencies will have their own procedures including child protection policies which need to be consistent with the LSCB Safeguarding Procedures so that all children and young people get a consistent response and level of protection.

It is individual workers, either paid or volunteers, who work with children and young people and their families that make this safeguarding wheel spin so as to keep children and young people safe from abuse and neglect.



So actually, individual workers have the most important job – they are the ones in direct contact with children and young people – and therefore able to make a difference on behalf of their agency as well as the LSCB. They are best placed to identify and act upon concerns and to achieve positive outcomes for those children and young people who are experiencing significant harm. We provide the overall co-ordination including procedures and training to enable you to do your job well.

Revised Child Protection Procedures

In light of the requirements of the new Working Together (2006) document, the former ACPC Child Protection Procedures are redundant. New procedures were launched in May 2007. They are known as Solihull LSCB Safeguarding Procedures. We have approved them as the definitive guide. They provide a practice framework for all agencies, professionals and volunteers who work together to safeguard children and young people.

They are available electronically via www.solihull.gov.uk/staysafe.

One of the key changes to these inter-agency procedures is that children's names will be no longer placed on a Child Protection Register following a Child Protection Conference.

Instead, children and young people who are considered to be at risk of on-going significant harm will be the subject of a Child Protection Plan. This is because it is an effective plan that safeguards a child or young person. Greater emphasis is given to the role and nature of the plan in achieving the child or young person's safety.

In the past staff from other agencies could enquire if a child or young person was "on the Child Protection register" particularly if they had concerns about the child or young person.

It is still possible to enquire if a child or young person was on the Child Protection Register or is currently the subject of a Child Protection Plan. Please contact the Child Protection & Review Unit on 0121 788 4307 or if the enquiry is out of office hours via the Emergency Duty Team on 0121 605 6060.

Revised Safeguarding Guidance for schools

The DCSF has produced a new guidance for schools 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education' which came into force in January 2007. The document is a consolidated version of earlier guidance material. It looks at the recruitment and selection processes, recruitment and vetting checks, and duties for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in education.

It replaces 'Child Protection: Preventing Unsuitable People from Working with Children and Young Persons in the Education Service', "Criminal Records Bureau: Managing the Demand for Disclosures", "Safeguarding Children: Safer Recruitment and Selection in Education Settings" and "Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers".

All schools, including non-maintained schools, independent schools, and academies, Further Education institutions, and Local Authorities exercising education functions, should use this guidance to review and, where appropriate, modify their practice and procedures for safeguarding children and dealing with allegations of abuse made against teachers and education staff.

To access the document:

<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DFES-04217-2006&> or www.solihull.gov.uk/staysafe



SIBS Team Launched

April 2007 saw the introduction of a new service to children and young people who display sexually inappropriate behaviour. We have developed this service through the creation of a Multi-agency Virtual SIB's Team. It comprises of: Social Work practitioners from Children's Social Work Services and the Youth Offending Team (YOT) ; Education Welfare Officers; an Educational Psychologist and Connexions worker; Clinical Psychologists and an Independent Reviewing Officer. It is co-ordinated jointly by Lisa Harris, a Team Manager from Childrens Social Work Services and Chris Crocker, an assistant Team Manager from YOT.

The Greater Manchester Investigation and Referral Support Team along with the AIM Project Coordinators provided training. A half-day awareness raising workshop was delivered to local Strategic Partnership members and Councillors. This was followed by a series of one-day foundation courses aimed at professionals wanting to increase their understanding of children and young people who sexually abuse others. The training for members of the SIBs Team began in March. There was a two-day course which sought to provide a primary knowledge base on which to evaluate and assess sexual behaviour presented by young people. This is referred to as the AIM 2 Assessment Model. A further three-day course developed the team's understanding of the Comprehensive Assessment Model and the flexible modular programme of individual therapeutic direct work.

The aim of the Virtual SIBs Team is to reduce the incidence and increases the awareness of sexually inappropriate behaviour amongst young people. The team members will undertake assessments of children and young people using GMAP assessment tools where SIBs behaviour has been identified in order to identify needs; assess presenting risks and provide a programme of intervention identified in the assessment process. This process will also aim to identify those children and/ or young people where consultation or specialist intervention might be required. The team members meet bi-monthly to discuss referrals, practice issues and team development. We are currently reviewing the first six months to provide an initial service overview. The summary of which will be presented to the LSCB in due course.

What should you do if you are concerned that a child or young person is exhibiting sexually inappropriate behaviour?

In the first instance consult the LSCB Guidance 'Sexually Abusive or Healthy Behaviour?' which distinguishes between healthy and abusive sexual behaviours in children and young people. You should also familiarise yourself with the LSCB Procedures Part 4.1.3. All referrals should be processed through the Duty and Referral Team (DART) where a decision will be made as to the appropriateness of the referral.

Consultation is available to professionals on the suitability of referrals through contacting either;

Ian Wyatt (EWO) 0121 788 1505

Chris Crocker (YOT) 0121 779 1720

Lisa Harris (ECS) 0121 704 6774

'Sexually Abusive or Healthy Behaviour?' can be accessed via www.solihull.gov.uk/staysafe



CRB Checks – The way forward

Following the Bichard Inquiry Report into the murders of Jessica Wells and Holly Chapman in Soham, the Government is introducing a new system for vetting people whose jobs will bring them into contact with children and young people. This will help avoid harm, or risk of harm to children and young people by preventing those who are deemed unsuitable to work with children and young people from gaining access to them through their work.

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 provides the legal mandate for the scheme and it will be phased in from autumn 2008.

Those who work with children (including voluntarily basis) will be required to register. If an individual is not considered suitable to work with children and young people s/he will be barred from such work. An independent statutory body, Independent Safeguarding Authority will make the barring decision. The CRB will run the processes.

The status of individuals will be continuously updated on receipt of new information, such as new convictions or referrals from employers. Employers will be notified, where they have registered an interest if the status of their employee changes. Scheme membership will be fully portable.

Employers will also be able to conduct on-line checks to establish if an individual is barred from working with children. This is good news as it provides for a more effective and streamlined vetting service for potential employees and also reduces the need for repeat checks on existing employees as, is currently the practice in some agencies.

Domestic employment will also be covered by the scheme and so parents/carers will be able to check if babysitters, carers, private tutors are barred from working with children.

For further information:

www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/safeguarding/independentsafeguardingauthority/

Procedures for managing allegations against people who work with children.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006 introduced guidance for all agencies including the voluntary sector in relation to allegations against staff. Here is a summary of the new requirements.

Each agency is required to have procedures in place which details how they will respond to any allegations they receive.

There are three main areas when the procedures should be used where there is an allegation that a person who works with children has:

1. Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child.
2. Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
3. Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children

Appendix 5 of Working Together provides guidance on how such cases should be managed. The crucial issue is, as with all cases of suspected abuse, that the person who has the concern talks to someone! With this in mind the guidance is that each agency has a Senior Manager with whom all initial allegations or concerns should be discussed.

Senior Managers have to contact the LSCB's appointed Local Authorities Designated Officer (LADO). The LADO will provide advice and guidance to the Senior Manager, will attend strategy meetings and will help track and monitor the allegation through the process.



The guidance is clear that there should be a clear and understood methodology for dealing with all allegations and certain practices are clearly not allowed. Compromise agreements are, for example, explicitly excluded.

In Solihull, our LADO is Steve Martin who can be contact by phone 0121 788 1505 or email smartin@solihull.gov.uk

MARAC: A Multi agency response to domestic abuse

What is MARAC?

A multi-agency response to domestic abuse following a police call out – it stands for multi-agency risk assessment conference.

The MARAC process collates and shares information between partner agencies to:

- increase the safety, health and well being of victims, both adults and children
- to assess whether the perpetrator poses a significant risk to any individuals or to the community as a whole
- to jointly agree a risk management plan and ultimately reduce repeat victimisation and domestic abuse related deaths

Police officers complete a risk assessment proforma for all victims who report domestic abuse. The proforma is victim based and asks such questions as “Has the offender ever attacked you with a weapon?” “Has the offender ever threatened to kill you?” The proforma is then submitted to the Police domestic violence unit and specialist trained officers complete the risk assessment using the information provided by the victim. All incidents are classified as: standard / medium / high / very high risk.

All referrals receive an appropriately graded and immediate support, but the very high risk cases are also then referred to the MARAC.

In a single monthly meeting, up to date risk information is considered along with a comprehensive assessment of a victim's needs. Links are also made to an appropriate service tailored to support the victim, and where relevant, their children and the perpetrator

The meeting is chaired by the Police, with Education and Children's Services, Health, Housing, Probation, Victim Support, Women's Aid, MABL and other support services in attendance and sharing relevant information prior to agreeing a safety plan individually targeted to meet the needs of the most vulnerable victims.

The support package available to victims is extremely comprehensive and is focused on a multi-agency support network, which incorporates improved security within the victim's home, a sanctuary scheme, a women's refuge facility, drug and alcohol support services and many more options depending on the victims needs.

Solihull was instrumental in piloting the scheme within the region and the MARAC process has been up and running since 2005. The evaluation process is still in its infancy. However, the amount of domestic abuse referrals received by Solihull Police has remained fairly consistent at around 2,000 referrals per year. But the level of repeat victimisation has reduced, which has reduced since MARAC was introduced. Prior to MARAC in 2004/05 the proportion of repeat victims of domestic abuse referrals in Solihull was 38%. In the first year of the MARAC the rate was reduced to 33% and in 2006/07 this was reduced further to 29%. This means there were approximately 200 fewer repeat victims of domestic abuse over a two year period.

It is essential that a co-ordinated multi-agency approach to target domestic abuse continues and the MARAC process is pivotal to the process.



Effective Safeguarding Practice: learning the lessons

The inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié revealed shortcomings identified by past inquiries. These included:

- Poor co-ordination; a failure to share information; the absence of anyone with a strong sense of accountability; and frontline workers trying to cope with staff vacancies, poor management and a lack of effective training (Cm 5860,p.5).

The purpose of any such inquiry or serious case review is to identify any lessons about the way professionals and organisations work together to safeguard children and young people and how they need to be acted on. Over the past 60 years the following have consistently emerged as shortcomings:-

- Losing focus on the child or young person
- Lack of oversight, co-ordination and analysis of risk of harm
- Over optimism about parenting capacity
- Poor information sharing and communication
- Poor recording or lack of significance of an event identified in notes
- Non-compliance with Child Protection procedures
- Poorly trained, inexperienced staff.

We know that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and in particular protecting them from significant harm depends on effective joint working between agencies and professionals with different roles and expertise.

So what are the key lessons?

- **Understanding** of other agencies' roles – all those involved should know what each other's responsibilities are and what they should or could be doing.
- **Communication** – all those involved should keep each other informed about what has or has not been achieved. This could be done through a lead professional (Social Worker in the cases where the child or young person is subject to a Child Protection Plan) who co-ordinates responses and makes sure that those who need to know do know. They should make sure that all those who could contribute do so.
- **Recording** – staff should recognise the integral role of recording, but so should managers who should allocate sufficient time for recording. Recording should be accurate, relevant and analytical. It should also differentiate fact from opinion although judgements, clearly stated as such, should be encouraged. Recording could also be subject to peer review to ensure that standards are kept.
- **Supervision** – time must be spent reflecting on cases with managers. It is the time to discuss and plan training needs for individuals. Staff need to feel supported.
- **Risk Management** – too often warning signs go unheeded. Staff should be clear what constitutes a warning sign and respond. Supervision should explore warning signs.
- **Decision Making** – management must recognise the need for thoughtful but prompt decision-making. If all of the above is in place decision-making will be easier and clearer.



Responding to childhood deaths:

A preventative approach

In line with the broader safeguarding agenda Working Together (2006) requires every LSCB to have processes in place by 1st April 2008 to respond to all childhood deaths by, not just those where abuse or neglect is known or considered a factor.

In 2004, 5,000 children died in the UK under the age of 16 (ONS, 2006). Of these deaths, two-thirds of the children were under one. Approximately a quarter of these infant deaths are unexpected, including the large proportion of deaths classified as Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). It is recognised that a proportion of sudden unexpected deaths in infancy will be related to child maltreatment – homicide, abuse, neglect.

During the middle childhood years, natural causes of death predominate, with infections, cancers and other medical causes accounting for 79 per cent. However, during the adolescent years (15-17) the pattern is very different, with 52 per cent of deaths due to external causes of mobility and mortality, including accidental deaths and suicide.

If we are to prevent childhood deaths, it is important that we understand contemporary patterns of such deaths, their nature, causes and any underlying contributory factors. In Solihull, we will adopt a regional protocol for responding to sudden unexpected deaths in children under two years of age known as the SUDI protocol. We will develop a similar protocol for responding to sudden unexpected deaths in children over two years of age.

It is hoped these protocols will lead to improved investigations of unexpected childhood deaths and improved support for the families. An important focus of the investigation will be whether the death was preventable. The outcome will be analysed by a panel of professionals (the Child Death Overview Panel) who will look at how the lessons learnt can be used to prevent future deaths.

There is an African proverb, which says “it takes a village to raise a child”. It has been suggested that it takes a community to bury a child. Jenny & Issac (2006) describe the death of a child as a “Sentinel event” that reflects on society’s policies on safety and health. In this spirit, we as professionals working with families, owe it to bereaved families to investigate thoroughly yet sensitively each child’s death, to respect the rights of each child, even in death, and to strive to learn lessons that may help to prevent future deaths.

LSCB Training Brochure now available

The LSCB has published its new training brochure. Please have a look at it and book places on courses as soon as you can.

The brochure provides details of the statutory training framework and courses available. Together with the Course Booking Form it can be accessed:

- 1 Via the Solihull Local Safeguarding Children Board pages at www.solihull.gov.uk/staysafe – just click on LSCB Training and Development Programme, and then scroll down
- 2 In the new printed version – this will be widely circulated or you can request a copy by emailing lsbctrain@solihull.gov.uk or telephoning 0121 704 8529.

Please book early to avoid disappointment and to help us allocate places fairly.



“What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused” publication

The Department for Children, Schools and Families has revised the guidance ‘What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused’ in light of the Every Child Matters Change for Children Agenda.

You can access the full and summary document at www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/safeguarding

The guidance also provides general information for anyone whose work brings them into contact with children and families focusing on those who work in social care, health, education and criminal justice services.

Addressing issues affecting each of these target audiences, the document outlines:

- What you should do if you have concerns about a child’s welfare
- What will happen once you have informed someone about those concerns
- What further contribution you may be asked or expected to make to the processes of assessment, planning, working with children, and reviewing that work.

The guidance has flowcharts following the procedure from referral, initial assessment, emergency action that might need to be taken, through to what happens after a strategy discussion and child protection review conference.

Hard copies of the full document as well as the guidance can be obtained from:

DCSF Publications
 PO Box 5050
 Sherwood Par
 Annesley
 Nottingham NG15 0DJ
 Telephone: 0845 602 2260
 Fax: 0845 603 3360
 Text phone: 0845 605 5560

Safeguarding Children and Young People: Free Resources



We have produced the above poster in two sizes (A3 & A5) aimed at adults of the Borough advising them on the action to be taken if they have concerns about the safety of a child or young person. Please contact us to obtain the posters and display them in your organisation.

We have also produced a mini safeguarding guide aimed at those who work with or come into contact with children or young people.

These materials form an important part of the LSCB's work in spreading the important message that "safeguarding is everyone's responsibility".

To request copies of the mini-safeguarding guide and/or posters, please email lscb@solihull.gov.uk or contact Karen Perry on 0121 788 4325. Please provide your name, organisation, postal address and the number of guides/posters (A3 or A5) you need.

lscb@solihull.gov.uk
www.solihull.gov.uk/staysafe