



Bath & North East Somerset
Local Safeguarding Children Board

KEY MESSAGES FROM THE CHAIR

6th September 2016

B&NES LSCB met on 6th September to work through another packed agenda. The following issues were discussed and these will be of particular interest to all professionals working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and families.

Presentation Speak Out – Stay safe The NSPCC Schools Service representative for our area is Gemma Darby who presented some key aspects of their offer to schools. The NSPCC is now responsible for running Childline and complementary to this, offer tailored, age-appropriate support to schools in the form of interactive lessons raising awareness of safeguarding issues including staying safe online. This service is provided free, although schools are encouraged to participate in fund raising for the NSPCC if they are able to. The LSCB have formally endorsed the resource and schools are encouraged to respond positively whenever the service is offered.

Themed Review –Early Help

A themed workshop style review of Early Help took place in which the LSCB considered a range of issues in the context of safeguarding and promoting welfare. Early Help is a significant aspect of preventing the escalation of harm and poor outcomes for children and is of necessity dependent upon effective commitment from professionals from a variety of agencies. As a result of this review the LSCB has determined to assume a much closer role in monitoring the effectiveness of Early Help and the shape of this role will be scoped over the coming months. In particular, with a view to further strengthening evaluative work to track outcomes and to facilitate transparency in the participation of agencies as a route towards improved accountability.

Welfare Reform

Significant changes are being made to the amounts of and arrangements for the payment of benefits. These reforms will bring with them particular risks for vulnerable people, especially children and families, many of whom by dint of the circumstances in which they have become dependent on welfare payments, may place them in jeopardy. All professionals need to be sighted on these changes and the LSCB will be publishing a briefing on their website during the next week or so. I have also taken steps to seek assurance from the Government that they are aware of these risks and have put measures in place to ameliorate their impact on the vulnerable.

Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) Annual Report

Dr Mary Gainsborough presented the Child Death Overview Panel Annual Report. This report is available via the LSCB website. Every child death in the region is subject to both a local review where learning can be rapidly translated into improvements and subsequently, scrutiny by the CDOP. 33% of cases were considered to be “modifiable” and this has led to a number of activities and challenges aimed at risk reduction.

Missing Children

A recent report of a thematic inspection by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary has revealed significant inconsistencies and areas for improvement across England and Wales in handling missing children reports. Avon and Somerset Police are reviewing their approach in the light of this report and it is evident that some changes will be forthcoming.

LSCB Sub Group Reports

The really hard work of any LSCB is conducted by members of its sub-groups. The Board received updates from several sub groups and it is clear that some excellent and well-focused work has been undertaken on behalf of all of us. In particular, some new leaflets are available about the risks to children of parents in custody and about responding to child sexual exploitation. A new Connect TV advert poster about Female Genital Mutilation is being shown in B&NES leisure centres, reception areas and larger libraries and it is hoped will soon be shown in GP reception areas too.

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) will go live on Monday 26th September and will be based at Keynsham Police Station. This is an important new resource that will make notifications of concerns and referrals much more effective. **It is important to note that the MASH is not a substitute for existing arrangements for making referrals.** It is a tool that will be used when such referrals are thought to require further clarification to assist an informed decision.

Child Protection Chairs Annual Report

The LSCB received the CP Chairs Annual Report. It is clear that a lot of improvement activity has taken place and their important role continues to be well delivered. In particular, the LSCB were pleased to note that efforts to encourage more parental engagement have seen a rise to 48% of cases in which BOTH parents attend Conferences. This is an impressive outcome and one that we hope can be built upon. As ever, securing fathers to attend presents difficulties and a problem that is shared in all localities not just B&NES.

Joint LSCB and LSAB Stakeholder Event – Domestic Abuse

On the 2nd November the LSCB and LSAB are holding their first stakeholder event on Domestic Abuse. The event is being held at Somerdale Pavilion; Keynsham many of you will have received a ‘save the date’ flyer for this so many of you will have this already on hold in your diaries.

Please note the change in venue and also look out for the flyer which will detail how to book a place via:

Children's Workforce Training

01225 394210

childrensworkforce_training@bathnes.gov.uk

LADO

Finally, you are advised that Jackie Deas is taking up a new and exciting job in Scotland and by the time this is published will have left. For the immediate future, the LADO role will be fulfilled by Mel Argles who can be contacted on the same number 01225 396810.

Reg Pengelly

Independent Chair, B&NES LSCB