



Reading Safeguarding Children Board Newsletter

November/December 2013

About the LSCB

Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) help make sure that all organisations who provide services to children work together to keep them safe.

Serious Case Reviews Update Recent months have seen a number of serious case reviews completed. The children's names now familiar for the tragedy of their short lives and the cruelty of their deaths. There are similar themes in many of the reports and the themes echo those found in many previous reports.

The clear message is that the system is failing to learn, with government and media speculating on why this is and what needs to be done differently. A key theme in all reviews is the need to focus more on the child and to find out what the child's life is actually like. There is a need to share more information across agencies to create a fuller picture and the recurring issues of domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse and mental health problems were noted in most cases. The report into Daniel Pelka's short life and cruel death contains many of these themes. Pointers to improve practice include the following;

- Always consider domestic abuse as a child protection issue
- Talk directly to children – ensure no child is invisible Develop understanding of patterns
- Write effective and timely records and reports
- Physical injuries, especially to face must always be considered as abuse

Training

The LSCB has published its Training Programme for the year ahead. Courses include specialist courses for those working with child sexual exploitation and a wide range of safeguarding courses. Including an advance course for working with families when domestic violence is a feature and also one for safer care for children of parents with a learning Disability. Details can be accessed through the LSCB website

<http://www.reading.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/professionals--hub/localsafeguardingchildrenboard/safeguarding-children-training/>

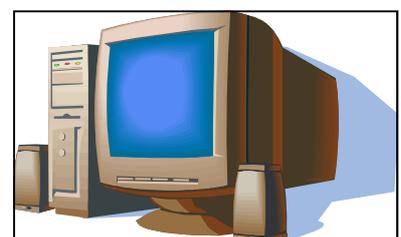
there is also a comprehensive e-learning programme for staff in the childrens workforce. Useful learning material can also be found on websites,



Policies and Procedures

The Board is responsible for having an up to date effective set of Procedures that explains what to do in certain situations. There are also some guidance notes. You can look at the Procedures either through a direct link on your

Computer desk top where they exist or by clicking on:
<http://berks.proceduresonline.com/index.htm>

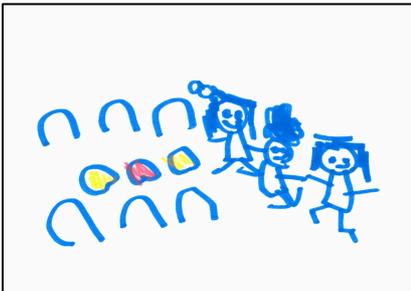


Awareness Raising

FGM Awareness; Between 130-140 million girls and women alive today have undergone FGM in 28 Countries in Africa and some countries in the Middle East and Asia. Annually in Africa 3million girls are affected. The workshop addressed the following points.

- Identified the different factors underpinning the practice of FGM and the prevalence among different communities in the UK.
- Gained a better understanding of the impact of FGM on victims.
- Discussed risk factors and guidelines for practitioners to help identify and safeguard children/young women at risk of FGM.
- Discussed ways of working with families where there is a risk of children being made to undergo the practice of FGM

You could use the list to find out what your team or service knows about the practice of FGM. There are several forms of FGM with the following countries practising it, **Indonesia, Malaysia, Sudan, Mali, Nigeria, Mauritania, Guinea, Togo, Uganda, Eritrea, Kenya, Liberia, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Eastern Chad, Cameroon, and Ivory Coast. Djibouti, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Somalia, Thailand, Rwanda, Burundi, Yemen.**



Long-Term Mental Health Outcome of Sexual Abuse. This workshop presented research findings and included some discussion about resilience and protective factors. Protective factors include

- Family support
- Strong supportive peer relationships
- Education / School achievement
- Positive plans for the future
- Religion

Managing risks posed by sexual offenders. The Lucy Faithfull Foundation led this workshop and included a diagram on the Pre-conditions to sexual offending (Ref: - D. Finkelhor (1986) *Child Sexual Abuse: New Theory & Research*)

- Motivation to sexually offend
- Overcome internal inhibitors
- Overcome external inhibitors
- Overcome Victim resistance

Forced Marriage Unit. This is a section of the foreign office, which works to prevent forced marriages; they have handled cases involving 60 different countries.

Depression in children and young people - Quality Standards QS48 (September 2013)

NICE quality standards are a concise set of prioritised statements designed to drive measurable quality improvements within a particular area of health or care. This quality standard covers the diagnosis and management of depression in children and young people aged 5 up to their 18th birthday.

<http://guidance.nice.org.uk/QS48>



Board Members



**Stephen Barber, Independent
LSCB Chair**

**Anderson Connell, Reading
LSCB Lay Member**



**Marian McNichol, LSCB
Business Manager**

Update from the last Board Meeting

Reading Safeguarding Children Board met on October 24th. There was a busy agenda and excellent attendance. The board welcomed Anne Farley, the new lay member. She joins Anderson Connell in undertaking the special role lay members have in helping the board engage with local communities. Nicky Williams was also attending her first board as a representative of the independent schools sector in Reading. **Adviza**, known previously as Connexions, presented their Annual Report. They are a smaller organisation than previously but still provide services to many vulnerable young people. The board also heard about the **Domestic Violence Strategy developed** by the multi-agency Domestic Violence Steering Group. Domestic violence is a feature of the lives of many children on child protection plans and is noted in many serious case reviews as an indicator of risk. All agencies know we need to do more to prevent it and to offer support and advice to families experiencing domestic violence. Comments included the need to ensure the MARAC

(multi-agency risk assessment conference- held when agencies believe there is a risk of repeat incidents and therefore a need to implement a risk reduction plan), process provides an effective response to children. Anyone can ask for a MARAC conference. The report set out an ambitious action plan and a request was made to health agencies for more active participation in the steering group. The board was pleased to receive the annual report from the **Youth Offending Service**.

First Time Entrants to the Criminal Justice system are significantly reduced

Re-offending rates show no particular pattern, but are consistent with the national picture

Low use of custody, on both remand and sentence

Priorities for the future

Continued focus on the three National Indicators (above)

Continue to embed a whole family approach to planning and intervention

Embedding Signs of Safety into co-production in planning

The board reviewed the Child **Sexual Exploitation strategy** and received an annual report on the arrangements for safeguarding children who are electively home educated. There was also a report on children who are **privately fostered** and note was made of the low numbers registered within Reading. Recent audit findings indicate the need for continuous updating of key agencies such as schools and GP practices to ensure people are alert to the higher risks that a private fostering arrangement might entail. **Child protection conferences** were discussed and the system for reporting allegations against

workers in the children's workforce, the **LADO system** gave their annual report. The board was told of recent problems finding local resources for young people requiring **in-patient services from mental health providers**. Young people are often placed a long way from home, a review is underway to try and address the problem and the board asked to be kept updated as the review progresses.

September Conference Update

The LSCBs across Berkshire West combined with the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board to run a conference in September that focused on sexual abuse and related themes. 115 people attended but in case you missed it, this newsletter highlights some of the key themes and messages. Additional information is available please do contact the LSCB if you have further questions.

Crime, Consent and Capacity was a workshop on vulnerable victims' consent or non consent to sexual activity and how the justice system responds to them. It included awareness of what constitutes a sexual crime. The criminal law is found in the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

How the law affects those who advise children?

A person does not commit an offence of aiding or abetting a child sex offence if they give advice to children in order to:

protect them from sexually transmitted infection,

protect their physical safety,

prevent them from becoming pregnant, or

Promote their emotional well-being.

This means that parents, doctors, other health professionals, in fact anyone can provide sexual health advice to children as long as their only motivation in doing so is the protection of the child.

Legal definitions include the following;

Section 15: Grooming: Where a person over the age of 18, having

met or communicated with a child on at least two occasions, intentionally meets the child or travels to meet the child anywhere in the world, with the intention of committing a sexual offence (whether during, or after, the meeting);

And where the child is under 16 and the accused does not reasonably

believe the child to be over 16.

Section 16: Abuse of Trust and Sexual Assault: Where a person over the age of 18 intentionally sexually touches a child or young person, the accused is in a position of trust and the child or young person is **either**: - under the age of 13; or under the age of 18, and the accused does not reasonably believe that person to be over the age of 18.



Contact Information

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Learning the lessons — News about a serious case review

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