



March 2017

Message from Deborah Lightfoot, LSCB Chair

Welcome to the March LSCB newsletter- in this I want to remind colleagues about the concept in safeguarding children work of **'professional curiosity'**. At its heart this asks frontline workers and managers to demonstrate a healthy scepticism and respectful uncertainty in their dealings with families. They should play 'devil's advocate' and constantly balance arguments and opposing concepts. Set out below are two areas where it is important that we do not make assumptions about the lives of children and families- children who may be in private fostering arrangements and children who may be educated at home.

Elective Home Education (EHE)

EHE is when parents or carers take on the full legal responsibility for educating their child or children. All parents have a responsibility to make sure their children receive education. Most parents carry out this responsibility by sending their children to school.

We often assume in universal services, such as GPs, Housing, Police, London Ambulance Service, and Hospital Departments, that all children of school age go to school. By law, parents can choose to educate their children at home. About 60 children are educated at home in Kingston and over 90 in Richmond. Our LSCB quality assurance work has been looking at children who are educated at home this year and this was discussed at the Board in Kingston in February.

Home-educating parents or carers are not more likely than others to abuse or neglect their children. There is, however, a risk that home-educated children can become invisible to local agencies. Under current legislation and guidance, there is no formal registration process EHE, which means that some home-educated children may be completely unknown to the local authority. There are good local organisations who offer support to children who are educated at home.

A minority of parents and carers can choose to educate their children at home to avoid scrutiny. They can be resistant to engagement with services.

A Case Review was published in Pembrokeshire in 2016 regarding an 8 year old child who was home educated; he died from scurvy in 2011; another review was published by Birmingham LSCB regarding Khyra Ishaq, aged 7, who died of starvation and neglect in 2013; she too was receiving home education. These tragic reviews have important learning for us all.

Remember:

- schools to note and act appropriately when children leave schools or are missing education;
- if your work or volunteering leads you to meet children or young people who you find may not be in education, contact the SPA;
- admissions teams can ask for proof of identify, relationship and legal responsibility;
- above all, be curious.

Find out more here:

www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/content.asp?nav=101,100&id=31390

<http://www.educationotherwise.net/attachments/article/350/NSPCC-SCR-BRIEFING-March-2014.pdf>

www.afclocaloffer.org.uk/pages/home/education/elective-home-education

Policy for Children Missing Education

[http://kingstonandrichmondscb.org.uk/media/upload/fck/file/Policies%20and%20Procedures/Missing%20Children/Children%20Missing%20Education%20Protocol%20%20Nov%202015%20\(1\).pdf](http://kingstonandrichmondscb.org.uk/media/upload/fck/file/Policies%20and%20Procedures/Missing%20Children/Children%20Missing%20Education%20Protocol%20%20Nov%202015%20(1).pdf)

Private Fostering

Private Fostering occurs when a child aged under 16 years, or 18 if disabled, is cared for by someone other than a close relative for more than 28 days. Close relatives are defined as step parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts or uncles. To qualify as private fostering, the arrangement has not been made by the Local Authority, and the child or young person is not being looked after by an approved foster carer. Most private foster carers are excellent and safe, however we have recognised only a handful of children in Kingston and Richmond, and there are many more. If the Local Authority is unaware of the arrangement, they cannot carry out their statutory duty to assess the situation and offer support. Universal services, such as schools, A&E, and GPs have the biggest opportunity on admission or registration to ensure children are as safe as possible. The SPA will assess if the situation is in fact PF, so you can contact with queries, after asking for documents.

This one minute LSCB film is suitable for staff, school governors and can be shown to the public in reception and waiting areas: <http://kingstonandrichmondscb.org.uk/parents-carers/private-fostering-looking-after-somebody-elses-child-18.php>

Here are some helpful questions:

- is there anything unclear on files or records about the child's living arrangements?
- is the child an unaccompanied asylum seeker or trafficked?
- is the child living with someone other than a parent, someone with parental responsibility or close relative?
- has the child been living, or is likely to live away from home for more than 28 days, or a series totaling more than 28 days?

Walking out of Darkness

One of our LSCB priorities for Kingston and Richmond this year is emotional wellbeing for children and young people. Together with our local colleagues we wish to ask you to help us promote **Walking Out of Darkness**, which works to prevent self-harm and suicide. Mental Health Awareness Week is 8-13 May 2017. We want to join their walk on Saturday 13 May in London to increase Mental Health Awareness, Suicide Prevention and end the Stigma.

Find out more here: www.claspcharity.com

Young people's mental health survey

YoungMinds is holding a survey for young people aged 11-18 about their experiences of education and mental health. The survey should take around 15-20 minutes:
www.youngminds.org.uk/mental_health_education_survey.

The information collected from this survey will be used as part of an inquiry in Parliament being held by the Health and Education Select Committees. The inquiry is asking two key questions about schools and colleges:

- How important is the role of schools and colleges in teaching young people about their mental health?
- How important is the role of schools and colleges in preventing mental health problems from happening in young people's lives?