



Message from Deborah Lightfoot, LSCB Chair

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2016. In this edition we address the issue of diversity which was an area of practice improvement and consistent theme for both LSCBs throughout last year. Sticking to our focus on practice, set out below are details of the free Richmond and Kingston LSCB conference on 2nd February 2016 looking at missing children and child sexual exploitation which I urge you to attend. This is a short conference aimed at all members of our multi agency partnership with a session running in the morning and then repeated in the afternoon.

Diversity Matters

One of our local priorities from our LSCB learning and improvement case reviews and our audit work in Kingston and Richmond, is that we pay attention to issues of diversity when working with families. Disability, ethnicity, class, culture and history are all important in understanding a child and family, and how they live. Without duplicating conversations, it is important that any multi-agency network understands a family's basic information and identity. This is a springboard to working effectively towards change. Do we know how the family fits into their culture and society? Have they faced discrimination and prejudice? Do we have any stereotypes as we meet them? Are we making assumptions regarding language, history, or ability? If we don't ask, an opportunity is lost.....maybe forever.

NSPCC research from published case reviews highlights that professionals sometimes lack the knowledge and confidence to work with families from different cultures and religions. A lack of understanding of the religious and cultural context of families can lead to professionals overlooking situations, that may put family members at risk; whilst the desire to be culturally-sensitive can result in professionals accepting lower standards of care.

'The learning from these reviews highlights that professionals need to take into account families' cultural and religious context when undertaking assessments and offering support. The rights and needs of the child need to remain the focus of interventions at all times, regardless of this context.' Find out more here:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/case-reviews/learning/culture-faith/>

Some key information:

- If you're working with a family and you know or suspect that English is not their first language, it is important to always check that what you are saying is understood;
- It is important to establish as early as possible what language a family would prefer to speak, if you suspect comprehension issues. Once established, arrange interpretation services accordingly;
- Be aware that you may not be fully understood by a family when making initial contact. Failure to respond or attend appointments may be the result of a lack of comprehension, rather than engagement. Follow up contacts, ideally with a home visit.

Learning regarding culture and faith:

- Assessment tools should be adapted to ensure cultural sensitivity based on knowledge and understanding;
- Assessments should explore the impact of a person's culture on their life, including: spiritual practices, rites/blessings, beliefs and practices surrounding life events, dietary restrictions, personal care, daily rituals, communication, social customs and attitudes to healthcare and support.

Research and evidence suggests that **Deaf and Disabled Children** are more likely to be abused than non-disabled children. They are particularly vulnerable to abuse because:

- The same protection is not offered to disabled children as it is to non-disabled children;
- Sometimes they are treated as different and not provided adequate sex education or information on their body;
- In general, these children may face more isolation, physically and emotionally, and particularly from mainstream services and facilities;
- Some may have a lack of communication with other people;
- There may be a dependency on others for their most important needs such as feeding, taking medication or their intimate care needs.

If you work with **deaf and disabled children**, it is important to get training about how to keep them safe. More information can be found at by clicking the following links:

- [Safe Network](#)
- [Equality Human Rights Commission](#)
- [London Safeguarding Board – Culture and Faith](#)
- [Social Care Institute for Excellence](#)

LSCB Free ‘Mini’ Conference – Missing Children and Child Sexual Exploitation

The LSCB will be hosting a mini conference on Tuesday 2nd February at the Teddington Baptist Church focusing on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Missing Children. The event will also launch the Joint Kingston and Richmond LSCB CSE and Missing Children Strategies, which practitioners and professionals can utilise. Key organisations and services will be hosting stands at the Conference, where you will be able to network and access some valuable information about the services that they provide. We have just under 2 weeks before the Conference so please download the [conference flyer](#) for more details and booking a place. To book for the conference please email: maha.gadher@achievingforchildren.org.uk with your **name, job role, organisation, email address and contact telephone number**.

Department for Education – Reporting Abuse campaign

The Department for Education (DfE) are planning a national campaign re raising public awareness around reporting child abuse for parents aged 25-40 starting in March 2016. The campaign aims to encourage the public to report their concerns in order to get help to children more quickly. The DfE aims to create a new social norm around reporting and tackle the barriers that stop people taking action. The campaign will address all forms of abuse and neglect. Many forms of abuse and neglect present alongside one another and the most common reason for a child to be in the child protection system is neglect - one of our priority issues in Kingston and Richmond.

Research for this campaign has shown that if people feel they are part of their community's response to child abuse and neglect, this reduces their fear of reporting and encourages them to report. The DfE will be piloting a paid-for campaign in 33 local authorities in the West Midlands and Outer London. In these areas, the DfE will pay for out-of-home (bus stop), digital (Facebook and pay-per-click) and radio advertising. These areas have been chosen to test the activity, because of their dense and diverse populations.

The DfE will be giving us free resources in Kingston and Richmond and we want to encourage early help and preventive support, such as using the CAF (Common Assessment Framework) with professionals at the same time. The LSCB is going to work with other local agencies, such as GPs, Public Health and Schools to publicise this around six local areas where need is greatest for children and young people. In Richmond these areas will be Whitton, Hampton and Barnes. In Kingston these will be Norbiton, Berrylands, and Chessington. Please let us know if you would be able to join us.

Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness Raising

The LSCB is also raising awareness of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) around 18th March 2016 to combine with the national campaign. Please can you let the LSCBs know if your school or agency has any plans so that we can ensure the local press is aware, and so that we can help you. We would hope to have Safefrom car/shop window stickers by then. Please inform Vivienne White (Vivienne.white@achievingforchildren.org.uk) if you would like the LSCB Stickers and/or LSCB CSE leaflets well in advance.

Please see the following links on ideas about how to raise awareness:

- <http://www.stop-cse.org/national-child-exploitation-awareness-day/>
- <http://faceup2it.org/>

Reforms to strengthen the approach to Local Authority intervention

In December 2015, the Prime Minister announced a number of reforms to strengthen the approach to Local Authority intervention. The announcement also set out a number of further measures including an urgent review of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) and centralisation of Serious Case Reviews (SCRs). The fundamental review of the roles and functions of LSCBs began in January 2016 and will be completed in March 2016. It will be led by Alan Wood, former President of the Association of Directors of Children's Services. He will look at the roles and functions of LSCBs within the context of local strategic multi-agency working, including the child death review process, and will consider how the intended centralisation of SCR's will work effectively at local level. As soon as we have more information this will be shared with you.