

Autumn Newsletter 2008

Welcome to the MSCB newsletter.

Child Death Review Process

The death of a child, at any age, is a tragedy. From 1st April 2008, the government required that all Local Safeguarding Children Boards (including MSCB) must be notified of the death of any child under 18 years whether from natural, unnatural, known or unknown causes, at home, in hospital or in the community.

It is intended that such a process will provide better support and information for the families of those children who have died. This course of action will enable a coordinated agency response to unexpected deaths.

Thorough investigations of all child deaths will allow a greater understanding about why child deaths occur in Medway, and what can be done to prevent them.

The analysis of local child deaths will enable the identification of cases requiring a serious case review, matters of concern regarding children to be detected and, on a larger scale, will enable public health/safety concerns to be ascertained from a single death or a pattern of deaths.

All agencies that have had contact with the child should expect to contribute to the process, which means that most organizations or agencies should expect to be involved with work of this nature at some point. They will be asked to share information about the child to help formulate the professional response, and to inform the work of the Medway Child Death Overview Panel.

The MSCB has developed a Child Death Review Process to satisfy these requirements,



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which can be accessed on our website at www.msccb.org.uk.

Information for those affected by the death of a child

To lose a child is the most devastating experience any parent has to face. The **Child Death Helpline** aims to provide a quality freephone service to all those affected by the death of a child under any circumstances, and however long ago.

Further information can be accessed at www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk, or by calling 0800 282 986 (time restrictions apply).

For further details on any issues mentioned in this newsletter, or for further details of our training courses, please contact MSCB using the details below:

✉ *MSCB Administrator
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Chatham
Kent ME4 4TR*

✉ *MSCB@medway.gov.uk
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Autumn 2008

The Byron Review

On 6 September 2007, Dr Tanya Byron was asked to independently review potentially harmful or inappropriate material children may be exposed to through the internet or video games. It brought, what she described as, a "very necessary focus to what is a very necessary debate".



The Byron Review shifted the focus of the debate from those forms of media attributed with causing harm, to the children and young people, and how their understanding can be used to make the digital world safer. It highlighted the difference in confidence about using the internet between parents and their children, despite children still developing their critical evaluation skills.

Just as it is the responsibility of multiple agencies to keep children safe in the real world, it is everyone's responsibility to contribute to their welfare on the digital realm. The Byron review cites people in diverse roles at all levels of society as forming part of the support network necessary to underpin a culture of responsibility.

Schools and other children's services have been identified by the Byron Review as playing a key part in equipping children and their parents with the skills they need to stay safe online.

Every part of the workforce involved with children should undergo e-safety training. Educating people in this fashion, however, will only be productive if backed up by an effective social marketing campaign, aimed at changing people's existing habits.

The global popularity of video games and the variety of topics which they incorporate means that a complex approach is necessary to managing children's access to them. While the chance of a child becoming addicted to video games is minimal, spending any significant amount of time playing them will inevitably impact upon their social development.

Parental knowledge of each individual child is key to understanding the impact a game will have on a child, but improved classifications and offering better advice about games to parents will ensure they make the best decision about which games to allow their child access to. A joint effort from both the industry and parents will push up standards of children's safety within this arena.



Child Protection Training

MSCB is planning next year's training schedule, and in designing it, we've taken into account the comments of people who have already completed

our training. We will hopefully also be offering new training, according to what you've specified you would like. Next year's timetable will be available on our website soon, so keep checking back!

Upcoming training events include:

Basic Awareness in Child Protection
(Friday 24th October - *full*)

Advanced Sex Offending Behaviour
(11th-12th December)

Introduction to Sex Offending Behaviour
(Wednesday 11th February 2009- *full*)

Neglecting Neglect
(Monday 26th January 2009)

MSCB training events are regularly oversubscribed, so please apply for courses as soon as possible. Most courses are filled on a first-come-first-served basis. A full list of events is available on our website.

MSCB is continually striving to improve its training plan; if you feel training should be delivered on a particular topic or that MSCB's training could be improved in any way, please send comments or suggestions to our contact details (found on the front or back page of this newsletter).

Effort needs to be made on several fronts if children are to enjoy contemporary technological advances. The risks of the internet are closely correlated to the benefits, but the benefits to children's development are evident in many areas. With adequate regulation, the internet can be used as an aid in developing children's creativity, learning, identity and social engagement.

Details of the Byron Review, including the full report and a summary for children and young people can be found at:

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/byronreview/>



Independent Safeguarding Authority

Independent Safeguarding Authority

What do you know about the ISA?

What is the Independent Safeguarding Authority?

The ISA is an independent body, set up aiming to "help prevent unsuitable people from working with children and vulnerable adults."

Why does it exist?

Jessica Chapman and Holly Wells were murdered by their school caretaker, Ian Huntley, in Soham in 2002. How a man with multiple allegations against him of underage sex, rape and indecent assault, was able to gain a job in a school staggered police investigating the case and the public as a whole.



The day after Huntley's conviction, the Richard Inquiry was launched. It was intended to reveal how a man with Huntley's past had got through vetting processes and gained employment in a local school.

The inquiry's recommendations eventually led to the writing of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. A need for a single agency, charged with vetting all individuals who want to become involved with vulnerable people in any way, was identified, and the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) was created.

When does it come into existence?

The Independent Safeguarding Authority does not yet operate - it comes into being 12th October 2009.

How will it work?

The ISA will work in partnership with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB), who already play the role of a 'one stop shop' for organisations who need to run police checks, to make the process possible. The CRB will develop the administrative aspect of the application process, and will inform the barring process accordingly.

Individuals applying to work or volunteer with members of vulnerable groups will need to apply to be vetted via the CRB (volunteers will not have to pay, all others will pay a one-off £64 fee). The CRB will check if any relevant information exists, whether from the police or other agencies. If there is



not, the individual becomes ISA registered, and will be informed accordingly. If relevant information comes to light, this information will be passed to the ISA who makes the decision about whether to place the applicant on the Barred List.

Could that decision ever change?

All those who are ISA-registered will be subject to continuous checks. If new police of referral information is brought forward, this could result in an individual being barred (if this is appropriate).

How will the ISA decide who to bar?

The ISA will consider information from a wide variety of sources when making such a decision. It will look at offences, evidence of behaviour likely to cause harm to a member of a vulnerable group, referrals from employers and employers from other agencies/regulatory bodies.

Will there be any kind of appeal system for someone who has been barred?

Yes, although only appeals based on either points of law or facts that the ISA made their decision upon will be allowed. No appeal will be allowed against the decision making process. The Care Standards Tribunal will hear appeals.

Who will have to be checked?

From October 2009, all new applicants to jobs which work with members of vulnerable groups (adults or children) will need to apply for ISA registration.

From 2010, all existing employees and volunteers without CRB check must apply for ISA registration. Equally, those employees or volunteers with CRB checks will begin to apply for ISA registration, beginning with those with the oldest CRB checks.

Where can I find out more about the ISA?

Further information is available at:

<http://www.isa.gov.org.uk/>

Any queries may be directed to

scheme.info@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

MSCB's Annual Report 2007-08 and Business Plan 2008-09

MSCB's Annual Report demonstrates what the Board has achieved. Key accomplishments are as follows:

- Launch of joint Kent and Medway safeguarding children procedures – demonstrating consistent co-operation on policy, procedures and practice guidance agreed between Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children Boards.
- Key strategies established for safer recruitment and safeguarding training.
- New board logo and corporate identity established.
- Audit of all Medway agencies' compliance with Children Act 2004 section 11 completed.
- Child death overview and rapid response proposals agreed across Medway agencies.
- Comprehensive multi-agency safeguarding training programme delivered.
- New processes developed for conducting serious case and lessons learned Reviews and monitoring the implementation of recommendations.

Within the report, the MSCB outlines strategic safeguarding priorities in line with those of the Local Area Agreement. It also provides criteria which performance will be scrutinised against and will be evaluated to discover the extent to which they are achieved. This will indicate the effectiveness of multi agency working within this remit. The priorities are:

- Keeping Medway's most vulnerable children safe
- Providing children and young people with a safe environment
- Minimise the incidence of child abuse and neglect

The Board sought to raise awareness amongst young people this year. It engaged with the Medway Youth Parliament as part of the programme of consultation with the new safeguarding children procedures. It is anticipated that some members of the Cool Kids Club will offer input into developing the website this financial year, and will

help to develop a children's version of the Safeguarding Procedures.

The 2008-2009 Business Plan sets out what MSCB will aim to achieve this year and sets this in the context of our direction of travel in the longer term. Following the recommendations of the joint Area Review in 2006, the last business plan was focussed upon putting the nuts and bolts of plans and strategies in place. This year's focus is upon developing understanding how agencies, disciplines and individuals can best work together to improve outcomes for children.

Members of the Board identified the following issues as key for the forthcoming year:

- Safer recruitment.
- Child Death Overview Panel, and in particular the role of the designated paediatrician.
- Domestic violence.
- Neglect
- Improving Communication between agencies regarding safeguarding.
- That children and young people know what to do if they are concerned about their safety or others.

Under the 2008-09 Business Plan, the Board is keen to develop its strategic responsibilities and those of its constituent partners. It is especially important that the Board has the appropriate links in place with the other strategic bodies that have a role to play in safeguarding children in Medway and beyond. The Plan will also map the links between the board's activities and the strategic priorities.

For further information, and to view an electronic version of both the Annual Report 2007-08 and the Business Plan 2008-09, please visit our website.

Serious Case and Lessons Learned Review Workshops

MSCB is pleased to announce, in addition to the scheduled training programme 2007/08, a new half-day workshop for practitioners from all Medway agencies and organisations.

It is intended to provide delegates with a thorough understanding of SCRs and LLRs, what their purpose is and to examine how to learn more effectively from them.

It is facilitated by Sally Mortimore (MSCB Manager) and Caroline Budden (Chair, MSCB Quality Assurance and Case Review Subgroup (incorporating the Serious Case Review Panel) in 3 different locations throughout October. For a place on the course, please contact the MSCB administrator using the details on the back of this newsletter.

New Report: Safeguarding Children 2008

The third joint chief inspectors' report on arrangements for safeguarding children was published in July 2008. It identifies a number of positive change made in the children's services arena, fuelled largely by changes made the Children Act 2004 and the Every Child Matters agenda.



The arrangements for safeguarding children and young people in four areas came under scrutiny in the report, including the effectiveness of the system currently in place, how well vulnerable groups of children and young people are looked after, how child protection concerns are dealt with by the relevant authorities and the wider safeguarding role of public services.

A generally positive trend has been identified since the 2005 report, although it is noted that some children are still not served well. Those affected continue to be those in secure settings, asylum seekers and looked after children. Clearly, further attention needs to be paid to those children in these areas to ensure that they are properly safeguarded.

The report specified that greater emphasis has been placed on safeguarding all children and there has been noticeably improved inter-agency support for children in need of protection from abuse or neglect.

LSCBs generally have shown greater independence in their actions than when they were first established in 2006. The report commented that all agencies who have a statutory duty to cooperate need to ensure that they are members of the relevant LSCBs by 1st September 2008, as specified in statute. It also instructed that LSCBs need to make robust quality checks on agencies within their area to ensure compliance, with checks including random CRB checks and regular audits of vetting practice.

With regards to dealing with children within custodial settings, the report advocates an open approach. For example, any incident of restraint which results in the injury of a child should be reported to the LSCB, and similarly all incidences of strip-searching in such an environment should be recorded and monitored by prison safeguarding committees.

Domestic violence has been consistently identified as a high priority for action. The majority of LSCBs making this identi-

fication have demonstrated the impact of this work on outcomes for children and young people, and significant improvements have been made to joint working practices designed to fight domestic violence.

Yet there is a significant difference in levels of comprehension about the issues surrounding domestic violence by CAFCASS practitioners, which plays a significant role safeguarding children who are affected by it. In a related issue, all relevant departments or agencies should take the impact of domestic violence on children into account, as part of their risk assessments, when deliberating over planning, delivering, evaluating or inspecting safeguarding services.

Public services have improved their identification of needs at an early stage. They have consistently contributed a more effective provision of preventative and early intervention services. In addition to child protection, a strong com-

mitment was evidenced to focus on the wider safeguarding needs of children and young people.



Despite some concerns, the report advocates that "most children feel safe, and are safe in their homes and communities." The third joint chief inspectors' report clearly outlines what action different organisations need to take, and how this will improve upon the current situation.

Further information can be found at: <http://www.safeguardingchildren.org.uk/Safeguarding-Children/2008-report> .

Next issue.....

.....MSCB will be offering guidance to help young people stay safe on the internet.

If there is anything you would like to see in the next issue, please let us know. Send any suggestions to one of the addresses found at the back of this newsletter.

Safeguarding in the News

Information disclosure pilot begins around the UK

From 15/09/08, four areas are testing a new scheme where parents, carers or guardians of children and young people are allowed to ask the police if a person has a record for child sexual offences. The areas, which will house the scheme for a year, are Warwickshire, Cambridgeshire, Cleveland and Hampshire.

The leaflet containing more information about the scheme can be found at this link:
<http://www.info4local.gov.uk/documents/publications/967603>

For examples of how and when the pilot would be invoked, please view the following BBC link:
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7616515.stm>



needs and disabilities when facing bullying. It is hoped it will enable these learners to participate more fully in school life, and will help schools develop a non-bullying ethos.

The leaflet containing more information about this can be found at: <http://www.info4local.gov.uk/documents/publications/957246?version=1>

Paedophilia in Albert Square

EastEnders is to bear witness to the unfolding of a paedophilic storyline. Just chasing ratings? Diederick Santer, executive producer of EastEnders insists not, and that this is to bring to the fore an uncomfortable issue.

The actor playing the paedophile, Chris Coghill, explains that he hopes forcing such a difficult issue into the limelight might help people recognise signs of abuse they wouldn't have otherwise. He elaborates: "If people recognise something on EastEnders that is happening in their lives and it means that they pick up the phone to NSPCC or Childline, then it's worth doing."

Further information can be found at:
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2008/sep/13/eastenders-television>

Guidance released about preventing bullying involving children with special educational needs

On 05/09/08, the government released guidance entitled Bullying Involving Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities: Safe to learn - Embedding anti-bullying work in schools".

This guidance targets schools, and is intended to enable them to better support learners with special educational

MSCB's new website is now up and running

The site provides full details about the training courses that we run, as well as when the next dates are scheduled.

It is regularly updated with the board's latest news and has a section to enable kids to understand who we are and what we do.

All board publications are available, as well as some nation publications, policies and procedures. It has a section jam-packed with FAQs, and you can find a copy of this newsletter electronically. Why don't you stop by and let us know what you think?



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