

WSCB News

Issue 6 January 2010

The News Bulletin of Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board

A Welcome from Chris Hallett, Chair of WSCB



Welcome to the sixth WSCB News Bulletin, which launches 2010 with a bumper edition reflecting the major developments on safeguarding that have followed Lord Laming's Progress Report on Child Protection in England.

Since publication of the last bulletin, the government has made its response to Lord Laming and the main points from this are featured in this news bulletin in our item on the WSCB 6th Annual Conference. Warwickshire has in turn developed its own Post Laming Action Plan and this can be accessed in full on the WSCB website. The Safeguarding Board and Children's Trust Board are working jointly on implementing this plan, though much of this activity hinges on the Government's detailed proposals. For example, final publication of a new version of Working Together to Safeguard Children, the mainstay of our interagency child protection work.

One of the key developments to arise from Lord Laming's report has been the move to establish a new National Safeguarding Delivery Unit (NSDU). The purpose of the NSDU is to provide a mechanism for driving good practice across the country. The Government has appointed a new Chief Advisor on Safeguarding to lead this work – Sir Roger Singleton,

currently head of the Independent Safeguarding Authority. (The ISA is working on a new vetting and barring system for people whose work brings them into contact with children, and the implications of this are being considered by the WSCB Safer Employment Subcommittee).

Readers will understand our delight when Sir Roger asked to come to Warwickshire last Autumn, to talk to us about our Risk Assessment Model. He has identified the identification and management of risk in child protection as a major priority of his new unit, and was very interested in what we have been doing in Warwickshire. Details of his visit are to be found in this edition.

There are many other interesting and important features for you to read that showcase the many aspects of the Board's work and those playing such a key role in enabling us to achieve our objectives.

I hope you enjoy reading this bulletin.

A Request to our Readers:

Would you like to contribute to completion of the WSCB Improvement Tool and the Action Plan? (See feature on page 3).

If you have any views about what WSCB could do to make itself more effective; bring its activities closer to professionals in Warwickshire or improve on some of its current work then send these to us by using the mail-box on the WSCB website or e-mailing Vic Tuck directly at: vicktuck@warwickshire.gov.uk

We would also like to know what you think we do well and any activities delivered by the Board that you find particularly useful.

WSCB holds its latest Annual Conference - Safeguarding Warwickshire Children after Laming



Marion Davis addressing the conference

The WSCB 6th Annual Conference, held after the Government made known its response to Lord Laming's Progress Report on Child Protection in England, heard a major key-note address from Director of Warwickshire Children's Services, Marion Davis. Marion is also Vice President of the Association of Directors of Children's Services.

80 delegates from Board partners in the statutory and voluntary sectors were briefed that the Government had accepted all of Laming's recommendations. Its response has centred on five key themes:

- **National Leadership and accountability** – stronger central guidance, appointment of a chief advisor and National Safeguarding Delivery Unit, a more rigorous inspection framework

- **Local Leadership and accountability** – strengthened local governance arrangements, new guidance on roles of director and lead member
- **Supporting local leaders and the frontline workforce** – better support from the DCSF and Children's Workforce Development Council, new training programmes from the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes (C4EO), action on the capacity of police child protection units and health visiting programme
- **Social work reform** – A Social Work Task Force which has reported on how the profession may be developed, and a Social Work Transformation Fund of £57.8
- **Tackling delays in proceedings and review of court fees**

Marion outlined the widespread concern that apart from the welcome investment in strengthening social work training, the considerable

demands that flow from the Laming Report are unfunded.

She described the implications for local safeguarding children boards, and the new distinct role of the LSCB and Children's Trusts. This includes an independent chair for the former, the responsibility of the Chief Executive to produce an annual safeguarding report, Director and lead member joining the LSCB along with lay members, and consulting young people to inform the Board's work.

Setting out the challenges ahead for WSCB, Marion said that the Board would have to review its relationship with the Children's Trust, update its membership and chair, and forge links with the National Safeguarding Delivery Units. Serious Case Reviews would need to become more robust with independent authors and independent review panel chairs. We would need to build on our current work of promoting the participation of children and young people in shaping safeguarding services.



From Rhetoric to Reality Making WSCB More Effective

The sixth annual Warwickshire LSCB conference held at the Trident Centre in Leamington Spa set itself the task of responding to the Laming Report by undertaking the most extensive evaluation so far of the Board's effectiveness. This was achieved through workshops where members of the Board and it is nine subcommittees and associate members worked together to complete the government's new LSCB Challenge and Improvement Tool. Led by Dr Vic Tuck, WSCB Development Manager, the workshops focused on 7 essential principles of good governance in safeguarding children.

Chris Hallett, Chair of WSCB, described the process: "It is absolutely essential in the current climate that we as a Safeguarding Children Board have systems and structures in place that are "fit for purpose" and capable of delivering good outcomes for children in Warwickshire."

Continues Chris: "In being one of the first LSCBs to go through the exhaustive process of completing the new Government tool, we were able to involve our full membership – not just a few people – in appraising our governance arrangements and all aspects of our operation,"

The outcome of the process is a detailed action plan specifying a series of priority actions, which has been approved by the Board. These actions and their implementation are linked to the Warwickshire Laming Action Plan.

Learning from Laming

– WSCB holds major training conference for practitioners.



Linda Village

Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board has commissioned the world renowned Eye

Witness Theatre Company to deliver a major multi agency training conference. Child Protection: Learning from Laming took place in November 2009, funded entirely from the proceeds of the Board's non-attendance charging policy. The content of the day considered the exercise of professional authority in child protection cases; working with disguised compliant and hostile parents, as well as focusing on other current developments in child protection practice.

Linda Village, WSCB Interagency Development Officer (pictured), organised the event and explains its purpose: "Just as the Safeguarding Board and its members have had an opportunity to consider the impact of the Laming Progress Report, so it is important that practitioners from across the County have also been able to reflect on the key findings."

The day provided a keen learning experience, building on other WSCB multi-agency training programmes. Continues Linda: "It has provided a platform for constructive debate with an emphasis on improving practice in the light of the Laming Report".

With an unprecedented 100 Warwickshire practitioners and managers attending, the training conference was an invaluable forum for interagency networking as well as learning together. Due to the phenomenal demand for places, the WSCB Training Subcommittee has organised a repeat of the conference this year.

Government's Top New Advisor Comes to Warwickshire



Sir Roger Singleton

Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) has received a visit from Sir Roger Singleton, the new Chief Adviser on the Safety of Children. His Government appointment followed Lord Laming's report into the protection of children in England.

The chief adviser advises the Government on strategic priorities and the effective implementation of policy, as well as reporting annually to Parliament on safeguarding progress.

During his visit, Sir Roger listened to a presentation from WSCB Development Manager Dr Vic Tuck on the Warwickshire Risk Assessment Model, and a perspective from the Children's Reviewing Team delivered by Mary Eccleston and Andrew Jones.

The process developed in Warwickshire for escalating complex cases was spelt out by Phil Sawbridge, Assistant Head of Service, Safeguarding, Quality

Assurance and Service Development, and Liz Tinsley from the NSPCC's Midlands Region, which will provide an independent review in cases which are particularly "stuck". Sir Roger commented that this was an innovation he had not come across before and it is noteworthy that OFSTED has recently called for such processes to be put in place across the country.

Sir Roger also spoke at length to Chris Hallett, Head of Service, Children in Need division, CYPF Cabinet Member Cllr Izzi Seccombe and Matt Langsford from the Children in Care Council.

Sir Roger revealed that he initially asked to visit Warwickshire after being quizzed by Strategic Director Marion Davis. He was also impressed by the work that has been done in the County on assessing and analysing risk and wanted to see this first hand, having identified this as a priority area for the National Safeguarding Delivery Unit (NSDU) which he leads.

He said: "I chose to come to Warwickshire because the director of children's services asked me some challenging questions at a conference and I thought they were on the ball and would be an interesting authority to visit."

"I aim to have a continuing programme of visits to make sure my advice to the Government is informed on what people are doing day in and day out and to see the kinds of issues real people are dealing with."

Sir Roger added that he is looking at what more the Government could do to help children and is pulling together advice across Government departments to improve things on the front line. In the course of quizzing the panel on the risk assessment model, Sir Roger heard about the problems posed by the Integrated Children's System (ICS) and its inconsistency in enabling practitioners to record risks to children as well as their needs. He promised to take this issue back to the NSDU. There is some indication that this has already resulted in changes being put forward to the recording system.

Sir Roger took up his new three-year position, which is independent of Government, in April. His immediate priorities have been to advise on the development of the action plan to implement Lord Laming's recommendations, examine the remit of the new National Safeguarding Delivery Unit and its mode of operation, and influence and monitor the co-ordination of central government department policies and approaches towards safeguarding.

He also aims to assess the extent to which professional advice and guidance contributes to effective, front line multi-disciplinary work and intends to be alert to the emergence of particularly effective approaches, fresh ideas and new thinking.



Sir Roger, Vic Tuck and Chris Hallett



Sir Roger and the panel

Making the Internet Safer for Children at Home



Professor Tanya Byron and colleagues with pupils at Woodloes Primary School

Warwickshire's status as a focus for high profile people has been further enhanced by the launch in the County of the CyberSentinal software package by Professor Tanya Byron, leading clinical psychologist and BBC series presenter of Little Angels.

Partnering John Sullivan, WSCB Education Safeguarding Manager, and John Parmiter, Head of ICT Development, Professor Byron made a presentation to 60 head teachers and school governors about e-safety, and the role of the soft ware, which is being made available in Warwickshire to all parents of 80,000 school age children.

The package is a free e-safety product for in-home use, which protects PCs from the many dangers of the internet such as cyber bullying and chat room predators. CyberSentinal is made by Forensic Software Ltd and is already in use in county schools.

Commenting on the package, John Sullivan said that it was important that young people did not see this software as an attempt at being "big brother".

"It is really a protective measure which rests very well with our new and comprehensive WSCB E-Safety Strategy."

WSCB Launches Business Plan Update

Visitors to the WSCB web-site are able to access the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board's 3 Year Business Plan that spans the period 2008-2010. Now there is a new addition – the 2009-2010 Annual Update.

Charting the progress of the Board's key strategic objectives over the last year, the update describes the various initiatives and work streams that have been launched. It also describes the work of the nine subcommittees of the Board, measuring progress against key tasks. For the first time, the update is able to present data against the Government's Public Sector Agreement Indicators against which all LSCBS are now measured.

Phil Sawbridge, Chair of the Quality and Information Subcommittee which is responsible for compiling the Business Plan and annual updates, and bringing them to the Board for approval, comments: "I would really commend the latest document to readers of this news bulletin. For us the Plan and its updates represent a valuable planning tool that enables us to chart just where we are as a Board in terms of implementing the Government's Safeguarding Children Agenda. For professionals, it is an excellent summary of what is happening in the County at a strategic and practical level, with vital data on child protection activity in the County over the last year."

Continues Phil: "The update confirms what all practitioners at the frontline know, that there has been an upsurge in child protection activity in Warwickshire after the Baby Peter tragedy in Haringey. As a Board we are very well aware of the pressures this has placed on staff and our local interagency network, and how central to good outcomes for children are the dedication and skill of professionals."

New Practice Guidance for Trafficked Children

A key task for Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board is ensuring that all new government guidance on safeguarding children is carefully considered, and is ready for incorporation in every new version of the Blue Book. Work on producing the next version of the WSCB Interagency Child Protection Procedures will be led by the Procedures and Guidelines Subcommittees, after the government publishes the updated Working Together to Safeguard Children in the Spring.

But WSCB has acted quickly to make sure new procedures on Safeguarding Trafficked Children are available to professionals. These new procedures can be accessed on the News Page of the WSCB website (www.warwickshire.gov.uk/wscb). More detailed practice guidance produced by the West Midlands Child Trafficking Group, providing valuable background information and contact details of organisations specialising in this work, can also be found on this link.

New Escalation Processes Impress Government Advisor



As featured in this news bulletin, Sir Roger Singleton, the Government's Chief Advisor on Safeguarding Children expressed particular interest in the processes for escalating complex cases that have been developed in Warwickshire.

Key points outlined to Sir Roger were:

- WSCB has developed an integrated approach to escalation ranging from resolving cases where the threshold for intervention is disputed, to situations where there are concerns about professional practice
- Processes have been established to progress situations where children have been the subject of a child protection plan exceeding 15 months and at 33 months
- A framework is in place for managing cases where a child has been the subject of a third child protection plan or is part of a family experiencing three episodes where children have been subject to such a plan.

Sir Roger heard that cases falling into the last two categories are now the subject of an additional feature of the Warwickshire Risk Assessment Model. Professionals will conduct an Enhanced Risk Assessment, which is designed to capture the full history of the case, an aspect that Serious Case Reviews in Warwickshire and elsewhere have identified as a gap in managing chronic and particularly complex cases of child abuse.

Components of the Enhanced Risk Analysis:

- Consider the full history of the case taking account of -
 - Progress of the current child protection plan (if one in place)
 - Progress and outcome of any previous plans (child protection, child in need and others such as CAF)
 - The full, updated chronology of the case
- What evidence does this information provide about the prospects for clear demonstrable and sustained change by the family in response to professional intervention and support?
- What evidence does this information provide about the likely future outcomes for the child(ren) in terms of their safety, health and wider development?
- What does this indicate about the tenability of the current care arrangements for the children?
- Is further action now needed to safeguard the children and promote their welfare, and if so, what further actions should be taken?

With the process now in operation, WSCB has identified a number of Frequently Asked Questions:

Q. What is the purpose of the Enhanced Risk Analysis?

A. It is designed to assist members of child protection conferences when the third and fourth parts of the escalation process have been triggered (See the WSCB booklet: New Processes for Case Escalation Warwickshire, also available on the WSCB website – go to the Escalation Page).

Q. How will conference members know when an enhanced risk analysis is due?

A. The Conference Chair will advise members on the need for this at the time of the second child protection review conference. The chair will advise members that an enhanced risk assessment should be presented to the third review conference (15 months after the initial child protection conference) and thereafter at every subsequent review conference. Completing the enhanced risk analysis will override the need to compile an updated risk assessment as applies at the time of the first and second review conferences.

Q. Who will complete this enhanced risk analysis?

A. Where this is to be compiled for a review conference at 15 months and thereafter up to 33 months, the Core Group will undertake this work collectively and present their analysis to the review conference.

Q. What about cases where an initial child protection conference is requested in respect of a child who is likely to become the subject of a third plan?

A. The Children's Team Operations Manager and Children's Reviewing Manager will discuss the request for an initial child protection conference. This discussion will ensure that information held on the family by the children's team and reviewing team will be made available to the conference so the full history of the case can be considered.

Q. Who will complete the enhanced risk analysis in these circumstances?

There are two parts to this.

The social worker bringing the case to the initial child protection conference will prepare and present to the conference a report which draws together this full history. The "triggers" described in the very first part of the enhanced risk analysis format can be used to compile this report.

At the initial child protection conference, other professionals will contribute the information which they hold on the family, allowing the conference to work through all the questions and complete a full interagency enhanced risk analysis.

Q. Up-to-date chronologies are an important part of the process of properly assessing full family history. Where will professionals find the template for completing chronologies and guidance notes to assist them?

A. All the documentation that professionals will need is to be found on the WSCB web-site: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/wscb (go to the Resources Page and follow the link to the new Escalation Processes Page), and the Intranet Departmental Library serving social care colleagues. A hard copy booklet of the process has been widely circulated to professionals by the Board.

You can also access an electronic version of these F.A.Qs by visiting the WSCB website and going to the Escalation Page.

WSCB and Police Target missing and Runaway Children



Neil Hewison

Last year over 400 Warwickshire children were reported as missing to the police, accounting for 58% of the missing person population. As many as a third of these children repeatedly

go missing. Often they are extremely vulnerable: 1 in 6 sleeps rough and 1 in 12 will be hurt or harmed whilst they are away. Missing behaviour is known to be a symptom linked to other serious factors in a child's life.

These figures, allied to recognition that there is a need for a co-ordinated strategic approach across agencies to tackling the problem, have led to missing children being identified as one of WSCB's 5 key strategic objectives. A task group chaired by Detective Superintendent Neil Hewison of Warwickshire Police has been set up to lead on this work.

Commenting on progress so far, Neil comments: "The introduction of National Indicator 71, established for local areas to assess whether levels of young people running away are accurately identified and responses are appropriate to meet their needs, has also lent the work of this Task Group increased urgency."

The group has already conducted an exercise to identify the scope of the problem in respect of children missing from home or care, missing from education, not registered for health services and other areas where children could be 'lost' such as the within the

travelling community, asylum seekers and victims of criminality, for example, trafficked children, forced marriage and those hiding in fear. The group meets quarterly and has developed an Improvement Plan to drive forward the business and bring about the necessary improvements to services. This plan takes account of the government Young Runaways action plan and developments required to improve our baseline assessment against NI 71.

Explains Neil: ***"Improvements have already been made to co-ordinate effective activity and close gaps in knowledge and practice. A framework that encourages sharing of information across agencies has been established and membership extended to a wide range of stakeholders, including the Children's Society. Warwickshire Police has introduced a comprehensive database recording missing reports and this will enable better analysis of the missing from home and care problem to focus resources on those at greatest risk through the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process. This data will be linked into the work of the Board's Quality and Information Sub-Committee."***

It is planned to link this work with the Safer Schools Partnership to raise awareness among children and building prevention and early intervention opportunities.

Warwickshire Sets Up New Child Safety Partnership



Jane Williams

At its fifth Annual WSCB Conference in 2008, delegates heard a key note address from Zoë Keddie, joint author of the Healthcare Commission and

Audit Commission report “Better Safe than Sorry”, a national strategy for preventing accidental injuries to children.

Keen to take forward this key aspect of the Government’s safeguarding agenda the Board also identified this as one of its key strategic objectives, and Jane Williams Head of Children, Young People and Family Services at Warwickshire Community Health, stepped into the role of task group leader.

Observes Jane: ***“Engaging relevant partners has been the major focus of activity and this was assisted by a re-launch of the initiative when Zoë Keddie returned to Warwickshire to discuss strategies for implementation with our partners. The event was able to re-focus on the current incidence of unintentional injury in Warwickshire, with particular emphasis on road traffic accidents involving children, an issue that has also been of interest to the Warwickshire Child Death Review Panel.”***

A further outcome of this event was a commitment by the Health Protection Agency to gather more data around accidents involving children in Warwickshire so assisting the task group in its attempts to scope the extent of the problem in the County.

Recently, the Task Group decided that it should be turned into a permanent group known as the Warwickshire Child Safety Partnership. Representatives from a wide range of agencies have agreed new terms of reference and are sending in reports about the activities their agency is leading on with regard to accident prevention.

Jane continues: ***“One of the tasks for the new partnership will be to raise public awareness around the issues arising from child death reviews. The first campaign will focus on Sudden Infant Deaths (Cot Death). There have been four cot deaths reported in Warwickshire in the first year of the Child Death Review process. A small sub group has been established to consider ways to promote Safe Sleep messages, and a campaign is to be launched at a joint event with Coventry Local Safeguarding Children Board.”***

Jane has recently been invited by the Government to sit on the steering group of the *Making the Link* project, a national initiative to prevent child accidents.

Flagship Prevention Scheme Passes with Flying Colours



Ann Seal

Most readers will be familiar with the Warwickshire Taking Care Scheme which has been operating in Warwickshire since 1999. It works to ensure that school pupils across the County have the opportunity to learn new knowledge, skills and confidence to empower them to keep safe in a wide range of situations.

Reports of the success of the Scheme have been a regular feature of accounts provided to WSCB, but an independent evaluation of Taking Care has confirmed this picture. Undertaken by Independent Consultant Rose Ruddick, the evaluation involved 600 children and adults including school staff and parents, members of WSCB and the scheme's steering group. Those who deliver the training – professionals

working with Warwickshire children and families – were also consulted.

Ann Seal, the Taking Care Programme Manager, comments on the outcomes of the evaluation: "This wide ranging assessment of the scheme has demonstrated its strengths while at the same time indicating recommendations that will help to improve it. The Action Plan that has been developed will enable us to convert what is a good service into an excellent one."

Parents overwhelmingly rated the programme as helpful or very helpful in enabling their children to understand the right to be safe, and understanding the importance of their child telling and recognising their own early warning signs. Parents felt more able to talk about sensitive issues with their children, a finding echoed by school staff involved with the scheme who also felt more confident about talking to pupils.

Boys and girls said that what they remembered most about the programme was:

- **Knowing who to tell**
- **Recognising their own early warning signs about not feeling safe**
- **Their right to feel safe**
- **Knowing about their own "imaginary" or "real" safe place.**

More than two thirds of boys and girls felt their confidence about what to do if they ever felt unsafe had increased.

Ann continues: "The scheme has great credibility amongst school staff, parents and children in tackling directly tricky yet important areas relating to personal safety, and helping to bring these into the open. It achieves this by using a range of interesting and attractive materials that really capture the interest of children."

Some of the things children said about the Taking Care Scheme:

"I really liked Taking Care because it helps you to understand all about abuse and what to do if you are in a situation you do not feel comfortable in"

"I think everyone should be taught how to feel safer"

"It taught me how to deal with things and gave me confidence to tell someone if I feel unsafe."

Things parents said about the scheme:

"We did some exercises together steering us towards topics we might not talk about easily, in a way that wasn't frightening."

"I think the Taking Care Programme is wonderful. The idea of a child having a personal network is a very good idea. The guides I have received have been very informative."

Government Publishes Key Safeguarding Survey



Vic Tuck

Among a raft of new publications and guidance recently published by the Government has been a major document reporting on a

key aspect of the safeguarding process:

"Effectiveness of the New Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) in England – Interim Report"

Produced by Loughborough University at the request of the Department for Children, Schools and Families, this survey reports on the progress of LSCBs since their inception in 2005. Key findings of the report are:

- Chairing Arrangements: 40% of LSCBs now have an independent chair and the government has insisted that this should apply to all LSCBs in due course.
- Structure and Representation: 55% of LSCBs have representation from all the statutory agencies. Chairs and Business Managers identify difficulties in maintaining continuity of membership and regular attendance once agency representation has been secured.

- LSCB Infrastructure: 89% have created Business Manager posts. Most Chairs (54%) believe LSCB budgets are inadequate undermining the amount of issues Boards are able to address. Challenges still exist for Boards in managing subcommittees with attendance and membership levels impacting on work.
- Communication, Information Sharing and Relationships: Difficulties exist in establishing effective relationships with GPs, faith groups and independent schools. Links with larger children's charities are strong but weaker in relation to smaller third sector organisations.
- Serious Case Reviews and Child Death Panels: SCRs have a significant impact on the resources of LSCBs and partner agencies. There are issues with OFSTED evaluations which are seen to be overly focused on assessing the process.

WSCB Development Manager, Vic Tuck (pictured), comments: "This survey highlights important progress made by LSCBs in taking forward the safeguarding children agenda. But significant challenges remain. We have made substantial progress in Warwickshire in engaging with all our partners and ensuring their continued participation, and work with colleagues in the voluntary sector and faith groups (see last edition) has been particularly pleasing".