

Learning Lessons from Serious Case Reviews

When a child dies (including death by suicide) **and** abuse or neglect is known or suspected to be a factor in the death, the Local Safeguarding Children Board should **always** conduct a Serious Case Review (SCR) into the involvement with the child and family of organisations and professionals.

They are also required to consider whether a SCR should be conducted where a child has been seriously harmed in the following situations:

- A child sustains a potentially life-threatening injury or serious and permanent impairment of physical and/or mental health and development through abuse or neglect; or
- A child has been subjected to serious sexual abuse; or
- A parent has been murdered and a domestic homicide review is being initiated under the Domestic Violence Act 2004; or
- A child has been seriously harmed following a violent assault perpetrated by another child or an adult; **and**
- The case gives rise to concerns about the way in which local professionals and services worked together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This includes inter-agency and/or inter-disciplinary working.

Stockton-on-Tees LSCB has recently published the Executive Summary and Action Plan for a Serious Case Review it has carried out. It can be found on the LSCB website at www.stockton.gov.uk/slscb.

Briefing sessions will be held over the next few months to raise awareness of the lessons to be learnt from Serious Case Reviews from a local and national perspective. The Childrens Workforce Development Team will provide agencies with the dates. They will also be sending out details of the 2010 / 2011 training programme.

Contact details: Childrens.WorkforceDevelopment@stockton.gov.uk

We're on the web
www.stockton.gov.uk/slscb

You can also find us at:

SLSCB
The Review Unit, Parkside
Melrose Avenue, Billingham
Stockton-on-Tees
TS23 2JH

Phone: 01642 527636
Fax: 01642 524907
Email:
slsrb@stockton.gov.uk

Who's
Responsible
for
Safeguarding
Children?

Everyone Is!

Making a Referral for a Serious Case Review

If you become aware of a case which you believe fits the criteria for a serious case review or management review, you should discuss this with your manager or senior officer and s/he will discuss your concerns with your LSCB agency representative.

If following this discussion it is agreed to make a referral for consideration, you will be advised to contact the LSCB Office who will provide a SCR Referral form and explain the next steps. Having made the referral it will be considered by the serious case review sub committee who will make a recommendation to the Chair of the LSCB as to whether the information, having been thoroughly considered, meets the criteria laid down in Working Together to Safeguard Children (DCSF 2010) for a Serious Case Review.

Stockton-on-Tees LSCB Serious Case Review

The multi agency review, which was carried out by a Serious Case Review panel led by an Independent Chairperson, has been a comprehensive investigation of events which occurred.

The child at the centre of the SCR was living with her family when she was subjected to a serious sexual assault by an adult male who was living as part of the household. At the time of the abuse this adult male was receiving treatment and being supervised by two agencies and was subject to notification as a registered sex offender.

Stockton Safeguarding Children Board was required to carry out the SCR into the circumstances surrounding the case under the provisions of the Government document, "Working Together to Safeguard Children" (2006).

The purpose of the review was to examine the ways in which agencies and professionals worked together, to identify any lessons which could be learnt and to propose recommendations to ensure that this learning is not lost.

The review did find some evidence of good practice in every agency however it concluded that there were also clear failings by a number of agencies to consider the protection of the child and undertake a full assessment of risks.

The review makes a number of recommendations for all the agencies involved in the case - Stockton-on-Tees Local Safeguarding Children Board, Stockton Council's Education and Social Care Service, Durham County Council's Children and Young People's Service, The Probation Service – Teesside and Durham, Durham Constabulary, Cleveland Police and Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board.

These include detailed recommendations in the following areas:

- Improvements in the timeliness and quality of the recording and sharing of information between partner agencies
- Improvements in the assessment of risk to children where a sex offender is living in a family setting and improved communication of this risk to the family members. The recommendations on risk assessment also identify the need to continually re-evaluate risks over time
- An audit of all cases where sex offenders are in contact with children to ensure that appropriate actions have been taken
- Improvements in the management and supervision of child safeguarding cases
- Further training and awareness raising for staff involved in the investigation and management of child abuse cases
- A review of issues and follow up action relating to individual members of staff where appropriate

Jane Humphreys, Chair of Stockton Local Safeguarding Children Board, said:

"Speaking on behalf of all the agencies we are profoundly sorry for our failures in this case. We particularly regret we did not provide the mother of this child with information to enable her to adequately protect her daughter. We are continuing to offer support to the family.

"The well being of children is of utmost importance and we deeply regret the impact this case had on the child. We fully support the report's recommendations and will continue to work in partnership across all agencies to address the shortcomings highlighted to strengthen the services we offer."

Abuse and Neglect of Children

If you think a child is being abused or neglected, or that they may be at risk of harm, **contact:**

First Contact Team,
Bath Lane,

Stockton-on-Tees TS18 2DS.

Tel: 01642 527764

Email: firstcontact@stockton.gov.uk

Or

Emergency Duty Team (Outside of Office Hours)

Tel: 08702 402994 (Free Phone Number)

In an emergency, contact the Police.

Children need to feel loved and valued, and be supported by a network of reliable and affectionate relationships. If they are denied the opportunity and support they need to achieve these outcomes, children are at increased risk of not only an often impoverished childhood, but of disadvantage and social exclusion in adulthood. Abuse and Neglect pose particular problems

Safeguarding Children and Social Work Reform

On 17 March 2010, the cross-Government National Safeguarding Delivery Unit launched *The Government's Response to Lord Laming: One Year On* as part of a set of documents designed to offer further support and clearer guidance to everyone involved in safeguarding children and young people. Revised statutory guidance ***Working Together to Safeguard Children***, which comes into force with immediate effect, was published by the Government as part of this package.

In parallel, the Government published **'Building a Safe and Confident Future: implementing the recommendations of the Social Work Task Force'**, which sets out the government's long term commitment to reform social work, working in partnership with the profession, employers and the education sector.

The complete package of work comprises:

- [The Government's Response to Lord Laming - One Year On](#);
- Revised statutory guidance [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#);
- [The Government's response to the consultation on Working Together to Safeguard Children](#);
- [Local Safeguarding Children Boards: Practice Guidance](#)
- [For consultation, The Evaluation of the Arrangements for Effective Operation of the New Local Safeguarding Children Boards in England](#);
- [A DCSF research brief entitled Building a Safe and Confident Future: Implementing the recommendations of the Social Work Task Force](#);

and

- [The Chief Adviser on the Safety of Children – First annual report to Parliament](#).

Ashleigh's Rules

Ashleigh Hall was a student at Darlington College who died in tragic circumstances. Ashleigh's death came about through her social networking. The following information has been put together by Darlington College who have agreed that we can reproduce 'Ashleigh's Rules'.

Lots of people love using Facebook, Twitter and chat rooms. There is nothing wrong with chatting to your friends in this way. However, it's really important that you keep yourself safe, so we asked our students to give us their safeguarding tips.

1. If you are ever meeting up with somebody who is alien to your or your friends make sure that you meet them in a group of at least 2-3 and in a public, well lit and populated area.



Safer Recruitment Online Training

The Childrens Workforce Development Council (CWDC) want anyone recruiting people to work with children and young people, whether in the public, private or voluntary sectors, to do their online safer recruitment training.

Safer recruitment training is required to ensure that correct decisions are made during the recruitment process to ensure that unsuitable people are not given the opportunity to access children and young people.

There are two training courses for different audiences. Please ensure you chose the one which is appropriate to you.

- Safer recruitment in education - for the school sector workforce
- Recruiting safely: Safer recruitment for the wider audience

What is the difference?

The key concepts of safer recruitment are consistent within both training programmes, however the safer recruitment in education training is designed specifically for the schools sector and CWDC's training has been designed with the rest of the children and young people's workforce in mind. Therefore the scenarios and examples will be relevant to each training programme.

Register / login

If you are ready to take the recruiting safely training login or register in the [e-learning portal](http://elearning.cwdcouncil.org.uk/login/index.php) at <http://elearning.cwdcouncil.org.uk/login/index.php> but please be aware:

How you register will decide which course is assigned to you.

The e-learning on this system is aimed at people working with children and young people in England only.

If you complete this course please send an email to Childrens.WorkforceDevelopment@stockton.gov.uk advising them of your achievement and the date you completed the course.

3. Inform somebody of where you are going and what time you should be back, also the name of who you are meeting.
4. Don't accept anyone on social networking sites that you don't know.
5. Remember never to trust anyone who you have met online, you don't know what they are capable of doing.
6. Never tell a stranger on network sites or chat rooms anything personal about yourself, e.g. Where you live, date of birth etc.
7. Never meet anyone you don't know, simple as!

Safeguarding Children E-Learning Courses

Congratulations to everyone who has passed their Awareness of Child Abuse and Neglect e-learning course during 2009 /10. Our learner completion rates are brilliant and show an increase of roughly 65% from 831 at the end of 2008/9 to 1375 at the end of 2009/10 ! Keep enrolling

We are currently working with the Safeguarding Children e-Academy to develop a Risk Assessment course and hope to hold a regional launch event to raise the awareness of this new course and also increasing the uptake for the 'Hidden Harm' and 'Refresher Training' courses.

Safeguarding Children Induction & Refresher Mandatory Requirements

Working Together (DCSF 2010) states that *'Employers should ensure that all those in contact or working with children and young people and / or adults who are parents or carers have a mandatory induction, which includes familiarisation with their child protection responsibilities and policies and procedures to be followed if they have concerns about a child's safety or welfare. The Childrens Workforce Development Council provides induction guidance and supporting materials. Induction should be completed within the first six months of employment and before individuals take part in inter agency training. Regular refresher training should also be provided at least every three years.'*

E-Learning is a good way for managers to ensure new staff are provided with training to meet this mandatory requirement as part of their induction and for the three year refresher training for staff.

Arrangements can be made for enrolments to take place so that staff could do the Awareness of Child Abuse and Neglect course during their first few weeks in post. This would also provide them with information how to access the Local Safeguarding Child Protection Procedures.

For further information regarding this course and the suite of e-learning courses that are available please contact: sjscb@stockton.gov.uk or by telephoning 01642 524591.



Sharing Information Safely & Securely

Sharing information to safeguard children is a vital part of inter agency practice however it must be undertaken in a manner that does not breach local protocols and national requirements.

Please remember when sending emails to ensure that messages: -

- are protected from unauthorised access or modification
- are correctly addressed to ensure they reach the intended recipient
- contain appropriate content
- are sent in accordance with approved policies and guidelines
- comply with any legislative or regulatory requirements

E-mails are not generally encrypted, so anything included in an e-mail could be easily read by someone other than the intended recipient. It is important that sensitive or personal information is not sent unprotected to outside organisations via e-mail, and that internal e-mails must only contain sensitive or personal information where absolutely necessary.

One sensible and obvious precaution to remember is ***"If you have sent an email that has a password protected document attached to it, do not send a follow up email to the recipient to provide them with the password"***. If your email has inadvertently been sent to or received by the wrong person they will also receive your follow up email and be able to open the document.

At the end of your first email just included a line asking them to ring you to confirm safe receipt of the email and to ask for the password.

If you have any articles, questions, information, good news notices relating to safeguarding children and young people you would like including in our next Safeguarding Children Briefing please send them to the SLSCB Business Unit at the address on the front page. Help us to celebrate the good work that's happening in Stockton, how we are working to do things better and the impact we are making

Regards
Pauline Beall, SLSCB Business Manager