Safeguarding Matters
Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board Newsletter

Goodbye & Thank You ...

Sadly we have to say goodbye to one of our most trusted and dedicated colleagues, Adrienne Plunkett, who is moving on to take up fresh challenges. Adrienne has worked in Worcestershire for the last 20 years.

Gail Quinton, Director of Children’s Services, said:

“On behalf of Children’s Services I would like to say a big thank you to Adrienne and wish her all the best for the future. During her time in Worcestershire Adrienne has contributed significantly to the development of safeguarding practice, particularly as WSCB Manager and then latterly in her role as Group Manager for Safeguarding and Quality Assurance. Her knowledge, expertise and calm approach will be missed but she has left a strong legacy for the future.

And A Warm Welcome ...

Diane Partridge recently replaced Adrienne as Worcestershire County Council’s Group Manager for Safeguarding and Quality Assurance. Diane qualified as a Social Worker in 1993 and has practiced in a number of local authorities, most recently Herefordshire where she was Head of Safeguarding and Review. Diane says, “I am excited to be in Worcestershire and look forward to settling in to my new role.”

Annual Report 2013

The WSCB Annual Report for 2013/14 has been published and presented to the Chief Executive and Leader of the County Council, the Children and Young People’s Overview and Scrutiny Panel, the Council’s Cabinet and the Health and Well-Being Board by the WSCB Independent Chair, Diana Fulbrook. The Report has also been circulated to key agencies, partnerships and strategic bodies in Worcestershire and is available on the WSCB website.

The report covers the local and national context; governance and accountability arrangements; priorities, achievements and learning; and contains a formal summary statement about the sufficiency of arrangements to ensure children are safe in Worcestershire.

The report concludes that there is a good body of evidence from data, audits, reports and learning during 2013/14 to demonstrate that safeguarding arrangements are in place and that children are generally safe in Worcestershire.

Progress has been made since last year and performance has improved, although organisational changes in a number of agencies did contribute to this declining for a period. Outcomes and measuring effectiveness are still challenging. There continue to be multi-agency areas for improvement around consistent practice, communication/sharing information and “Think Family”.

The Board remains committed to achieving effective safeguarding for children and young people in Worcestershire and hopes that the report will be well received.

www.worcestershiresafeguarding.org.uk
National Panel of Independent Experts on Serious Case Reviews

In June 2013 the Government established a new independent panel to help ensure that lessons are learned when a child dies or is seriously harmed and there are signs of abuse or neglect. The role of the panel is to advise and challenge local safeguarding children boards (LSCBs) to initiate and publish high quality serious case reviews (SCRs) in order that, nationally, lessons can be learned which in turn drive up the quality of child protection services and avoid mistakes being repeated. The revised statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013)* makes it clear that LSCBs should have regard to the panel’s advice when making decisions about SCRs.

The National Panel of Independent Experts has produced its first annual report of its findings. The report discusses the panel’s recommendations for wider future learning about child protection services and sets out the panel’s top ten safeguarding practice tips.

**Change Through Learning**

In line with expectations laid out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013)*, WSCB has introduced a local Learning & Improvement Framework. Approved at a recent Board meeting, the Framework provides a model for identifying, acting upon and disseminating learning through a range of mechanisms in order to consolidate good practice across Worcestershire.

It is important to note that the local Learning and Improvement Framework does not seek to replace the Interagency Child Protection Procedures. Instead it sets out how the implementation of local learning from serious case reviews, case reviews, multi-agency case file audits, domestic homicide reviews and child deaths will be supported. The Framework outlines the responsibilities of the local safeguarding children board, partner agencies and individual practitioners in applying learning to improve practice. Part of the local safeguarding children board’s role is to collate lessons learned and to identify priority learning themes which are communicated to the wider workforce via a combination of learning events, electronic briefings and professional development opportunities.

**Further Information & Resources For Practitioners**

- WSCB Learning and Improvement Leaflet
- WSCB Learning and Improvement Briefing Sheet 1
- WSCB Learning and Improvement Briefing Sheet 2
- WSCB Learning & Improvement Framework

**The Panel’s Top 10 Safeguarding Practice Tips**

- Always see the child alone on a regular basis – and overcome any communication difficulties that might prevent effective assessment and care
- Always think of additional risks to young babies and children and ensure physical examination, where necessary, by one of the professional team
- Always see the accommodation occupied by the child
- Always identify who is in the household, including any new partners and ensure that there is contact with the men involved
- Always seek information on families from other professional colleagues involved with them, and on a regular basis
- Do not allow families to block access – seek management and, if necessary, police support
- Always ensure the best possible understanding of family histories – use chronologies to underpin that understanding
- Always look at the build-up of cumulative evidence of neglect or mistreatment
- Always be clear with parents about your first responsibility being the welfare of the child – and explain the consequences of their actions
- Always think of the family circumstances from the child’s point of view
Domestic Abuse & Coercive Control

The Home Office definition of domestic abuse was amended to include coercive control in April 2013. Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA) say that 89% of domestic abuse victims referred to an Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor (IDVA) have experienced jealous and controlling behaviour.

What Is Coercive Control?

Coercive control describes a range or pattern of behaviours that enable a perpetrator to maintain or regain control of a partner, ex-partner or family member. It might include:

- Controlling or observing victim’s daily activities
- Isolating the victim from family/friends
- Intercepting messages or phone calls
- Constant criticism of victim’s role as a partner/spouse/parent
- Preventing the victim from taking medication/accessing care
- Extreme dominance
- Extreme jealousy (“If I can’t have you, no one can”)
- Damage to property, including to pets
- Manipulation of information given to professionals

CAADA has produced a helpful factsheet providing a detailed explanation of Coercive Control, some key principles for professionals working with survivors of domestic abuse and sources of additional information and guidance.

Where to go for more information


Worcestershire Forum Against Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence


Increase your knowledge of Domestic Abuse with an e-learning package

An Awareness of Domestic Violence & Abuse including the impact on Children, Young People and Adults at Risk

Visit WSCB [website](http://www.worcestershiresafeguarding.org.uk) for more details.

WSCB e-learning

Individual agencies are responsible for ensuring that all staff who work with children, young people, and parents or carers have access to high quality training and support. This includes volunteers as well as those in a paid capacity.

Full details of the WSCB Training Programme can be found on the WSCB website. But did you know that WSCB has a wide range of e-learning opportunities too? Click the links below for more information about each of the e-learning courses.

- An Introduction to FGM, Forced Marriage, Spirit Possession and Honour Based Violence (PDF 1.3 MB)
- Child Sexual Exploitation (PDF 1.3 MB)
- Safer Sleeping reducing the risk of SIDs (PDF 1.2 MB)
- Safeguarding children with disabilities (PDF 1.2 MB)
- Domestic Violence including the Impact on Children and Young People (PDF 1.24 MB)
- The effect of Parental Drug and Alcohol Misuse on Children (PDF 1.3 MB)
- Parental Mental Health (PDF 1.2 MB)
- E-Safety (PDF 445 MB)
Management of Allegations

Management of Allegations

When an employee or volunteer has behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or placed a child at risk, this must be taken seriously and dealt with sensitively and promptly. The child's interests are paramount and their views and wishes must be given careful consideration at all times. They should also receive appropriate support.

All agencies are expected to have in place their own internal procedures for the investigation of such allegations to ensure that they are compliant with the local Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures which can be viewed at http://westmerciaconsortium.proceduresonline.com/

The procedure should be used in all cases where it is alleged that a person who works with children or young people has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children or be unsuited to working with children

The local authority will appoint a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) whose responsibilities include the management and oversight of individual cases. Early discussions can be held with the LADO who will provide advice as to whether a referral should be made if you are unsure.

Jon Hancock is the Local Authority Designated Officer for Worcestershire. Email: jhancock22@worcestershire.gov.uk Phone: 01905 752816

Are you concerned about the behaviour of a colleague or volunteer? Uncertain about your responsibilities under the Management of Allegations Procedure? Then this training will help you to feel more confident and provide all the information you need.

Management of Allegations Training

Tuesday 10th March 2015
Tuesday 15th September 2015

9.30—12.30 in Worcester (venue tbc)

This training will:

- increase participants' understanding of legislative requirements and Government guidance
- provide participants with an opportunity to consider current practice in their own organisation and what changes may need to be made

The workshop focuses on the guidance contained in Working Together to Safeguard Children for managing allegations against people who work with children and young people, including volunteers.

It is aimed at staff with strategic and/or operational responsibility, including representatives from HR Departments, and provides the opportunity to consider the steps that may be necessary to ensure agencies have effective and safe procedures in operation.

To book your place please email; WSCBtraining@worcestershire.gov.uk
Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures

Where are they?
Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board has collaborated with Shropshire, Herefordshire and Telford & Wrekin Safeguarding Children Boards to produce joint procedures for responding to child protection concerns. The Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures are available via the WSCB website or on the West Mercia Consortium website at http://westmerciaconsortium.proceduresonline.com/chapters/contents.html.

Who are they for?
Everyone working with children, young people and their families, including volunteers, should be aware of the Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures and know how to access them when needed. Although individual partner agencies will have their own child protection policies, single agency guidance which sets out for staff what they should do in specific situations should always reflect the published Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures.

How to use them ...
The electronic format has been designed to make the procedures easy to access and allows you to move readily between sections via hyperlinks. The West Mercia Consortium home page provides an easy start menu (see the graphic) which helps you to become familiar with the site and its contents.

The Chapter called Quick Guide explains how the manual has been constructed and the key features which have been included to assist you in navigating the chapters. The contents button takes you to an index with live links so that you can quickly and easily access the information you need. The key words provide handy definitions and explanations of safeguarding terms, common acronyms and other 'jargon'.

Why do we need them?
The Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures are designed to encourage close working between agencies to facilitate early intervention and support in order to meet the needs of children, young people and their families. They reflect current legislation, accepted best practice and comply with the government guidance: Working Together to Safeguard Children published in March 2013.

Supporting good practice in Worcestershire ...
The Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures include a section for Worcestershire protocols, procedures and best practice guidance. Links from the main chapters will take you through to the Worcestershire section when necessary, but it can also be accessed from the contents page. The procedures are regularly updated and new information is constantly being added, so it is important to visit them often to keep yourself up to date. It is possible to register for alerts about updates which can be extremely helpful.
What is a Safeguarding Lead or Designated Safeguarding Officer?

The Designated Safeguarding Officer or Safeguarding Lead has operational responsibility for receiving concerns about the safety and welfare of children and young people and is usually the first point of contact for all staff and volunteers on safeguarding children matters. They may be required to make contact with other agencies in respect of individual children and to make referrals when necessary.

They will have received a higher level of safeguarding training and should have a good safeguarding knowledge, to include knowledge about thresholds and local procedures for protecting children. They should be able to assess information and support decision making about the action to be taken by the organisation to meet the child’s needs. They may be required to play a role in escalating professional concerns if there is disagreement about another agency’s response or concern about the effectiveness of the response being made to safeguard the child.

Role of the Designated Senior Person (DSP) in education settings

In educational settings there is a Designated Senior Person who provides advice and support to other staff, makes referrals to and liaises with other agencies, takes responsibility for the school’s child protection practice, policy, procedures and professional development.


Engaging Fathers and Other Significant Males

The risks of not engaging effectively with fathers and significant males early on in interventions to safeguard children are that practitioners fail to triangulate:

- what mothers and other family members might be saying about their role
- the positive contribution which they might be able to make to the needs of their children, or
- the risks which they might present to them.

The evidence is clear and comes from both what fathers themselves say about their experiences and also from case reviews being undertaken both locally and nationally, including a Serious Case Review undertaken in Worcestershire. There is a tendency for practitioners to focus on mothers and to take at face value what mothers are telling them about the dynamics which exist, or have existed, within the family and about the impact of those dynamics, positive or negative, on children and young people. Robust assessments, however, require that information is triangulated and tested out. Engaging fathers in a positive way is critical to ensuring that assessments are balanced and rigorous, especially when important decisions need to be made about children.

WSCB has produced good practice guidance which pulls together contemporary thinking in respect of the engagement of fathers and other significant males in work with families. This guidance is now available on the WSCB website via the link below.

Watch for further updates in the next newsletter.

[WSCB Guidance on Engaging Fathers and Other Significant Males](http://www.worcestershiresafeguarding.org.uk/)

Make sure you know who the Safeguarding Lead is for your organisation/service