



Safeguarding Newsletter

THE SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER IS PUBLISHED BY THE EDUCATION SAFEGUARDING TEAM AND ISSUED TO SCHOOLS, EARLY YEARS PROVIDERS AND LOCAL AUTHORITY STAFF THREE TIMES EACH ACADEMIC YEAR

ISSUE NO. 63 – September 2017

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Team updates

From late September, two of the team will be leaving to re-join Specialist Children's Services, with Lorrissa Webber (North Kent) joining the LADO team and Catherine Holmberg (East Kent) returning to work in the Central Duty Team. We are of course sad to see both Catherine and Lorrissa leave and would like to thank them for all of their hard work over the past year, but are delighted that Julie Maguire and Jonathan Hogben will be joining the team from the beginning of November. Some of you may know Julie and Jonathan as they both currently work in Specialist Children's Services – Julie will cover the East of the County and Jonathan will be responsible for North Kent.

There will be a short period where there will not be a dedicated officer in the two areas, but we will endeavour to ensure the level of support, advice and training provided to schools and settings will remain unaffected. Please continue to use the telephone numbers for the relevant geographical area and a revised contact sheet will be made available later in the year.

Education Services Company

Some of you will be aware that the Education Safeguarding Team will be transferring to the yet to be named Education Services Company, a company which will be wholly owned by Kent County Council. The role of the team will broadly remain the same, with both the Executive Board and KCC understanding the true importance of the need for schools and settings to be supported in carrying out their safeguarding responsibilities. As the company takes shape, there will be communication updates and we shall ensure Designated Safeguarding Leads are kept abreast of any changes that may arise.

Training

The number of core Designated Safeguarding Lead training courses will be increased over the coming academic year, with the aim for two courses per week to be running in different locations across the County during term time. This is in response to repeated feedback that it is difficult to access courses as they become full in a short period of time due to their popularity.

We will also be holding three themed conferences over the coming year, with the first being held in November. The conferences will meet the requirements of an *annual update*, as stipulated in KCSIE 2016, but would not be considered sufficient for refresher training which should be completed by the DSL every two years. Places are limited, so it is advisable to book sooner rather than later.

Again in response to feedback and also learning from recent Serious Case Reviews, the team are considering reverting to delivering the DSL course over one and a half or two full days. This is due to the ever increasing amount of content which needs to be covered. In particular, we are aware of the need for more time to be dedicated to multiagency working using the Signs of Safety methodology, including in child protection conferences.

We will be seeking your views on this proposal in the near future, but in the meantime if you have any questions, please contact your Area Safeguarding Adviser.

Revised LADO referral process

As of Monday 7th August 2017, all new referrals to the LADO service should be made using a referral form, which can be found on the [KSCB website](#). The form should then be e-mailed securely to kentchildrenslado@kent.gov.uk either via a secure egress account or the document should be password protected. The LADO team will aim to respond within 24 hours and will discuss with the referrer the most appropriate course of action to be taken.

If you are unsure whether the concern constitutes an allegation you are still able to phone the LADO team on 03000 410888 for advice but a referral form will also be required. You should also contact the child's named social worker if the case is already allocated or the Central Referral Unit if there is an immediate Child Protection concern. A LADO may be able to assist in an emergency situation, but this cannot always be guaranteed.

'Front Door' Update

Due to the recent Ofsted inspection of Kent County Council Children's Services, the planned introduction of the new Front Door was put on hold. Now that the inspection is completed and recommendations are being implemented, work on the Front Door has begun again.

The Front Door aims to simplify and improve the referral pathway to Specialist Children's Services and Early Help (Kent Family Support Framework), by implementing a single referral form and triage process. This will ensure all referrals are considered in line with the Kent threshold criteria and processed appropriately.

The Front Door procedures and guidance and the new single form are being further developed alongside the updated threshold criteria. A date for relaunch has not yet been decided, and as more is known we will keep you informed.

Updated policies, procedures and guidance

Department for Education - Preventing and Tackling Bullying

The Department for Education have published new updates to the '[Preventing and tackling bullying](#)' guidance for schools. The updated version includes additional information about how schools can support children and young people who are bullied, including cyberbullying.

Kent Safeguarding Children Board - Child Protection Conferences and Children Abused through Sexual Exploitation

The new 'Kent Complaints and Representations about the Conference Decision and about the Conference Process Procedures', and 'Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children Abused through Sexual Exploitation Procedures' have now been published.

Both procedures can be found on the [KSCB website](#).

The procedures will be accessible via this website until November 2017, when they will be transferred to the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children Procedures website.

Education Safeguarding Team exemplar policies

A number of exemplar policies and guidance have been updated over the summer holidays to reflect the most up to date legislation and guidance.

These include a significant number of [online safety policies](#), including the Online Safety policy template and Acceptable Use Policy templates. To support leaders, managers and DSLs, there is additional guidance on 'How to write an Online Safety Policy' which includes a flowchart, information regarding legislation and a range of frequently asked questions.

All revised documents are easily identifiable on our pages on [Kelsj](#), with the Managing Allegations against Staff policy yet to be finalised.

Kent Police update from Inspector Sonia Lassnig, Kent Police, on the role of Youth engagement officers

Over the last 15 months Kent Police has been developing a new model of policing designed to better support vulnerable persons in the community. It has carried out the biggest consultation programme with staff, partners and the public it has ever done, which has resulted in a new model designed and built from the 'bottom up'.

Consultation with partners included surveying headteachers on the proposal to create a new role dedicated to working with children and young people. With thanks to the Education Safeguarding Team, who kindly facilitated the circulation of the survey, we received a fantastic response from Heads and Deputy Heads with an interesting mix of views and thoughts on our proposal.

As a result of collating the responses it was decided to create a role for a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) entitled Youth Engagement Officer. This role will operate from within the Community Safety Unit (CSU) and will be the single point of contact for schools to raise any concerns or issues about children. The main purpose of the role will be to make that early identification of children and young people at risk of harm, exploitation or crime (victim or offender) and to make the right interventions with either the police or a partner agency to protect and safeguard for the future. There is an expectation that the postholders will not be taking part in assemblies or delivering lessons; this has not been built into their job specifications.

The role is brand new for PCSOs and will mean they are dedicated to working with children, young people and their families to build positive and trusting relationships both within the school environment and beyond, including outside school interests and during the school holidays.

Kent Police is very excited about the opportunity this new role will present for gaining the confidence of young people and for the force to be in a better position to protect those vulnerable or at risk from harm in the future.

The policing model 'New Horizon' goes live on the 12th September when all 20 Youth Engagement Officers will take up their new roles across Kent and Medway. As is to be expected, it will take some time for the postholders to settle in and become familiar with their new positions and to establish their role and remit. Each Youth Engagement Officer will be making contact with their local schools and colleges over the next few months, in the meantime you can find out who your local Officer is by contacting your Community Safety Unit.

Kent Police looks forward to working with schools and colleges across the county to shape the role going forward and to build productive working relationships.

Communicating with your staff – a reminder!

We have recently received information that suggests some safeguarding leads may not be sharing the actions they have taken following receipt of green forms from staff within their school or setting. It is vital that staff who have regular contact with pupils know how their concern has been addressed, and what action they need to take if they remain concerned for the child. Similarly, relevant staff need to know if there are issues in a child's life that may affect their ability to fully access their education, for example illness or a family breakdown.

Point 2.9 of the EST [exemplar recording guidelines](#) emphasises the need for information sharing to be a two way process; *'It is vital that DSLs notify staff of how they as the safeguarding lead will respond to reported and recorded concerns... Members of staff also need to feel empowered to seek clarification on why concerns have not been reported to the statutory agencies, and it should be made aware that if concerns remain, then a consultation should be sought with the Area Safeguarding Adviser.'*

Additionally, Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016 emphasises the need for staff and volunteers to be able *'to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school or college's safeguarding regime and know that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team'* by having appropriate whistleblowing procedures in place, including staff knowing the NSPCC whistleblowing hotline number (Page 9).

It may be helpful for DSLs to familiarise themselves with the government's [Information Sharing guidelines](#) which make it clear that there should be no barriers to sharing information if it affects the safeguarding or promoting the welfare of a child. If DSLs are concerned that information may be misused by individual staff members, this should be dealt with via the appropriate channels rather than information not being shared as a general rule

Information sharing with other agencies and at transition

Information sharing is essential in successful multi-agency work to safeguard children. However, it is vital that this is done in a safe and secure way, adhering to the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998.

School and setting staff should always verify the identity of anyone requesting information about a child before giving any details. This can be done by calling back the person through a verified agency number or, if time and circumstances allow, asking for any request to be made in writing on agency letterhead or email.

The responsibility to transfer safeguarding records is placed on the DSL in the school or setting the pupil is leaving, rather than the receiving school asking for the information. These records should be transferred securely with confirmation of receipt received from the new school. In order to meet these requirements, the schools internal mail is not an appropriately secure method of transferral.

Again, DSLs should familiarise themselves with the EST [exemplar recording guidelines](#) and the government's [Information Sharing guidelines](#) to ensure they are fully compliant.

Inappropriate resources for schools and settings

We have recently been contacted by another Local Authority who has issued a warning to their schools relating to inappropriate resources being sent by independent companies, apparently free of charge, for use in PSHE lessons. Although seemingly harmless these resources are considered to be potentially damaging to young people due to the nature of the content and imagery. In addition, they provide links to gaming sites, with the intention that pupils then make purchases through them, thereby generating income for the company.

Please could we remind you to adequately research any resources you are sent by independent and/or commercial companies to ensure there are no hidden messages or advertising and that they are fit for the purpose they are intended.

Kent Serious Case Reviews published

Child B

A serious case review into the wounding of a 16 year old girl, Child B, who is the middle of three daughters has now been published. Child B and her family returned to Kent from the North of England in 2007 with a history of domestic abuse. They were experiencing significant financial and housing difficulties at this time. Over the following eight years, there was considerable involvement from a range of health agencies; the eldest daughter had emotional and psychological difficulties and the youngest daughter had digestive and muscular problems.

At the end of 2012, the father had a serious psychotic breakdown and was sectioned. He was treated in the Forensic Mental Health Unit because of the level of violence he displayed. The father was discharged from hospital in June 2013 with a Community Treatment Order in place. When this ceased a year later, he started to self-medicate and subsequently stopped taking his medication.

The two younger children were subject to Child Protection Plans until November 2013, and Specialist Children's Service involvement ended a month later. In February 2015, the father locked himself in a bedroom with the two younger girls. During the incident he stabbed Child B a number of times. He was shot by the Police, resulting in a protracted recovery period in hospital.

Child B and her two sisters were high achievers at school and demonstrated a degree of resilience. Attendance was good and the two younger siblings in particular excelled academically. This is despite living in a home where the *toxic trio* (substance misuse, mental health issues and domestic abuse) were a factor in their daily lives. It seems, therefore, that the school environment was seen as a 'safe haven' for the girls. Alternatively, and more worryingly, it could be their behaviour meant they had normalised a situation which would otherwise have caused more obvious harm to a different child in similar circumstances.

Another point of note is the need for professionals to clarify medical issues as stated by parents. Child B's younger sister was said to have a variety of medical issues, some which had been diagnosed and some which had not. Professionals, including the school, accepted mother's account of symptoms without gaining supporting evidence from the most appropriate health professionals. Consideration was not always given to the possibility the physical symptoms exhibited may have been an emotional response to the stressful situation at home. It is vital that education providers seek medical confirmation from health professionals where there are health issues identified by parents, not least because of the support and guidance other agencies can provide.

A summary of the report and the overview report can be found on the KSCB website;

- [Learning from SCRs - Child B](#)
- [Overview Report – Child B](#)

Child C

Child C was the youngest of five children and was born to parents who were long term drug users. She died aged 2 following the ingestion of methadone. At the time of her death, Child C's parents were separated, with her father serving a prison sentence. Child C's mother was on a long term methadone recovery programme.

Child C and her siblings were known to a variety of agencies, including health, Specialist Children's Services and Education and Early Help. Agencies often focussed on the needs of the parents rather than really understanding what life was like for the children in the family. Although the agencies sometimes worked together, this was felt at times to be superficial, with a lack of robust information sharing and understanding of each other's roles.

Child C's parents were always open with professionals about their long term drug use, but this led to disguised compliance. It appeared they accepted ideas about how to improve their and their family's life, but they did not follow through on the agreed actions. This lack of compliance was not followed up and professionals did not challenge the parents appropriately and lacked curiosity.

Together with drug misuse, domestic abuse and mental health issues were factors in this family's daily life. Professionals from across the agencies did not fully understand the impact of this "toxic trio" on the emotional and behavioural development of the children, nor on parenting capacity.

A summary of the report and the overview report can be found on the KSCB website;

- [Learning from SCRs – Child C](#)
- [Overview Report – Child C](#)

Online Safety Updates

Early Years

Online safety is a fundamental element of safeguarding children in schools and Early Years settings. It is important to acknowledge that children are capable of using technology from a very early age and in order to keep them safe online, we need to educate and support them right from the start.

According to [Ofcom research](#) published in November 2016, 55% of 3-4 year olds access the internet using a tablet or mobile device, with 16% of them owning their own tablet device. Although children may not be able to access the internet or technology within some settings, it is vital that everyone who works with children understands the risks posed online and how to respond to online safety concerns; settings must also have appropriate policies and procedures in place to safeguard both children and staff online.

Centralised training is available via [CPD Online](#), for Early Years Designated Safeguarding Leads and Managers, which focuses on their strategic responsibilities regarding online safety. The course includes managing incidents, making referrals and implementing policy for the safe use of mobile phones and technology in settings.

Bespoke whole staff training is also available for Early Years settings, subject to capacity. If you have any questions regarding online safety in Early Years or would like to discuss bespoke staff training, please contact [Ashley Assiter](#), e-Safety Development Officer.

Ambassador Training

Peer education is an effective means of promoting online safety messages in schools enabling and empowering young people to share their knowledge and experience with each other, as well as with staff and parents. According to [Ofcom media attitudes research](#) published last year; '50% of parents of 8-11 year olds agree that "My child shows me new things online and I learn from them".'

With this in mind, in the last academic year the e-Safety Development Officer has been piloting Online Safety Ambassador Training in a number of primary schools in Kent. The aim of the course is to train a small number of children from a group of schools, who will then be 'responsible' for championing online safety within their peer group in their individual schools.

Below are some comments from recent Ofsted inspections at schools who have taken part in our ambassador programme:

- *“The importance of e-safety is regularly reinforced by trained pupil e-safety ambassadors who go into classes to talk to other pupils.”*
- *“The ‘E-safety ambassadors’ are proud of their role in helping all pupils understand how to keep safe online.”*
- *“All pupils have been taught how to stay safe on the internet and older pupils take responsibility as digital leaders, helping to lead assemblies on cyber safety.”*

If you would like more information about Online Safety Ambassador Training, please contact [Ashley Assiter](#), e-Safety Development Officer.

Safer Internet Day 2018 theme announced!

The theme for Safer Internet Day 2018 will be “Create, Connect and Share Respect: A better internet starts with you”. Safer Internet Day 2018 will take place on Tuesday 6th February. SID is coordinated in the UK by the [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) and is celebrated in February each year to promote the safe and positive use of digital technology for children and young people and generate a national conversation. Further information can be found on the [Online Safety blog](#).

Engaging Parents and Carers with Children’s Use of Apps – Template Letters

The Education Safeguarding Team regularly receive queries from schools and settings regarding new and popular websites and enquiring if template letters are available to warn parents and carers about ‘dangerous’ apps.

As highlighted within our recent [“Online Safety Alerts – Think before you scare”](#) blog post; whilst schools and settings wishing to warn their community is usually well intentioned, this approach often has the opposite effect. In many cases it can generate unnecessary fear with parents and carers, and can increase children’s curiosity about apps that they had not previously heard about.

To support schools and settings, we have created two template letters that may help encourage parents and carers to consider safe and appropriate use of new apps and websites. Schools and settings may find these letters useful to share as both proactive and preventative measures, as well as following a specific concern. The letters can be found on the [online safety](#) blog.

Staying up-to-Date

We are frequently asked by DSLs about how they can keep up-to-date with online safety, such as new policy changes and resources, as it moves so quickly. We would like to encourage all DSLs to visit and subscribe to the [Kent Online Safety blog](#).

Recent blog posts have included:

- [Children’s Commissioner launches ‘Digital 5 A Day’ Framework: Suggestions for Educational Settings](#)
- [A guide to monitoring: blog post by UK Safer Internet Centre](#)
- [Staying Safe Online over the Summer: Template Letter for Parents/Carers](#)

Please contact Ashley Assiter, e-Safety Development Officer and/or Rebecca Avery, Education Safeguarding Adviser (Online Protection) for further support, advice and guidance regarding Online Safety.

CYPE – Education Safeguarding Team Contacts – 2017

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Central Duty: 03000 41 11 11

Urgent child protection issue outside of office hours call: **03000 41 91 91**

LADO Team: 03000 410888 kentchildrenslado@kent.gov.uk

Early Help & Preventative Services: 03000 419222 earlyhelp@kent.gov.uk