



# NSCB Newsletter

Edition

**No 8 September 2010**

## The Impact of National Developments – a message from Chris Few, Independent Chair of the NSCB

As many of you will be aware the new government have announced a number of policy initiatives regarding both local and national services. These changes are taking place in a context which sees significant challenges to public finance. Some of the key changes that have either happened or are planned include:

**Professor Eileen Munro** has been asked by the Government to undertake a review intended to improve child protection services. She is tasked with identifying the barriers to improvements in child protection and the steps necessary to overcome these. The review will be wide ranging and will focus on, amongst other things

- Early intervention
- Trusting frontline social workers
- Transparency and accountability

An initial report has been published and is available on the Department for Education website [www.education.gov.uk/](http://www.education.gov.uk/) An interim report will be produced in January 2011 with the final report being published in April 2011

**Government Office East Midlands**, along with all other Government Offices, will be disestablished. A precise timescale will be agreed after the spending review in October but their functions which relate to children are already beginning to come to an end. On 22<sup>nd</sup> September the Secretary of State for Education wrote to Directors of Children's Services and Local Safeguarding Children Board Chairs to inform them that from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010 Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010) should be read as if all references to Government Offices and GO Children and Learners teams were omitted.

Significant changes to the organisation and structure of **health services** are anticipated by April 2011, and continuing over the next few years

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The **Family Justice Review** is underway and is examining all elements of the family justice system, including both public and private law.

**ContactPoint** was switched off at noon on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> August 2010. No access to the system is available to any Local Authority or National Partner and the database is to be securely deleted.

The Secretary of State has indicated that he proposes to implement changes that will remove the requirement to have a **Children's Trust** and publish a **Children and Young People's Plan**

**Serious Case Review overview reports will**, for all reviews that commenced after 10<sup>th</sup> June 2010, be published in full.

Although these changes will inevitably impact on our local safeguarding arrangements I want to assure you that the NSCB is working with all local agencies to ensure that these changes are implemented in a planned, considered way. I would also like to stress my view that, even taking into account these changes, the fundamental principles of effective practice remain the same. Staff need to be alert to the possibility that some children are particularly vulnerable, respond robustly if they identify concerns and maintain effective communication with colleagues from both within their own organisation and from other services. In parallel with these national developments there are many policy and practice developments occurring in Nottinghamshire and some of the most significant of these are included in this Newsletter. I hope that you find the content interesting and useful.

## Pathway to Provision

The Pathway to Provision is a two part resource which includes a multi-agency threshold guidance document for practitioners working with children, young people and families along with an online resource which will be available through the Family Service Directory by the end of October 2010.

The resource aims to enable practitioners to assess the level of need of a child or young person and their family, and then identify which services are available in Nottinghamshire that will offer support at the appropriate level to meet the identified need. Services included in the Pathway to Provision online resource will have mapped their provision against four levels of need. Information on referral processes, routes of access and criteria for access will also be included.

Two complementary resources have also been launched: the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) Handbook and the Joint Access Team (JAT) Handbook. Together these three separate resources will provide concise and clear guidance to the children's workforce ensuring that there is a consistency of practice across Nottinghamshire with regard to the Joint Access Teams, Common Assessment Framework Process, Children's Social Care and access to services for children, young people and their families.

To ensure the sustained success of the Pathway to Provision, a roll out programme has been planned for the autumn across the Nottinghamshire Children's Trust. At the centre of the roll out programme will be seven district conferences for managers and practitioners from all services within the Children's Trust. Details of these conferences and a request for nominations have been sent to senior managers in all partner organisations, who will be asked to identify nominees from their own organisations. The district conferences will be supported by a series of briefings for key staff groups.

All three resources are available for download via the following link:

[www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/pathwaytoprovision](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/pathwaytoprovision). If you would like further information or have any questions regarding the Pathway to Provision please e-mail [pathwaytoprovision@nottscc.gov.uk](mailto:pathwaytoprovision@nottscc.gov.uk)

## Improvement Notice

The June 2010 version of this newsletter highlighted the findings from the Ofsted Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Services. As a result of the findings from the inspection an Improvement Notice has been published, which identifies key priorities and targets for improvement. The Improvement Plan, which was also referred to in the June 2010 Newsletter, has been adapted in response to the Improvement Notice.

The improvement notice can be accessed via the following link

[www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/doc/1639469.doc](http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/doc/1639469.doc)

## Youth Crime Action Plan

The Safer Nottinghamshire Board and Children's Trust have approved the Youth Crime Strategy for 2010-13 which encompasses the statutory Youth Justice and Youth Crime Prevention plans.

The strategy is based around three targets:

- Reducing the number of victims of youth crime,
- Reducing the number of violent crimes committed by young people and
- Reducing the number of young people experiencing custody.

The strategy includes sections on safeguarding children and young people in the youth justice system, involving and protecting victims including those vulnerable due to being children and safeguarding those in custody.

The plan is available at <http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/youthoffending.htm#interventions>

## Web-enabled version of Working Together to Safeguard Children

A company called Tri-X have produced a web-enabled version of Working Together to Safeguard Children. This has been formatted to enable easier navigation through the document. Access is provided free of charge. It can be accessed at [www.proceduresonline.com/workingtogether/](http://www.proceduresonline.com/workingtogether/)

## The Risks of Co-sleeping

In August 2010 the NSCB published on its webpage the executive summary and action plan for the AN09 Serious Case Review. The review was undertaken following the death of a child who died whilst sleeping with his mother. This type of sleeping arrangement is often referred to as co-sleeping and creates significant risk for children, particularly if parents are under the influence of drink or alcohol. This is an issue that the NSCB has previously highlighted and there has been a local awareness raising campaign. Staff from all agencies are asked to promote parental awareness of this issue

## Referrals to the Independent Safeguarding Authority

Any concerns which could that indicate an individual may have:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved in a way that indicates s/he may not be suitable to work with children.

Employers, social care (if involved) and the police (if involved) should keep the LADO informed about progress until all elements of the process are complete. Since 12<sup>th</sup> October 2009, if you remove someone you employ or for whom you are responsible, from regulated activity or controlled activity, or if they leave while under investigation for allegedly causing harm or posing a risk of harm, you are legally obliged to refer this information to the ISA, at which point the LADO will provide advice and guidance regarding referrals to the ISA. All such referrals should be made within 1 month of the discussion with the LADO.

## “Register” Checks

We have recently become aware of the fact that some staff are making referrals to Children’s Social Care then routinely contacting the Safeguarding Children Information Management Team (SCIMT - previously Child Protection Register) with regard to the same issue. This practice had been recommended in the past to ensure

historical information about children on the child protection register was accessed. Following the introduction of the Children's Social Care IT electronic recording system such practice is now unnecessary as the duty social worker has access to the same information accessed by the SCIMT.

Workers may contact the SCIMT for other reasons and the purpose and function of the SCIMT are outlined in the revised NSCB Interagency Safeguarding Children Procedures Chapter 10. There is no need, however, for referrals to Children's Social care to be routinely accompanied by a SCIMT check.

## Small Babies Small Bruises

Several recent studies have increased our knowledge about the association between infant bruising and non accidental injury. It was found that in babies under nine months less than 1.5% had any bruises at all. Professionals should therefore appreciate that a bruise to any baby is a potentially significant indicator of non-accidental injury.

Small bruises which may appear to be of little significance can be a sign of serious physical abuse in babies who are not yet mobile and this is particularly the case in those under 6 months. 'Those who don't cruise, rarely bruise'.

The NSCB has found that in cases of serious physical abuse to babies in this age group, small bruises, on the face or body, had often been noted by professionals in the weeks before serious injury was discovered.

When there are unexplained or suspicious marks or bruising on a baby, particularly in those under 9 months, all staff are advised to make a record of the marks and any explanation given. Professionals should avoid asking leading questions or suggestions of how the mark/bruise may have been sustained. All non mobile babies should be referred to social care.

Unexplained or suspicious marks/bruises for any young child should also be referred to Children's Social Care

**Action could save the child's life.**

## Private Fostering

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (that is to say without the involvement of a Local Authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative with the intention that it should last for more than 28 days.

Private foster carers may be from the extended family, such as a cousin or a great aunt. However, a person who is a relative under the Children Act 1989 i.e. a

grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether of the full or half blood by marriage) or step-parent will not be a private foster carer.

A private foster carer may be a friend of the family, the parent of a friend of the child, or someone previously unknown to the child's family who is willing to privately foster the child. The period for which the child is cared for and accommodated by the private foster carer should be continuous, but that continuity is not broken by the occasional short break.

## **WHY DO YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PRIVATELY FOSTERED CHILDREN**

Children and young people who are privately fostered have been identified as being one of the groups of children who may be particularly vulnerable. Working Together 2010 reinforces this and states that:

- It is the responsibility of the parent, carer and anyone else involved in making the private arrangement, to notify the local authority of the private fostering arrangement.
- Upon notification, it is up to the Local Authority to satisfy themselves that the welfare of the children who are privately fostered in their area are safeguarded and promoted.

## **WHY SHOULD YOU MAKE THE LOCAL AUTHORITY AWARE OF PRIVATE FOSTERING ARRANGEMENTS**

### **Safeguarding the Child**

Privately fostering a child is a significant responsibility. The Local Authority has a duty to oversee the arrangements to promote the welfare of the child and to ensure they are protected. It is important that the carer and partner agencies have a good understanding of the child's needs.

### **Providing Support**

Taking on the care of someone else's child is often not straightforward. Misunderstandings and conflicts can easily arise, even between friends. Living away from their parents for any length of time can present challenges to children and their carers, and the Local Authority and agencies can support them both.

**IF YOU ARE AWARE OF A CHILD THAT MEETS THE ABOVE CRITERIA, THEN PLEASE MAKE A REFERRAL BY RINGING 01623 520309 OR 0115 8546356 AND ASK FOR THE DUTY SOCIAL WORKER**

**The next publication of the NSCB Newsletter will be December 2010.  
Copies of this newsletter are available from  
[www.nottsc.gov.uk/nscb](http://www.nottsc.gov.uk/nscb).**