



Nottinghamshire
SAFEGUARDING
CHILDREN Board

Newsletter December 2010
PRACTICE GUIDANCE SPECIAL

Introduction – A message from Chris Few
(Independent Chair of the NSCB)

The Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board produces the local Safeguarding Children Procedures and a range of practice guidance. The procedures and practice guidance are based on statutory requirements and national guidance and reflect best practice. Taken together they describe how staff working in all agencies in Nottinghamshire should carry out their work in order to best support and protect vulnerable children. It is therefore disappointing to note that the level of awareness of, and compliance with, policy and practice guidance is sometimes found to be an issue when undertaking any form of case review.

Feedback from staff locally has suggested that the fact that such documents are distributed electronically means that they are less visible to staff and this in itself is one of the factors that impacts on the level of staff awareness. We distribute the Safeguarding Children Procedures and practice guidance electronically in order to ensure that what is published is the most up to date versions of documents and to allow the Board to update these more readily. Having said this we have taken the feedback from staff into account and have therefore published this newsletter with the hope that people will use it as a way of promoting awareness about the content and importance of the Procedures and Practice Guidance. The newsletter provides a brief summary of the Procedures and Practice Guidance that is either published, about to be published or under consultation. It is hoped that it will be a quick reference tool for staff and act as a signpost to the place to access more detailed guidance.

I hope that you find this a useful document and that you will use it to promote increased awareness of the importance of all staff using the procedures and practice guidance to inform the work that they do.

All Policy and Practice Guidance can be accessed at www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/nscb



Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Boards' Safeguarding Children Procedures

The inter-agency Safeguarding Children Procedures are issued jointly by Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board (NCSCB) and Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board (NSCB).

The procedures set out the arrangements in Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire to ensure that all agencies, across statutory, voluntary and private sectors, work together to safeguard children and young people and promote their welfare.

The protection of children and young people from harm, including physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect, is part of a broader remit in relation to overall safeguarding and these procedures reflect this context.

These procedures apply to all children and young people up to the age of 18 years, including unborn babies, who live permanently in Nottingham City or Nottinghamshire or are temporarily resident here.

The document covers a range of issues to ensure frontline practitioners and managers in all agencies are aware of their roles and responsibilities within safeguarding, also reflecting the range of issues within the safeguarding arena that impact on children's safety. Chapter 5 of this document is the Child Protection Procedures.

The Safeguarding Children Procedures were last updated in July 2010 and so therefore are compliant with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

This guidance reflects principles set out in the supplementary guidance 'Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation (DCFS 2009)', which is available on the Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Boards' websites.

The purpose of the practice guidance is to assist practitioners in identifying those children and young people vulnerable to the risks associated with sexual exploitation. The guidance applies to male and female children up to the age of 18 years irrespective of whether they are living independently, at home, with carers, or in a residential setting. It includes guidance to assess and support children, young people and their families, multi-agency action to disrupt activity and to prosecute offenders.

The practice guidance was reviewed and updated during the course of 2010. An amended document will be published in January 2011

WORKING WITH DRUG AND ALCOHOL USING PARENTS

The aim of the practice guidance is to assist staff in all agencies in identifying situations where action is needed to safeguard a child and promote their welfare when concerns arise as a result of their parent's drug and / or alcohol use.

The guidance is written on the basis that when assessing a child's needs, parental drug and / or alcohol use should only be a concern when it adversely affects the quality of care that a child receives and consequently poses a risk to their health and development, or has the potential to do so. The focus of any ensuing assessment is not to determine whether someone is dependent on a substance but to establish the extent to which substance use is affecting parenting capacity.

For the purpose of this guidance the term:

- **parents** includes carers and / or guardians
- **child / children** refers to both children and young people under the age of 18.
- **drugs** includes legal and illicit drugs and volatile substances
- **substance** (mis) use also includes drugs, alcohol and volatile substances.

This practice guidance was reviewed and revised in October 2008

INTER-AGENCY PRACTICE GUIDANCE IN RELATION TO CHILDREN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

This guidance is based upon an understanding that all of the 5 key outcomes for children identified in Every Child Matters can be adversely affected for a child living with domestic violence. The impact is usually on every aspect of a child's life and will vary according to the child's resilience and the strengths and weaknesses of their particular circumstances.

This practice guidance details a simple multi-agency risk identification process for all agencies to consistently respond to the issues and concerns arising from domestic violence in households where there are children. The guidance tools provide a comprehensive and consistent framework to gather information, assess, analyse and further grade the severity of the risk posed to children and their non-abusive parent and aims to help practitioners make decisions with regard to the most appropriate and effective interventions for the family.

This practice guidance was reviewed and revised in October 2008. A summary document is in development and will be published in early 2011.

SAFEGUARDING DISABLED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

This practice guidance is written on the basis that safeguarding the welfare of disabled children and young people is everybody's responsibility. It recognises that attitudes in society and amongst the children's workforce can lead to a view that abuse of disabled children does not happen or that disabled children are somehow less harmed by abuse, this in turn undermines the safeguarding of disabled children at all levels.

The term "disabled children and young people" in this context is intended as a broad and inclusive term which may include any child or young person who has a physical, sensory or learning impairment or a significant health condition.

In accordance with national guidance, this practice guidance starts from the premise that disabled children have exactly the same human rights to be safe from abuse and neglect and to be protected from harm as non-disabled children. Research demonstrates that disabled children are more vulnerable to being abused than their non-disabled peers and that agencies need to be more vigilant to the need to safeguard disabled children.

The practice guidance was reviewed and updated during the course of 2010.

JOINT PROTOCOL FOR CHILDREN WHO RUN AWAY AND GO MISSING FROM HOME, CARE OR EDUCATION

This practice guidance was developed in recognition of the fact that children who are missing may be at risk of harm on multiple levels including risks from the people with whom they may come into contact. Risks can include physical harm, sexual exploitation, particularly prostitution, drug abuse and involvement in a range of other criminal activities. These risks apply whether the child is missing from their own family home or where children become missing while they are looked after by the local authority.

Children go missing in a number of different circumstances but children who do run away are often unhappy, vulnerable and in potential danger.

The aim of the guidance is to promote practice that will:

- Reduce the number of children that go missing.
- Ensure that children who go missing are appropriately supported.

The guidance sets out what is expected of staff when dealing with missing children, or children identified as being at risk of going missing.

The practice guidance was reviewed and updated during the course of 2010

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN FROM ABROAD

This practice guidance is based upon an understanding that large numbers of children arrive into this country from overseas every day. Many of these children do so legally in the care of their parents and do not raise any concerns for statutory agencies. However some of the children that come to this country are particularly vulnerable.

The purpose of the guidance is to assist staff in all agencies to:

- Understand the issues which can make children from abroad particularly vulnerable
- Identify children from abroad who may be in need, including those who may be in need of protection
- Know what action to take in accordance with their responsibilities.

The practice guidance covers a range of issues such as working with asylum seeking children and young people, private fostering and human trafficking.

It was first published in December 2010

Practice Guidance under Review

The following documents were developed some time ago and are currently under review. The key principles are still relevant but the guidance will need to be updated to reflect revised statutory guidance and recent research.

SEXUAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The purpose of this practice guidance is to provide information for staff in all agencies to help them to recognise the warning signs of sexual abuse, to clarify what action should be taken when concerns arise, and to build their confidence to do something about it.

The guidance is written to reflect the understanding that sexual abuse knows no barriers. It can happen in all cultures and communities and is not acceptable in any. It can happen to all children regardless of race, culture, gender, class or disability. Equally, perpetrators come from all backgrounds including those in a professional or trusted role.

The guidance was developed in recognition of the fact that the harm which sexual abuse causes to children can be profound, not just to their emotional and physical development, but to their trust in adults, especially if their abuser is someone they love. The sooner the abuse is identified and the child is effectively safeguarded, the sooner the healing process can begin.

We intend to publish revised and updated practice guidance during the course of 2010/11

CHILD NEGLECT PRACTICE GUIDANCE FOR ALL AGENCIES

This practice guidance complements the Safeguarding Children Procedures by considering the particular difficulties that may be experienced when working with child neglect. It is for use by all those who work with children and families in all agencies and settings. It draws on national and local research into child neglect and its aim is to help practitioners form judgements about their intervention.

It includes a range of tools, resources and useful contacts that practitioners may find helpful in their work with children and families. It is not, however, exhaustive and practitioners may well choose to add other tools or resources to it that have been found to be useful in practice.

We intend to publish revised and updated practice guidance during the course of 2010/11.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

This practice guidance considers and advises on the particular difficulties that can be experienced when working with emotional abuse.

It is intended for all those who work with children and families in all agencies and settings. It draws on research into child emotional abuse and on the experience of those actively working in this field. It aims to help practitioners define and identify emotional abuse and form judgments about their assessment and intervention.

It includes a range of tools, resources and useful contacts that practitioners may find helpful in their work with families where emotional abuse is an issue. The list however, is not exhaustive and practitioners may well add other resources to it that have been found useful in practice.

The term 'parent' is used within the guidance to mean parent or caregiver i.e. those with the primary responsibility for caring for the child.

SAFER WORKING PRACTICE: Preventing Unsuitable People from Working with Children and Young People

The purpose of this guidance is to set out a model of good practice for all agencies to assist them in ensuring there are robust systems in place to safeguard children from people who are unsuitable to work with them. In this context the term safer working practice covers recruitment and selection of staff and ongoing management issues. In addition it sets out good practice expectations for responding to allegations/concerns which bring into question the suitability of a worker to work with children.

The term worker is used throughout the guidance, for convenience. In this context 'worker' covers the following:

- An employee
- A volunteer
- A person contracted to provide services
- A foster carer
- A prospective adopter, i.e. someone that has had a child placed with them as part of a planned adoption where the adoption order has not yet been granted.

Practice Guidance under Review

The following practice guidance has been recently developed and is undergoing a process of final consultation. We anticipate that the documents will be published in March 2011.

SELF-HARM

This practice guidance was developed in recognition of the fact that self-harm among children and young people is a major public health issue affecting at least one in every 15 children and young people. There is some evidence that the rates are higher in the United Kingdom than the rest of Europe. It can be an indicator of mental health problems and emotional distress.

The aim of the practice guidance is

- To improve the quality of support, advice and guidance offered by staff working with children and young people who may be self harming or at risk of doing so.
- To support agencies communicating with children and young people in a way that encourages and enables engagement with support services.
- To support agencies in assessing and minimising harm for children and young people they are working with, with support from specialist services.
- To support agencies and young people working towards reducing self-harming behaviours and potentially life threatening coping strategies.

The practice guidance is currently out for consultation. It is expected that it will be published in January 2011.

E SAFETY

This practice guidance is based on an understanding that any person accessing / distributing / producing images of child abuse or grooming using information and communication technology (ICT) will be considered as a potential risk to children. This includes the use of computers, mobile phones, grooming through chat rooms, text messaging, etc. It is recognised that a robust, coordinated multi agency response will always follow any such allegations coming to light.

It covers:

- Policies and guidance to enable agencies to support the e-safety of children and young people
- The responses necessary when a risk to a child or a young person is discovered
- Awareness raising for children and young people so that they are able to keep themselves as safe as possible when using the internet and other digital technologies

The practice guidance is currently out for consultation. It is expected that it will be published in January 2011.