Welcome to the first newsletter from the Wandsworth Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB)

Many people will not be clear of the role of the WSCB, what it is or does. Local Safeguarding Children Boards were set up following the Children Act 2004 resulting from the Victoria Climbie enquiry, which called for new arrangements to hold people to account in organisations responsible for safeguarding children. It recognised that safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility, not just key agencies such as children’s social care or the police, and that the WSCB has a role in leading and coordinating all those involved in protecting children.

The WSCB carries statutory responsibilities for safeguarding children in Wandsworth. It is made up of senior managers within organisations in Wandsworth, who hold responsibility for safeguarding children in their agencies, such as children’s social care, police, health, education and other services including voluntary bodies. The WSCB monitors how they all work together to provide services for children and ensure children are protected.

The WSCB has a really important role in coordinating the work of professionals in keeping children safe from harm or neglect and enabling them to grow up to reach their full potential. One of our priorities is to communicate more effectively with everyone who has a role in keeping children safe in Wandsworth and to promote the part the WSCB plays in ensuring key messages are disseminated about safeguarding children and young people. We would like to make the work that the WSCB undertakes more accessible to practitioners and the public. We intend to use the newsletter to keep you up to date with developments in safeguarding practice in Wandsworth.

We welcome your ideas about how we can make the work of the WSCB more accessible and how we use the newsletter, the type of articles and information you would like.

Nicky Pace
Independent Chair - Wandsworth Safeguarding Children Board

What’s new for Wandsworth Safeguarding Children Board:
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks
- WSCB website
- LADO procedures and briefing sessions
- Welfare Reforms
- New Working Together guidance 2013
- Inter-agency resolution protocol
- Forthcoming Events – Safeguarding Week 10-14 June 2013
FIONA MULVANEY IS THE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP OFFICER FOR Wandsworth Safeguarding Children Board. Her role is to develop links with voluntary, community and faith groups in the borough, to offer improved awareness, guidance, advice, standards and training on how to keep children and young people safe from harm and promote their welfare.

The Community Partnership Officer can assist organisations, communities and groups to develop effective safeguarding practice by providing advice and support on the following:

- Developing safeguarding work and policies;
- Assessing and improving safeguarding standards;
- Completing safeguarding audits;
- Identifying staff and volunteers’ safeguarding training requirements;
- Accessing appropriate safeguarding guidance and information material;

If you are a voluntary, community or faith organisation or group working with children, young people and their families in Wandsworth, and would like any further information on the advice and support available, please contact Fiona Mulvaney: fmulvaney@wandsworth.gov.uk

On November 26, as part of Inter-Faith Week 2012, 90 pupils from Wandsworth secondary schools attended a unique event at the Town Hall where they were able to direct a series of quick-fire questions at representatives from the borough’s different faith groups.

The Faith Direct initiative was organised by the Wandsworth Multi Faith sub-group and supported by the Wandsworth Children Safeguarding Board. It brought together speakers from local Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Baha’i, Sikh, Humanist and Buddhist communities.

Faith Direct aims to increase young people’s knowledge of the different faiths and beliefs practised in the borough, promote understanding, tolerance and respect and offer an open forum for dialogue. It also brings together schools and local faith leaders so that work can carry on throughout the year.

The event is very well supported by local schools, with many taking the model and running it within their schools. One teacher said “Thanks again for another very enjoyable event. The students really enjoyed it last night and learnt a lot. Many students commented on how they felt that their confidence had improved with regards to asking questions and speaking out loud. Many also felt that the event made them reflect and re-evaluate their own belief systems.”

CRB checks have changed!

On the 1 December 2012 the Criminal Records Bureau and Independent Safeguarding Authority merged to become the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). CRB checks are now known as DBS checks. There are two main levels of DBS checks. The Enhanced check will provide the same information as a Standard check but may also contain more information held by the Police and an option to apply for a check that includes information from barred lists, available for those working in ‘regulated activity’ with children or vulnerable adults.

Any agency must report staff/volunteers to the DBS that are dismissed or removed from any regulated activity because they harmed or posed a risk to an individual. It is a criminal offence for any agency to recruit staff/volunteers appearing on the DBS barred lists to take part in regulated activity with vulnerable adults or children.

See www.homeoffice.gov.uk/agencies-public-bodies/dbs/

On the 21 March the new Working Together 2013 was launched. This guidance lays out all our responsibilities to keep children safe. Click on here for your own copy to download.

www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/statutory/g00213160/working-together-to-safeguard-children

WSCP has developed an inter-agency resolutions protocol around professional differences. We hope to be able to have this available on our website by May 2013 so you can download your own copy or contact us directly at the WSCP on 020 8871 7401 for a copy to be sent out to you.

Safeguarding Week in Wandsworth 10–14 June 2013

Check the new website for events to be announced!
Wandsworth Safeguarding Children and Young People

Worried that the Welfare Reforms will have an effect on children and families?

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 legislates for some of the biggest changes to the benefits system ever seen. The cumulative impact of the changes from 1 April 2013 will affect some low-income residents in Wandsworth and as such could have a disruptive effect on the lives of some children and young people in the borough. In order to mitigate some of the potential impacts of welfare reforms, there is a range of work underway in Wandsworth to support the most vulnerable families.

The Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) is a fund provided by Government to provide additional support with housing costs. The fund could be used to offer short-term support to households.

Work is underway to identify the most vulnerable families, primarily those that are Children’s Social Care cases, who may need support through the Discretionary Housing Payment and there is an officer working on this in the Benefits Service, supported by officers in the Children’s Services Department.

For advice and support or for further information about welfare reform or a quick reference to these proposed changes residents can visit www.wandsworth.gov.uk/info/200008/benefits/1390/welfare_reform

Signs of Well-Being/Signs of Safety implementation in Wandsworth

Wandsworth Children’s Safeguarding Board and the Children and Young People’s Partnership have agreed to trial the SoS/SOWB approach to integrated working across a range of partner agencies.

The Signs of Safety approach to child protection casework was developed by Andrew Turnell and Steve Edwards in Western Australia in 1990s. As the approach evolved it was adapted in the UK for early intervention and this became known as Signs of Well-being. It is exactly the same approach as the Signs of Safety, the language has simply been adapted to support the early offer of help.

It is being implemented across a number of local authorities, three of which are in London – including Wandsworth (some others are implementing in part).

The approach places the voice and perspective of the family and the child at the centre, with professional voices providing appropriate and effective support and challenge. It enables parents and children to be more in control of the assessment and planning for their family. In Wandsworth, it provides all Team Around the Child (TAC) members and managers and families a shared language to describe ‘what’s working well’, ‘what are we worried about’ and ‘what needs to happen’.

Training has been provided to over 260 multi-agency staff. Multi agency/specialist workshops are underway and offer practical experience in using the approach in a TAC meeting and using the direct work tools at a specialist level with children and their parents/carers developing Danger Statements and Safety Goals and using the direct work tools from the approach – Words & Pictures storyboards & the Three Houses. These Workshops can be applied for through www.wandsworthTPD.org.uk

Currently a trial is taking place in ten of the borough’s schools and Early Years Services using the Signs of Wellbeing assessment and approach to TAC meetings. SoFs in child protection conferences will start from 1 May 2013. An evaluation of the trial will be in September 2013.

For more information contact the Family Information Service telephone: 020 8871 7899 or visit www.wandsworth.gov.uk/fis

Our Website has had a facelift!

We have created a new look website, with information and advice for parents, young people, professionals and volunteers. Check out the new website at www.wscb.org.uk

Do you know what the LADO is in Wandsworth?

The LADO is the Local Authority Designated Officer and is responsible for co-ordinating the concerns when an adult who works with children may have caused harm or poses a risk. On the 26th January 2013 we held our first briefing session with over 20 safeguarding agency leads attending this event. If you are the person in your organisation responsible for responding to that concern, you must consult the LADO within 24 hours. To help clarify this process, the WSCB recently developed two leaflets and feedback to these has been positive. These can be downloaded from our website in the ‘managing allegations’ section or you can contact us for some to be sent to you. The next briefing session will be held on the 22 May 2013. Please sign up and book a place on www.wandsworthtpd.org.uk