Wandsworth Safeguarding Children and Young People

The New Education and Social Services Department

On 1 April 2014 Wandsworth Council’s Adult Social Services and Children’s Services departments will merge to become the Education and Social Services Department. Dawn Warwick, the current Director of Adult Social Services, will be leading the new department. Whilst the new service is being born from austerity as the council reduces its number of departments, it will provide many opportunities to adopt more effective ways of working, through identifying synergies and the sharing of some back office functions.

The Education and Social Services Department will aim to provide the best possible outcomes for vulnerable children and adults, and to continue to improve children and young people’s achievement in Wandsworth’s schools. The new department will offer personalised care and support for all age groups. There will be a strong focus on commissioning and new, innovative service delivery models will be explored. The new arrangements will also provide an opportunity to improve the transition pathway from children to adult care, to ensure young people continue to receive the support they need once they reach adulthood.

A key advantage of the new combined Children’s Services and Adult Social Services Departments is that it allows the council to take good practice from both departments and build on this to put in place optimal working practices and structures. Functions such as Quality Assurance and Performance Management will be cross-departmental, preventing duplication and enabling services to learn from each other.

Under the new arrangements, the Children’s and Adult’s safeguarding standards teams will be managed directly by the Director and will be co-located in the Town Hall complex, along with the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). This will enable closer working between the teams, with opportunities for collaboration. There will also be a review undertaken of the two safeguarding standards teams, to identify synergies and opportunities for joint working. The review will also look at the new safeguarding requirements under the Care Bill and the Children and Families Bill to ensure Wandsworth has an effective care and support system in place. This review is due to be completed by the end of 2015. Other proposed reviews in the new department include Front Door Services and the Disability and Special Needs service.

The efficiencies afforded through the new department will help the council meet its saving target of £33 million by 2015/16 but will also provide huge opportunities for collaboration and better ways of working, in order to deliver the best services for Wandsworth residents.

The committee report on the changes can be viewed here: Committee paper. A further update will be included in the October 2014 newsletter, reflecting on the progress of the new department.

NSPCC serious case reviews resource

When a child dies from abuse or neglect, the local inter-agency group responsible for child protection conducts a review to identify how local professionals and organisations can improve the way they work together to safeguard children.

The NSPCC provides an online resource where professionals can read about published review cases, along with the key learning, research and statistics.
Welcome to Access

Access Child & Youth Mental Health is provided by South West London and St Georges Mental Health NHS Trust and Wandsworth Local Authority working in partnership. The service is made up of experienced mental health staff from a range of different professional backgrounds.

The service is for children and young people (up to the age of 18 years registered with a Wandsworth GP) who may be experiencing a range of mild to complex difficulties with their emotional and psychological well-being. The Access team provide consultation and assessment to professionals, young people and families to help get access to the right service to meet your needs.

We work with children, young people & families from all backgrounds. We aim to provide a service which embraces all cultures and respects ethnicity, religion and individual identity.

If you are a parent and have concerns about the mental health or emotional wellbeing of your child, please discuss your concerns with a professional that knows your child, asking them to make a referral to Access where we can think together about the most helpful next steps. We are connected to a number of services for children and young people in Wandsworth and will make sure we support you to go to the right place for your needs.

Once we receive your referral, we will make contact with you to find out more about what is happening for you and the family, we will ask you questions about your what has led to your referral and think together about what we can do to support you. This may include meeting with you and the family, or signposting you to the most helpful service. There will be plenty of opportunity for you to ask us questions too.

Access Team

Safeguarding Week 2014 will be held from 16–20 June.

There will also be a Safeguarding Conference in the Civic Suite on Thursday 25 September.

Look out for details of all these events, and how to book, on the WSCB website.

Extension of child protection medicals service

By extending the role of the paediatric emergency department at St George’s Hospital, with support from Wandsworth CCG, there is now a five day a week service for children who need to undergo child protection medicals. Dr Malcolm Borg has led the development of this in the Paediatric Emergency Department with the ambition to significantly reduce waiting times and potential loss of forensic evidence.

The ambition is, as ever, to produce as seamless a journey as possible for the child.

Keeping Supplementary Education Safe and Effective

The WSCB has published a leaflet providing safeguarding advice and guidance for any group or organisation offering supplementary education to children and young people. Supplementary Education includes all non-statutory provision in a setting outside of mainstream school. It is sometimes known as complementary education, and may provide extra support in core curriculum subjects, as well as faith or culture-based learning.

If your community, faith or voluntary group offers supplementary education to children and young people, you can access this leaflet from the WSCB website, or by following the link below:

www.wscb.org.uk/downloads/download/49/supplementary_education
Barnardo’s project seeks to tackle sexual exploitation

The Barnardo’s Pan London Sexual Exploitation Service works intensively with young people in Wandsworth offering a safe, confidential environment where they can go for help, advice and support. Our project workers support young people and their families to prevent sexual exploitation. We also help to manage young people who are experiencing exploitation and those recovering from episodes of exploitation.

Our focus is to enable patterns or risks of exploitation to be interrupted, as well as to support prosecutions of perpetrators where possible. We aim to help the young person to change their way of life. To do this our project workers build a relationship with the young person and family to enable a trusting and safe relationship in which they can share experiences. The service also provides support for young people on various issues including sexual health as well as providing advocacy.

Our project works with schools to educate vulnerable young people on how to protect themselves from exploitation. We work with the police to enable the prosecution of perpetrators of sexual exploitation. And we work with, and provide training for, children’s services, health and other professionals in order to promote the understanding of the issue of sexual exploitation.

We support young people to access education again if they are not in education owing to exploitation. The project takes a multi-agency approach to interrupt grooming and exploitation to help young people access some form of education. Our project workers are able to act as advocates for young people so they can share their experiences of, and wishes for their education.

The service works with families including siblings, helping them to understand the risks of exploitation and how to manage exploitation. We also provide support to attend meetings and court hearings.

For more information on this project and other work of Barnardo’s please visit www.barnardos.org.uk.

Focus on Private Fostering

Catherine Cliff is the new Private Fostering social worker for Wandsworth. She is looking to develop a link with local communities and faith leaders in relation to Private Fostering.

Private fostering is when a child under the age of 16 (under 18 if disabled) is cared for by someone who is not their parent or a ‘close relative’. This is a private arrangement made between a parent and a carer, for 28 days or more. Close relatives are defined as step-parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles or aunts (whether of full blood, half blood or marriage/affinity).

Examples of private fostering include –

- Children and young people living apart from their families (parental illness is a common reason)
- Ethnic minority children with parents working or studying in the UK (but not living together)
- Children with parents overseas
- Children living with host families for a variety of reasons
- Children on holiday exchange (for more than 28 days)

This group of children are considered particularly vulnerable. Often their care arrangements are satisfactory, however sometimes they are not, and in the worst case scenario, you may recall the death of Victoria Climbie who was in a private fostering arrangement.

It is the law for a Private Foster carer to notify the local authority of such an arrangement.

The local authority need to ensure that the standard of care is appropriate for the young person and his or her needs are being met. Unfortunately many people are unwittingly breaking the law as they are not aware of Private Fostering, or can not identify their own situation as such. This is why making good links across the community can ensure that carers can get the help and assistance they are entitled to.

If you would like to discuss Private Fostering with Catherine, her email address is ccliff@wandsworth.gov.uk or you can call her on 020 8871 8932. Please get in touch if you have any concerns or questions.
A Day in the Life...

Name: Sarah Thurlbeck
Job title: Consultant in General Paediatrics and Named Doctor for Child Safeguarding at St George’s Healthcare NHS Trust
Duration in current post: 20 years (consultant), 5 years (Named Doctor)

What does a typical day in your job involve?
Although my position is full time only 12 hours per week are allocated to child safeguarding, so you will find me in clinic seeing children with assorted medical problems, teaching junior doctors and students, and dealing with the usual bureaucracy. The tasks – and my colleagues – are varied and interesting and I enjoy my job.

What is your Safeguarding responsibility within your work team?
In St George’s Trust I am the medical lead for child safeguarding and work closely with many others, particularly the Named Nurse, to try to ensure the wellbeing of individual children about whom concerns have been raised. Consultants and other health care workers have their own responsibility for all aspects of their patients’ care but rightly approach me for advice, both about the interpretation of medical aspects of the child’s case, and for recommendations about what action should be taken. On occasion I will support colleagues by attending strategy meetings. Broader aspects include devising and delivering training, particularly to medical staff. I find an interactive, case-based approach is particularly well received. There are also many committees, both in the Trust and externally. Another part of the role is participating in the development of Trust policy. For example “See the Adult See the Child” in line with GMC guidance is important, so that staff who don’t deal directly with children are aware, and know how to respond, when contact with an adult raises a fear about a child’s welfare. Recently I was involved in a Serious Case Review, and that was quite a learning experience. I report to and am supervised by Wandsworth’s Designated Doctor, who is an enormous support.

Can you give us an example of how your role has made a difference in safeguarding children and young people?
A depressed mother who admitted to harming her baby was successfully supported and rehabilitated with a happy outcome. The baby presented with a medical symptom which was fully investigated. Part of the assessment was of the mother’s attitude and mental state on the ward and we worked closely with Children’s Specialist Services to help her.

Proposed peer research project
Hearing what our children and young people in the borough think and feel are the real safeguarding issues for them, and what their fears and worries are, is very important for the Wandsworth Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB). One way that we are exploring this is through the commissioning of a peer research study, to get a better understanding from young people about what life is currently like for them in Wandsworth, with a specific focus on safeguarding issues.

The aim is to hear from young people about their key issues, what services they engage with, how effective these are, where they think the gaps are, and most importantly whether we (collective agencies working together in the borough) are making a difference in their lives and making them feel safer. The information gathered will then be fed into existing service planning, as well as informing the development of our priority areas and influencing future service planning.

The WSCB will be commissioning a qualitative study, with peer researchers going out into the community and speaking with around 500 young people, in focus groups, in-depth interviews and the use of an online survey. This process will involve a cross-sectional survey of young people that will provide a good snapshot of the population, with the aim that a combination of different research methods will produce the best results.

It is envisaged that the peer research project will commence during April 2014 and will be concluded by July 2014. A full analysis report will be presented to the Executive Board in July 2014 and a presentation will be delivered to the Network Board in September 2014.
OFSTED Framework for Inspections of Services for Children In Need of Help and Protection, Children Looked After and Care Leavers and LSCBs

Ofsted have released their new inspection framework for Local Authorities (here). The ‘Inspection of Services for Children in Need of Help and Protection, Children Looked After and Care Leavers’ which replaces the previous inspection framework covering separate inspections for Child Protection, Looked After Children, adoption and fostering. All of these have now come together under one, new framework.

There is also a separate new Ofsted inspection of the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board (LSCB) which is likely to happen at the same time.

The new inspection framework will focus on the experiences of children, young people and their families and the extent to which their lives have improved as a result of intervention and the quality of professional practice, management and leadership.

This inspection focuses on frontline practice and on the child or young person’s journey and reflects the changes from the Munro Review which stated that:

‘The new inspection framework should examine the child’s journey from needing to receiving help, explore how the rights, wishes, feelings and experiences of children and young people inform and shape the provision of services, and look at the effectiveness of the help provided to children, young people and their families.’

The Munro Review of Child Protection, May 2011

The new inspection framework was launched on 25 September 2013. The new framework is a single announced (1 day’s notice) inspection of local authority arrangements, incorporating children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. Adoption and fostering services are also covered within this new framework.

The inspection takes place over a four week period with inspectors normally on site for a total of 11 days. The Local Authority will be notified on a Tuesday that the inspection team will be arriving the following day. Three of the inspection team of seven arrive to meet with senior managers, and will then review the effectiveness of contact, referral and assessment arrangements. The LA are asked to audit 18 cases selected by the inspectors from the list of open cases the LA have to provide, including 10 looked after children and two care leavers. When they are on site the inspectors will review the cases that have been audited and will sample another 50 cases. They will want to meet with children, young people and families and will visit two looked after children who are placed out of the authority in a residential home. The inspectors will also review four foster carer’s records and at least four adopter’s records.

The focus of the inspection will be on the child’s journey and their experiences from early identification of need and receiving early help to leaving the safeguarding or care system and the difference that we make to the lives of children, young people, their families and carers.

Inspectors will report on the overall effectiveness of the service, including areas for development. They will focus on the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection, children looked after and achieving permanence, included adoption performance and experiences and progress of care leavers. They also will report on leadership, management and governance.

The council will be graded using a four point scale in each area: outstanding, good, requiring improvement or inadequate. The inspection of the LSCB is a separate entity with its own outcome. The grading scales are also outstanding, good, requiring improvement or inadequate.

Inspections can seem daunting, but there will be opportunities for us to show inspectors good practice, what works well and areas we are working to improve.

For more information on the areas covered in the inspection and the grade descriptors please go to the link: www.ofsted.gov.uk/news/ofsteds-single-inspection-takes-effect
Introducing the Parental Substance Misuse Worker

I am Jennifer Bawden and I am the Parental Substance Misuse Worker based within Wandsworth Children’s Specialist Services. I have been here since September 2012 and sit within the Initial Response Team, part of the Referral and Assessment Service. My job is to work directly with parents to support them to make changes to their substance misusing behaviour. I can accept referrals from any Social Worker within Wandsworth CSS (or YPL), where a parent has identified drug or alcohol misuse and has consented to meeting. I will only stay involved whilst the case is open to Children’s Services and will jointly work cases with the allocated social worker for the child/children.

There is a great deal of research and information available to professionals and the wider public about parental substance misuse, all of which highlight that parental problem drug use can and does cause serious harm to children at every age from conception to adulthood. Perhaps not surprisingly, parental substance misuse continues to be a key factor within serious case reviews as children are put at more risk of harm, and parents who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol, are unable to keep their child safe due to poor supervision. One of the many lessons that have come from case reviews is the need for timely and thorough assessments. These assessments need to be completed with the parents and should present a clear picture of their drug and alcohol use, and consider their behaviour when under the influence of substances in order to better understand the risks that this poses to the children. Learning from these case reviews also identifies that professionals too often trust the parents’ self-reporting of their drug and alcohol use. As professionals, we should continue to challenge parents and if we do not believe that they are being honest, then we should openly state this in our assessments and if necessary request drug and alcohol testing as evidence.

If you have cases where parents are using substances and you would like support in managing these then please call me on 020 8871 7885.

Once I receive a referral I will complete a parental substance misuse assessment which incorporates elements of the signs of safety approach and identifies what is working well for the parent, as well as addressing the concerns and worries. It also outlines the individual’s history of substance misuse, current patterns of using, and explores the impact that their substance misuse may have on their ability to safely parent their child. Towards the end of the assessment, the parent is asked to consider what changes they would like to make to their substance misusing behaviour. Depending on their answer referrals may be made to adult substance misuse services and/or I will provide 1:1 direct support to the parents.

I also have several booklets, leaflets and information sheets about alcohol and drug use which workers can take away and use in their work with children and parents. Please contact me if you would like to use any of these.

Jennifer Bawden

WSCB S11 Self-assessment Safeguarding Audit

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places duties on a range of organisations and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Wandsworth Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) has developed a S11 self-assessment questionnaire as a key assessment and monitoring tool, in order to support all staff to safeguard children effectively. All partner agencies have been asked to participate in this audit process by getting as many staff as possible within their organisation, agency, school or setting to complete the questionnaire. This will include receptionists, premises officials, volunteers, contracted staff, school governors, teachers, social workers, mental health workers, stakeholders, trainees, as well as any other direct employee of their organisation.

All WSCB partner agencies have safeguarding leads who will have responsibility for the analysis of the completed S11 self-assessment questionnaires. The analysis will help each agency to understand both the strengths and gaps in their staff’s knowledge. This will enable them to develop appropriate learning opportunities and training.

All completed S11 self-assessment analysis forms (and, if required, Action Plans) will be returned to the WSCB. A special S11 Task & Finish Group will analyse the returned audit forms by the end of March 2014. At the end of May 2014 the S11 Audit and Review Group, chaired by the Independent Chair of the WSCB, will meet with safeguarding leads as part of the monitoring, reviewing and scrutiny role of the WSCB, to ensure all agencies are meeting their safeguarding responsibilities as individual organisations, and having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
FGM comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other deliberate injuries to the female genitalia for non-medical reasons. The practice is particularly prominent in migrant communities from parts of Africa, Asia and the Middle East. It is a violation of the girl’s human right, a criminal offence in the UK since 1985, and has significant detrimental impact on the sexual, reproductive and mental health of girls and women.

In Wandsworth a multi-agency FGM Steering Group (chaired by the Director of Public Health) has been established to spearhead addressing the FGM concerns within the borough. A task group, the FGM Strategy Development Group, has been set up to develop an action plan of activities aimed at eliminating the practice in the borough. The action plan is to be launched on the 4 April 2014 after which it will be submitted to the WSCB for approval and future oversight.

Considerable work is on-going to address FGM within the Borough. This includes:

a) Development of a multi-agency strategy and pathways for managing FGM.

b) Effective engagement/working with key partners to better understand the situation locally.

c) Working with health services to establish appropriate coding for FGM. This will help collate information locally in line with national recommendations.

d) Development of a risk assessment framework to alert all frontline professionals to children and young women who may be at risk, noting the correct reporting procedure and following the appropriate Child Protection pathway.

e) Leaflets for GPs and Practice Nurses highlighting their roles in eliminating FGM. These have been produced and disseminated to all GP practices within the borough, and will be rolled out to all frontline staff.

f) Ensuring the embedding of a graded level of raising awareness and appropriate training for all workforce sectors within the borough.

g) Working with the voluntary sector e.g., FORWARD, to provide training and raise awareness among professional groupings, schools and the communities. This training has commenced.

h) Development of a collaboration between FORWARD, Wandsworth Council, Katherine Low Settlement and partners to train and equip members of the community as Community Champions to work within the community in raising awareness to the law, human rights of women and girls, and the health implications of FGM.

i) Engagement with regional agencies e.g. Metropolitan Police Project Azure to ensure consistency of approach. Members of these groups attend the FGM Strategy Group.

j) Hosting of the International Day of Zero Tolerance to FGM on 6th February 2014 with participation from members of the community and frontline professionals. In addition to a good attendance from professionals, twelve members from communities most at risk attended and have stated their willingness to participate as community champions in raising awareness within their communities; they will now be supported in that role.

It remains of concern that to date there has been no prosecution for this offence within the UK. The actions taken in Wandsworth will ensure that we better understand the extent of FGM within our communities; front line professionals have clear advice and guidance on how to respond; effective systems / processes exist to alert professionals to children and young people at risk; and that the communities affected are empowered to engage to stop this practice.
Faith Direct - Finding the facts on belief

In March, over 80 pupils from Wandsworth secondary schools attended a unique ‘speed-dating’ event at the town hall where they were able to fire a series of quick-fire questions at representatives from the borough’s different faith groups.

The Faith Direct initiative was organised by the Safeguarding Children Board and Wandsworth Multi Faith-Group. It brought together speakers from local Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Baha’i, 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.

The young people conducted a whistle-stop tour round the room interviewing each representative in turn. The questioning lasted 15 minutes before a bell was rung and the students moved on to the next table.

The speakers being questioned by local young people included: Mr Sunder Sharma (The Hindu Society); Venerable Phra Krui Samu Lom (Buddhapadippa Temple); Rev McKinney (Holy Trinity Parish Church), Zan Khan and Fareed Ul Haq (The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community); Rabbi Hammond (Wimbledon and District Synagogue), Rev S. Rouse (Balham Baptist Church) Ms Shanta Chellappoo and Miss Naz Knight (Baha’i), Sara Passmore (British Humanist Association) and Imam Gangat (Balham Mosque and Al-Risalah Education Trust).

The Mayor, who opened the event said: “Wandsworth is a modern and diverse borough which is home to many communities. This unique event set out to improve young people’s understanding of different faiths and beliefs.

“The students pulled no punches with their questions. They asked probing questions about the differences between different beliefs and the significance of having a belief”

The event was open to young people in Year 7 or above. All those attending received a fact pack in advance summarising the main characteristics of the different beliefs.

After the event, speakers said they enjoyed having the opportunity to challenge stereotypes about their beliefs and students said the event had added to their knowledge.