

# exchange

Working together to keep children safe

## Editorial

This is the second issue of *Exchange*, which aims to create a platform for sharing analysis and solutions to safeguarding issues faced by LSCBs and ACPCs.

Following a very positive response to the first issue, we have included as many articles as possible, to reflect the numerous requests from colleagues and partners to share ideas and information. To create more space for this, we have provided links to the NSPCC Inform website, where more detailed versions of these printed articles can be found.

Included in this edition are contributions which address post Richard safe recruitment; safeguarding disabled children; sharing LSCB experiences of awareness raising in the community; safeguarding children online; and safeguarding children involved in private family law proceedings. *Exchange* also encourages sharing learning between different jurisdictions and therefore includes commentary on practice and policy in Wales and Northern Ireland.

The NSPCC is keen to develop *Exchange* and welcomes colleagues and partners working on LSCBs and ACPCs to make comments or contributions, as a means of sharing learning and seeking solutions to safeguarding children and young people.

### Sue Woolmore

If you would like to make a comment or contribute to *Exchange*, please contact Sue Woolmore (see page four for details).

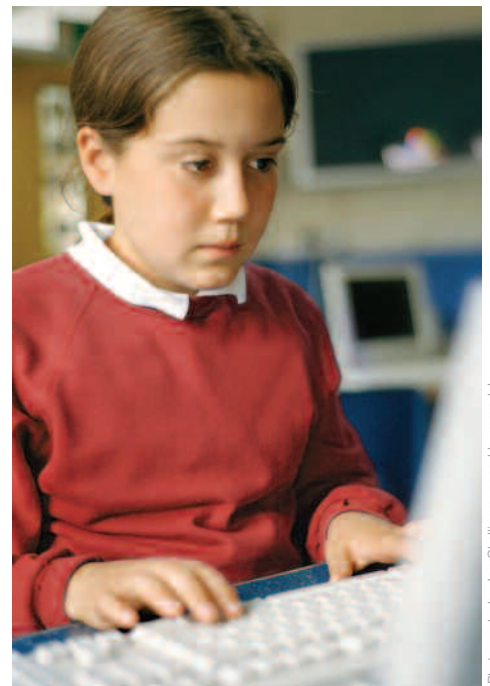
# Safeguarding children online

**Chris Atkinson, the partnerships liaison officer at the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) centre (who is seconded from the NSPCC), provides guidance about resources that are available for LSCBs to safeguard children when they are online.**

Children and young people's access to new technology, particularly the internet, continues to grow in a range of settings, including schools, libraries, family support projects and after-school care. This poses new challenges for those charged with the welfare of children and young people. Do we have appropriate policies about the acceptable use of technology in place across all children's services? How can LSCBs best safeguard children online? Who are the key partners in the online world?

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) centre and the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (BECTA) are two of the agencies identified as key partners for LSCBs to safeguard children online. The CEOP centre works across the UK and maximises international links to deliver a holistic approach that combines police powers with the dedicated expertise of business sectors, government, specialist charities and other organisations – all focused on tackling child sex abuse.

Detailed information, including a checklist for LSCBs interested in developing a co-ordinated strategic approach to safeguarding children online, based upon the BECTA publication, is available at [www.nspcc.org.uk/inform](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/inform)



Photography by Jon Challicom, posed by a model.

### Topics include:

- Policies to address online safety across all children's services.
- How online safety policy links with other safeguarding policies.
- The training needs of LSCB staff.
- Information on the CEOP programme for LSCBs.

BECTA's Safe Use of ICT in Education steering group and CEOP would be delighted to discuss developing strategic approaches with LSCBs to safeguard children online.

Contact Chris Atkinson at: [chris.atkinson@ceop.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:chris.atkinson@ceop.gsi.gov.uk)

# Empowering parents

A leaflet campaign, aimed at informing parents about risks to their children, was launched earlier this year by Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland LSCB.

The leaflet *Keeping children safe: a parent's guide* encourages parents to ask questions about adults who have access to their children – including people working in school and health settings, babysitters and carers, other parents, private tutors and those involved in running sports activities, drama groups, faith groups and after-school clubs – what they should look for in order to satisfy themselves that their children are in a safe environment and what action to take if they are concerned about the safety of a child.

Over 160,000 leaflets have been distributed to parents through schools, community groups, health and social services, and the police.

Some of the practical learning that can be shared with other LSCBs who are considering such a campaign includes:

- Being realistic about timescales.
- Planning distribution early.
- Sending personally addressed requests to headteachers for their support.
- Making it easy for schools to distribute by bundling leaflets into class-sized quantities.



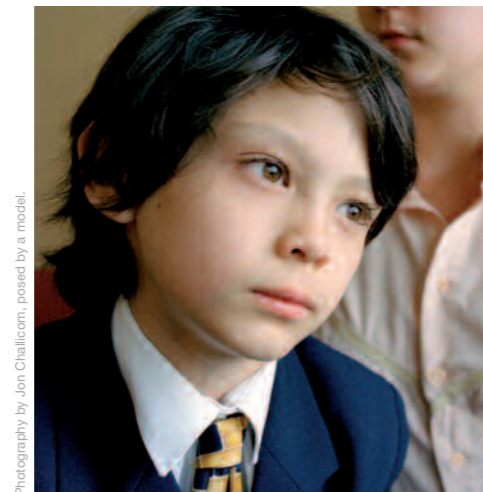
Inga Windley, LSCB audit officer, can be contacted by email to discuss the project at: [IWindley@leics.gov.uk](mailto:IWindley@leics.gov.uk).

## Get the latest child protection news from CASPAR

CASPAR News (Current Awareness Service for Practice, Policy and Research) is a free online and email service from the NSPCC Library and Information Service, which keeps professionals and practitioners working with children up-to-date with key developments in the world of childcare and child protection.

Register for free, weekly CASPAR email alerts on the NSPCC Inform website: [www.nspcc.org.uk/inform](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/inform)

# Welsh Assembly Government's commitment to children



Photography by Jon Challicorn, posed by a model.

Jane Hutt AM, Minister for Children, outlines the principles that underpin the Welsh Assembly Government's policy framework for children and young people. This includes the central role that LSCBs will play in increasing local co-ordination, and delivering improved protection from abuse, victimisation and exploitation for all children in Wales.

The point of reference for all policies and programmes affecting children and young people in Wales is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). It is this distinctive commitment to the UNCRC that underpins the

Assembly Government's Seven Core Aims for Children, which is the framework on which much current policy rests. Included in the Seven Core Aims is the Assembly government's commitment to ensuring that children and young people enjoy the best possible physical, mental, social, and emotional health, and that they are free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation.

ACPCs have had a key role in helping the Assembly government deliver on this commitment, which will be taken on by the new local safeguarding children boards as part of the development of a much wider safeguarding agenda. The NSPCC will continue to play an important role in this.

LSCBs in Wales will be expected to work closely with the children and young people's partnerships, the community safety partnerships and other partnership bodies who can contribute to the safeguarding of children in Wales. Commitment from senior management within the stakeholder organisations is needed to give LSCBs the authority to take forward vital policies.

All members of the community can help to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people if they are mindful of children's rights and their entitlement to live in a safe home and community, and are willing and able to act if they have concerns about a child's welfare.

Further information about what the Welsh Assembly Government has done and will be doing under each core aim can be viewed at: [www.wales.gov.uk/pynciau/plantpoblifanc/?iaith=cym](http://www.wales.gov.uk/pynciau/plantpoblifanc/?iaith=cym)

## Safeguarding disabled children

**The National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services requires that LSCBs have a system in place to ensure that the specific needs of disabled children are addressed in safeguarding children protocols. The government responded to the National Working Group's report on child protection and disability by making a commitment to develop a resource for LSCBs to help them fulfil these requirements.**

The resource was published on the DfES website in April 2006. It aims to be a practical tool for LSCBs and individual practitioners that will help those with a strategic or planning responsibility to understand the context of safeguarding disabled children. It has been endorsed by the National Working Group on Child Protection and Disability.

The core of the resource is made up of two sections. The first provides guidelines to help LSCBs address the needs and circumstances of disabled children in their monitoring and co-ordinating activities. The second provides guidelines for individual professionals involved in the safeguarding process who are in contact with disabled children to avoid the common pitfalls that often lead to a failure to safeguard the welfare of this group of children properly.

LSCBs now have the opportunity to issue these guidelines to practitioners and/or adapt them to suit particular organisational roles and local circumstances. Further information is available to view at: [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00048/](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00048/)

# Lincolnshire launches parenting handbooks



Photography by Jon Challicorn, posed by models.

One of the first projects Lincolnshire LSCB identified after being set up earlier this year was to evaluate the availability of information on parenting in their area. They quickly discovered that the best way to approach this was to work together with the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership.

As part of the development of the Children's Services Plan, community consultations identified that parents wanted advice that would enable them to solve their own problems.

Lincolnshire LSCB commissioned publisher Coles-McConnell to produce an advisory handbook and then approached Sure Start and Parent Partnership to undertake consultations with parents. After a number of workshops, the final topics were chosen and the publication developed. The finished handbook will be distributed through Lincolnshire County Council's customer service centre, as it is the key point of contact for all enquiries from parents.

This small, low-cost project has demonstrated how using partners who have existing links within communities can be central to the work of the board. The LSCB and Children's Trusts must work together effectively to safeguard children. For more details contact Debbie Barnes, business manager, Lincolnshire LSCB on: 01522 552222.

## New safeguarding scheme launched in England and Wales

**The Staying Safe Commitment Scheme, launched by the NSPCC in March 2006, is designed to assist organisations in the voluntary, community and commercial sectors in England and Wales to take their first steps towards protecting children and young people.**

For LSCBs, this initiative will help to raise awareness of child protection issues, develop communication with organisations in the local community and contribute to keeping children and young people safe in activities outside of their home.

The scheme aims to raise awareness and understanding across a range of organisations about the need for safeguarding policies, procedures and practices that protect children and young people. It will provide reassurance for parents and carers, give confidence to staff and volunteers, and strengthen the organisation's reputation. Organisations who sign up to the scheme will receive written guidance and access to advice. Those that successfully meet the scheme requirements will receive a certificate and be listed on the NSPCC website as having made a commitment to safeguard children and young people. A review process after two years is built into the scheme.

For more information about the NSPCC's Staying Safe Commitment Scheme visit: [www.nspcc.org.uk/commitmentscheme](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/commitmentscheme)

To request an interest pack (available in English and Welsh), please email: [commitment@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:commitment@nspcc.org.uk) or call 0116 234 7276 (England) or 01978 310192 (Wales).

**Stop Press:** The Safe Communities Project is a major three-year NSPCC initiative to ensure all children and young people in England and Wales can take part in organised activities safely. For further information, please email: [toolkit@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:toolkit@nspcc.org.uk). Full details will appear in the next issue of *Exchange*.

# Safer recruitment

Following the Bichard Enquiry Report, two key pieces of work, in terms of safer recruitment, are now under way that will be of interest to LSCBs and their work with children's services.

As a response to recommendations 16, 17 and 18, the DfES produced a set of online training materials for the headteacher and one governor of every school. This training is only available to schools through the National College of School Leadership (NSCL) website. A set of public material, which is aimed at any organisation working with children, is also available on the site. Using the material does not lead to any certification, but it presents a useful overview of all areas of safer recruitment practice.

The DfES has also produced a four-module, one-day, face-to-face training course on safer recruitment for those working with children outside of the education sector. This will be rolled out to key organisations during autumn 2006.

Recommendation 19 stated that there should be new arrangements for registering all those who work with children or vulnerable adults. This led to the development of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Bill (SVG), which is currently in the committee stages of parliament. When the legislation is passed, a new vetting and barring body will be created, which will hold lists of all those barred from working with children and with vulnerable adults. It is due to be introduced in 2008 and will replace the existing PoCA, List 99 and PoVA barring lists.

Further information on safer recruitment specifically within schools can be viewed at: [www.ncsl.org.uk/managing\\_your\\_school/safer-recruitment/index.cfm](http://www.ncsl.org.uk/managing_your_school/safer-recruitment/index.cfm)

## Education and child protection – responding to change

**A recent survey from the NSPCC looks at how education services within local authorities are responding to the changes that are transforming children's services. Conducted in late 2005 and early 2006, it examines the impact on local education authorities of government initiatives and policies, including *Safeguarding children in education (2004)*, the *Children Act (2004)*, *Every Child Matters (2005)* and *Higher standards, better schools for all (2005)*.**

The report *Responding to change: a survey of local education authorities' responses to the changing policy context of child protection* by Mary Baginsky is available to download at: [www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/Research/Findings/RespondingToChange\\_ifega31867.html](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/Research/Findings/RespondingToChange_ifega31867.html)

# Accreditation arrangements in Northern Ireland

**Colin Reid, NSPCC policy adviser, discusses accreditation arrangements from the Northern Ireland perspective.**

While safeguarding boards will no doubt be focusing on future developments around the vetting and barring scheme contained in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Bill, it might be wise to keep an eye on developments happening in Northern Ireland, where a new accreditation scheme will shortly be consulted on by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS). It will dovetail with existing and new vetting arrangements and establish a kite-marking scheme for good practice.

The NI legislation – (Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults Order (NI) 2003) – helps non-regulated organisations to vet staff in regulated positions and to report those dismissed for harming children. It also introduced the concept of voluntary accreditation. When implemented, non-regulated organisations will be able to apply to become accredited with the DHSSPS and will acquire a statutory duty to vet and report. The DHSSPS in Belfast hopes to roll out accreditation arrangements through 2007.

One advantage of voluntary accreditation over regulation is that, because it applies to a whole organisation, it gets beyond safeguards based on specific posts or positions and it can also be tied into future funding arrangements. It is another way to achieve what the UK Government is attempting to do in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Bill, which extends regulation to many posts in the voluntary sector.

Where does the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Bill leave accreditation in Northern Ireland?

Northern Ireland will get equivalent provisions to the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Bill, although the Government has still committed itself to rolling out accreditation as a method of improving safeguarding standards in the voluntary sector, especially since organisations who become accredited will more than meet requirements that will be imposed on them by the forthcoming legislation.

## The impact of parental substance misuse on children

**The NSPCC is one of five children's charities involved in a project funded by the Department of Health to look at how the voluntary sector can build capacity to respond effectively when substance misuse is a concern.**

As part of this project, the NSPCC is developing a multi-agency training pack focusing on the impact on children of living with parents who misuse substances. Contributors include representatives from health, education, children's services, LSCBs, the prison service, specialist drug and alcohol services, and the NSPCC.

This pack has been written in light of the research undertaken by the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs and published in *Hidden Harm*. The research highlighted the prevalence of substance misuse and potential for disruption and harm to the lives of children living in its shadow. *Hidden Harm* recommended that adult substance misuse services and children's service providers collaborate on the development of a coherent child-centred strategy. Multi-agency training was a key recommendation.

Sites for piloting the training programme are currently being organised for autumn 2006. LSCB training representatives, drug action teams (DATs), and health and education agencies have expressed a great deal of interest in being involved.

The proposed launch of the pack (available from NSPCC Publications) is early 2007. For further information about the training pack, please contact Melanie Pace at [mpace@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:mpace@nspcc.org.uk)

## Safeguarding children involved in private family law proceedings

**Jane Booth, corporate director, CAFCASS (the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service), provides information to LSCBs about work in progress to improve methods for safeguarding children and young people.**

CAFCASS is currently consulting on national standards. While they set the scene publicly for major change, a quiet revolution has been going on in the way CAFACASS responds to private law applications as part of the Private Law Programme launched in 2005 by the President of the Family Division.

In order for CAFACASS to fulfil its responsibility to safeguard the wellbeing of children in family proceedings, it has to ensure safety screening and risk assessment is embedded in new ways of working. A number of external changes will support this. With the implementation of Section 120 of the Adoption and Children Act came formal recognition of the harmful impact of domestic violence on children. CAFACASS now receives copies of all court applications and screens them to identify any indication of risk of harm.

CAFCASS has introduced a comprehensive domestic violence policy together with a practice toolkit, and its training programme has been revised and updated for all staff. CAFACASS is currently consulting on its overarching Safeguarding Framework, including arrangements for inter-agency checks. A national protocol is being developed between CAFACASS and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) to ensure good information sharing.

According to Jane Booth: "These are helpful steps forward, but there is a tension to be managed between the desire for early resolution and the need for safe solutions," as well as "a need for wider recognition of the vulnerability of children in private law proceedings, a need for a wider recognition in legal circles of the possible pressures that might lead a parent to agree to an unsafe outcome in court and a need for the voice of the child to be heard."

**To discuss NSPCC's contribution to your LSCBs or ACPCs please contact:**

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Dim mwy o greulondeb i blant. DIM.  
Cruelty to children must stop. FULL STOP.