

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2020

Foreword from the Independent Chair of the RSCP

Welcome to the Autumn 2020 edition of the RSCP newsletter.

The full meeting of the Partnership took place on MS Teams on 16 October, and a summary of some of the items discussed can be found on the next [page](#).

The meeting considered a detailed multi-agency report on the impact on service users and on practitioners of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic – headed, rather optimistically in the light of the Government’s announcement two weeks later, “Safeguarding Children and Young People during the Pandemic – Beyond Lockdown”. Three things stood out from this discussion. Firstly, the ongoing picture of adaptation, flexibility, and determination to continue to provide the best services possible across all agencies in the most difficult of circumstances is immensely striking and impressive. Staff in all agencies have made extraordinary efforts and shown extraordinary commitment.

Secondly, it is clear that levels of need in the community and the stresses on families and young people have not abated. Rather, there is clear evidence that they are intensifying, and are likely to continue to intensify the longer we are living with Covid-19. The impact on the mental health and wellbeing of young people, the impact on families of financial insecurity and anxiety, levels of domestic abuse – these will remain critical issues for the foreseeable future. We must be particularly concerned about what appears to be a really steep increase in levels of anxiety and mental ill-health among young people. Practitioners report a significant increase in the

number of young people seen with suicidal ideation, with parents extremely anxious and unable to cope. The number of young people presenting at A&E with mental health problems has gone up, and there were eleven ward admissions as a result of such presentations at BHRUT in September – an unprecedented number in a single month. The Partnership was very concerned to hear of the long waits in A&E at BHRUT experienced by many young people presenting with mental health problems, due both to pressures on out of hours on-call psychiatric assessment services and the shortage of Tier 4 in-patient adolescent psychiatric beds. It was particularly shocking to hear of one young man who, during the coronavirus crisis, spent five days in A&E waiting for a suitable bed and was eventually sectioned and placed in a secure unit.

And thirdly, the report emphasised that, while practitioners speak much more readily about the impact on children and families than they do about the impact on themselves, that impact cannot be overstated. Many staff have experienced stress, anxiety, and sometimes bereavement in their personal lives. Working from home brings its own stresses. These stresses are of course felt by staff at all levels, in all roles, in all agencies. The report, based on input from the practitioners I met in a well-attended workshop at the end of September, identified in particular the stresses on front line managers:

They play the key role in supporting their teams. They are the transmission channel for communication from senior managers and corporate centres, interpreting and unpicking those messages for staff.

They absorb anxiety from below and pressure to deliver and maintain service standards from above. In the vast majority of cases, they are clearly doing an extraordinary job.”

These issues, and many others, are explored in more depth in my [Annual Scrutiny Report](#) which has just been published on the [RSCP website](#). You will find an overview of the main findings in the Foreword to the report.

Finally, I can only end by paying tribute to the extraordinary way in which you are continuing to deliver services, day in day out, to the most vulnerable and sometimes most distressed people in our community in the awful circumstances of a pandemic. Thank you.

Keep safe and well.

Regards

John

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Board Report

Feedback from the RSCP Meeting – 16 October 2020

Summary of items discussed by the Board

Among other items, the Partnership:

- Considered safeguarding performance data for the period April – June 2020. This was of course the peak of the first wave of the pandemic. It was enormously impressive to note that performance remained strong on all the key indicators under such challenging circumstances. A continuing fall in the percentage of Section 47 enquiries leading to a child protection case conferences (22% in June 2020) was noted, and the question raised whether this might suggest that the threshold for initiating what may be a very difficult experience for families may be set too low. This has been scrutinised within children's social care, who are confident that thresholds are consistently applied. The low conversion rate may indicate success in engaging with families through the enquiry process and managing risk without proceeding into formal child protection procedures. A spike in re-referrals during the first three months of the pandemic was also noted: over 30% of the families referred between April and June had been the subject of at least one previous referral in the last twelve months.
- Considered a comprehensive multi-agency report on the continuing impact on both service users and practitioners of the continuing coronavirus pandemic. This is discussed in more detail in the Chair's Foreword, and in the recently published [Annual Scrutiny Report](#).
- Received comprehensive reports on early help services delivered by the Families Together Hub in 2019/20 – a year of continued expansion and innovation – and equivalent annual reports on work with children missing from home and care and on tackling child criminal and sexual exploitation. The learning from all these reports, what has been achieved and the continuing challenges, are summarised in the Annual Scrutiny Report. There has been a steady reduction in the numbers of young people in Redbridge's care who go missing since 2016/17. However, the average number of times each young person was reported missing has also increased – an average of almost ten times in 201/20. It is clear that there has been a huge increase in awareness of the risks to children of criminal exploitation: twice as many contacts were received by children's social care raising concerns about possible criminal exploitation as were received relating to sexual exploitation, and those concerns were much more likely than those relating to CSE to lead to a full social work assessment. The criminal exploitation of young people, and in particular of young men, has a vastly higher profile than it did some years ago. The Chair comments in the Annual Scrutiny Report that we make sure that this is not at the cost of a continuing focus on the sexual exploitation of young people, and overwhelmingly of young women.
- Discussed the thematic review, recently published by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, of cases involving the sudden unexpected death of infants and the lessons for safeguarding practice. The Training Subgroup have been asked to consider the need for multi-agency training in this area. The RSCP will also consider the development of a "Quick Learning" guide to be disseminated through all agencies.

Priority 1

Safeguarding adolescents

Completing the work begun in 2019/20 on transitional safeguarding – a joint project with the [Redbridge Safeguarding Adults Board \(RSAB\)](#) to develop proposals for an effective Redbridge response to the needs of young adults at risk of exploitation, recognising that adolescence as a developmental phase does not suddenly end on the eighteenth birthday.

- Continuing to monitor the multi-agency response to contextual exploitation through the work of the Multi-Agency Sexual and Criminal Exploitation Panel (MASCE) and the development of the Mapping Exploitation Tool.
- Carrying out a multi-agency self-assessment against the “questions and challenges in four key areas that we believe every partnership should be working on and be able to answer” posed in [“It was hard to escape: safeguarding children at risk from criminal exploitation”](#), a thematic review published by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR) Panel. The ‘four key areas’ are problem identification, supporting your staff, service design and practice development, and quality assurance.

The [London Safeguarding Children Partnership \(LSCP\)](#) nine principles for safeguarding adolescents (see [page 7](#)) will be embedded in the above work streams and across the agencies in the Partnership.

Priority 2

Monitoring and supporting the multi-agency safeguarding response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Continuing to monitor and support the multi-agency safeguarding response to the challenges of the Covid19 pandemic, the safeguarding risks that have been identified in this context, and the management of the recovery phase.



Priority 3

Child sexual abuse in the family environment

The [Joint Targeted Area Inspection \(JTAI\) report](#) on the multi-agency response to sexual abuse in the family environment, published in February 2020, identifies nine challenging findings which are highly critical of much practice in this area. The Partnership will carry out a ‘true for Redbridge?’ multi-agency self-assessment against these key findings.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR CHILD



S O L I H U L L A P P R O A C H

Redbridge Public Health are pleased to announce that staff and parents can now access an innovative ONLINE course about children, worth £39, completely **free of charge**. Understanding Your Child is put together by the Solihull Approach, an accredited, evidence based approach established 20 years ago by psychologists, health visitors and other health professionals.

Using the Access Code: **BRIDGE** at www.ourplace.co.uk you can register for your own account and revisit the course when convenient.

Understanding Your Child is for parents, carers, and professionals caring for children aged 0-18 years. It looks at brain development, play, styles of parenting, sleep, temper tantrums, communication and more and is based on the nationally and internationally acclaimed face to face course offered by the Solihull Approach.

There are 9-11 modules each taking around 20 minutes (the main screens have optional audio voice-overs) as well as interactive activities, quizzes, video clips and practical hand-outs.



We would like to encourage take up and will be entering all those that complete the course over the next few months (when we reach a target participation) into a prize draw to win a £50 high street shopping voucher.

Do get learning and encourage other parents and local professionals to join in too. A request for feedback will be sent out to participants early next year. Read below what participants have said about the resource.



“This has been a really valuable experience that in a way will impact on many aspects of my life”

“This course has been an absolutely invaluable gift to me. It has and will change so many aspects of my life. I am undoubtedly a better parent and more rounded and fulfilled person as a result. Some aspects have literally been like ‘Eureka’ moments to me! I WISH I’d known all this years ago”

“The Solihull Approach course I did made it clear parents don’t need lessons: daily life throws us enough of those. What we need is the space to step back and observe our children. We need some structured guidance to help us reflect on all the factors that make them behave the way they do; some developmental, some circumstantial.”

“I have found the online course very useful. Now, I take time to think more during difficult situations and during arguments with my kids.”

“It doesn’t work all the time but bit by bit, we are working towards a less confrontational household!”

RSCP Training Programme Calendar

To keep fully informed about RSCP events, do follow us on ...



@RedbridgeSCP

This year's [RSCP Multi-Agency Training Programme](#) will begin using a new online format and we've been busy redesigning our sessions to make them as interactive as possible, with pre-reading and resources for 'training transfer'; equipping participants to implement their learning with children and families. Courses will range in length from 2 hours (£25) to four hours (£50). Sign up is as usual, via our online [Nomination Form](#). There is no charge for attendance if you work or volunteer in the voluntary and community sector.

The 64 sessions in this year's programme are divided into three sections:

- **Understanding Safeguarding Risks;** reflecting the learning needs in the findings of the [Triennial Analysis of Serious Case Reviews 2020](#) and the RSCP priorities (see [page 3](#)).
- **Contextual Safeguarding;** working with the risks and challenges faced by children and young people outside the home, such as criminal and sexual exploitation and maximising resilience.
- **Safer Settings;** focusing on the knowledge, skills and principles that underpin services working with children and families, for example, Designated Safeguarding Lead (L3), Working Together to Safeguard Children (L2), Supervising Safeguarding Practice, Managing Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers and Voice of the Child and Safeguarding.

"This training was delivered on video call, a first for everyone. I think these things worked well, participation using chat messages allowing multiple trainees to answer at once, Mentimeter representing the collective thoughts and breaking up the slide show with videos." (Safeguarding Level 2)

"This was my first online training experience. It worked well helped by a very skilled and engaging trainer." (Working with Race, Culture and Belief Systems in the Context of Professional Curiosity)

Details of [upcoming courses](#) with availability are below.

Course	Date(s)
Modern Slavery Awareness	19/11/2020
RSCP Designated Safeguarding Lead (Safeguarding Level 3)	24/11/2020
Child Protection Conferences and the Strengthening Families Model	25/11/2020
Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding Children	26/11/2020
Abuse in Teenage Relationships	01/12/2020
Working Together to Safeguard Children (Safeguarding Level 2)	08/12/2020
Understanding Drug Use and the Impact on Safeguarding Children	10/12/2020
Early Help for Children & Families – An Introduction to the CAF (Common Assessment Framework)	11/01/2021
Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent	13/01/2021
Understanding Neglect	13/01/2021

NSPCC Speak Out, Stay Safe

Due to the effects of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, we've changed the way our **Speak out. Stay safe**, programme is delivered and therefore our staff and volunteers won't be delivering the programme in schools for the time being, but a virtual offer, available for children aged 5 to 11, includes access to video assemblies and supporting resources for use in the classroom. It's a simple yet invaluable safeguarding resource to support schools at a time when we have seen an unprecedented rise in contacts to our Childline Service from under children under the age of 11.

How does Speak out. Stay safe. online work?

Schools will have access to pre-recorded KS1 and KS2 *Speak out. Stay safe.* online assemblies, to show to their pupils. The *Speak out. Stay safe.* messages are delivered in a fun and interactive way with the help of our mascot Buddy and special guest appearances from Ant and Dec. The assemblies continue to help children:

- To understand abuse in all its forms and recognise the signs, including online abuse & neglect
- To understand that abuse is never their fault, and they have the right to be safe
- To know how to get help, and the sources of help available to them, including our Childline service.

We have also developed supporting resources to go alongside the online assemblies that provide fun and engaging classroom based activities that prepare children prior to watching the online assembly and help reinforce learning after the assembly.

Find out more here nspcc.org.uk/speakout

What next?

To book your school's online assemblies please contact caroline.roughley@nspcc.org.uk

Private Fostering

Do you know of a child who is being cared for by someone who is not a close relative for more than 28 days?

Private fostering describes an arrangement when someone who is not a close relative cares for another person's child under the age of 16 (18 if disabled) for 28 days or more. A close relative is considered to be an aunt, uncle, grandparent, step parent or siblings. Other family members such as cousins or great aunts are not classed as close relatives for the purposes of Private Fostering.

Private Fostering also includes families hosting overseas students being educated in the UK. Although these arrangements are usually organised privately, legally the parent and the carer must notify the local authority where the child is going to live so that the Local Authority can ensure that the child is being well cared for.

It is feared that some of these 'invisible' children could be at risk of abuse, or victims of trafficking.

We are asking people who work with children to be aware of private fostering arrangements and notify us if they believe a child may be in such an arrangement. Notification enables children's services to offer help and support to not only the children, but also to carers and parents as well.

To notify us about a private fostering arrangement in Redbridge, please contact the Child Protection and Assessment Team (CPAT) on 020 8708 3885 or by email CPAT.Referrals@redbridge.gov.uk.

More information about Private Fostering can be found on the [RSCP website](#).

Redbridge Safeguarding Children Partnership (RSCP)

RedbridgeSCP@redbridge.gov.uk

Tel: 020 8708 5282 or 020 8708 3289

Website: www.redbridgescp.org.uk

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RSCP Training

RedbridgeSCP.Training@redbridge.gov.uk

Requests, enquiries and feedback can be made using the on-line [Contact Form](#).

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

LADO@redbridge.gov.uk

Tel: 020 8708 5350

Mobile: 07584 127461

Child Protection Referrals

Tel: 020 8708 3885 (Office Hours)

Tel: 020 8708 5897 (Evenings and weekends)

CPAT.Referrals@redbridge.gov.uk

Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)

Tel: 020 3182 3515

E-mail bhr.cdop@nhs.net



Your views count!

We want your views on safeguarding issues that are important to YOU. Articles should be 200 – 300 words in length. We also welcome feedback, comments and suggestions for future content. Please contact Lesley Perry, RSCP Manager, via RedbridgeSCP@redbridge.gov.uk or on 020 8708 5282 or 07775399017. Our next edition will be published in the New Year.