

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2021

Foreword from the Independent Chair of the RSCP

Welcome to the Spring 2020/21 edition of the RSCP newsletter. The last full meeting of the Partnership took place on MS Teams on 23 April, and a summary of some of the items discussed can be found on the next [page](#).

Since that meeting, the third step in the COVID "roadmap" has been successfully taken. It is very clear, though, that the impact of the pandemic will be felt for a very long time into the future, and that services will continue to face the challenge of responding effectively to those lasting effects. Alongside the ongoing increase in domestic abuse, mental ill-health, and family poverty, there has been an increase in referrals to social care for young carers, forced marriage, parental ill health and other issues that may have been exacerbated in families during the pandemic. The potential long-term impact of educational disruption and uncertainty for a whole cohort of young people, and the unknown impact of "long COVID", are serious concerns. Perhaps the most disturbing reports to the RSCP, from several agencies, concerned an increase in emotional distress and indicators of mental ill-health in very young children. The Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service (previously CAMHS) have seen an increase in referrals for children under five. The full extent of the distress in that population which may affect their development and welfare for years to come is not yet possible to gauge.

The Partnership also considered at some length a [Safeguarding Adults Review \(SAR\) Report](#) recently published by the Redbridge Safeguarding Adults Board on the case of "Alice". Alice was only placed in Redbridge a few months before she died, and the review identified no issues for services or practice in

Redbridge. It is nevertheless a very disturbing story, and the RSCP is very keen to explore whether there are any lessons to be learned for local practice. Alice died at the age of 23 from a drug overdose. She was in the care of Wandsworth from the age of ten. She had enormously complex mental health and emotional needs. She left care to return to live with her mother in a wholly unplanned way, and when that broke down, was precipitated into a series of often emergency placements spread across London, which, however hard they tried, did not have the capacity or often the full information about Alice's life experiences to enable them to understand her behaviour. The review found that the lack of work with Alice and her mother to address the trauma and rejection Alice had suffered and to rebuild their relationship, when Alice left care, made it impossible for her to establish a firm foundation for moving forward. Alice was prematurely catapulted into adulthood and adult services, where she was expected to have responsibility for herself and her behaviour without any preparation or support. There was a lack of clarity about her mental health needs that continued over time. There were various care plans developed by all the agencies with whom Alice came into contact, but none of these were coordinated. The findings from Alice's case challenge us to ask 'Is this what it could be like for young people like Alice here in Redbridge?'. The Partnership agreed to bring children's social care, Leaving Care and adult mental health services together in a learning event later in the year to address this challenge. The RSCP and the Safeguarding Adults Board have agreed a joint priority to develop an effective approach to safeguarding vulnerable young people to ensure that they do not fall off the potential cliff of their 18th birthday. Our

consideration of Alice's story powerfully reinforces this commitment.

Finally, I would like to reinforce the message in a letter Adrian Loades sent recently to partner agencies about the unprecedented number of referrals currently being received by social care, and the importance in that context of ensuring the quality and timeliness of referrals, and consideration of the thresholds for referral, including where support might be better provided by the Families Together Hub. As Adrian wrote, "You will appreciate that when dealing with literally hundreds of contacts, receiving those with missing information, no clarification on what the safeguarding concern is, or misdirected referrals, impacts negatively on our response to all children at risk." The quality and timeliness of referrals are key to ensuring effective safeguarding, and it is something which the partnership will keep under constant review. Do contact [Lesley Perry, RSCP Manager](#), if you would like to join in with the fortnightly multi-agency [Thresholds and Referrals Meeting](#).

Keep safe and well.

Regards

John

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Board Report

Feedback from the RSCP Meeting – 23 April 2021

Summary of items discussed by the Board

Among other items, the Partnership:

- Considered safeguarding performance data for the period October to December 2020. Performance on all key measures remained strong. An increase was noted in the number of referrals to Early Intervention, and the number of CAFs completed. Conversely, the number of S47 enquiries was down by a third compared to the same period in 2019. It may be that this reflects some shift in practice at the front door, and the Partnership is keen to explore this further at a future meeting. It was also noted, however, that the number of children involved in care proceedings, which went up sharply from a low base in 2019/20, has continued to rise. Cafcass reported that the number of private law cases coming before the courts, involving parental disputes over arrangements for children, is also up by about 30%. The discussion also noted the fall in referrals relating to potential female genital mutilation over the last couple of years. This may reflect improved assessment and identification of genuine risk, but it would be concerning if it indicated a reduced awareness of FGM at the front line.
- Discussed an update report on safeguarding children and young people during the pandemic. This is discussed in more detail in the [Chair's Foreword](#) to this newsletter.
- **Received an update on the work in hand to develop a "true for Redbridge?" self-assessment** of the critical findings of the Joint Targeted Area Inspection report on child sexual exploitation within the family. This work is well advanced, and a full report will come to the RSCP in July.
- Received an update on work being undertaken at the tri-borough level by the BHR Safeguarding Partnership (the three local authorities, the police and the CCG). All three Boroughs have significant numbers of looked after children placed in their area by other local authorities. A working group has developed a template to help identify the key risks around children at the point they are placed in the area, as well as a process map to identify how we are notified of these placements and what should then happen in terms of multi-agency arrangements for them, particularly where significant risks are identified.
- **Agreed proposals from the Training Subgroup to move to a "blended" approach** to training as we move out of the pandemic, with an appropriate mix of online and classroom based training, determined on a course by course basis; and to reintroduce the level of charges for training as per pre-pandemic, which had been reduced.
- **Considered a report on the local and national response to the Everyone's Invited website**, on which thousands of young people have reported their experiences of misogyny, sexual harassment and sexual abuse at schools and colleges. At the time of the meeting, four of the 15,000 posts referred to Redbridge schools. However, none of the information reported was sufficient to allow follow up of the specific incident. Peer on peer abuse has been a significant focus of RSCP training for some years, and Amanda Jones, our Training Manager, is also working with colleagues in Education and Inclusion on developing a robust curriculum for Relationships and Sex Education in schools.
- **Discussed the report of the Safeguarding Adults Review on "Alice"**. This is discussed further in the [Chair's Foreword](#). The full report can be accessed on the Redbridge Safeguarding Adult Board [website](#).

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.

Carrying out a multi-agency self-assessment against the questions and challenges 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. A report based on this self-assessment is due to be presented to the July Partnership meeting.

The London Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) nine principles for safeguarding adolescents to be embedded in the above work streams and across agencies in the Partnership (see page 2 of the [RSCP Plan and Priorities 2020 – 2021](#)).



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 none 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. A report on this will be presented to the July Partnership meeting.

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.



Can you change a young person's life?

Over 200 children in Redbridge are unable to stay at home with their families. Children are our priority and we believe that every young person deserves to be cared for, loved and supported. That's where you come in!

Redbridge foster parents provide a safe, stable and nurturing environment for our most vulnerable babies, children and young people that they can call home. Together, we will ensure that the young people of Redbridge can reach their full potential.

It is the most rewarding and life changing role but can also be very challenging and we will be there for you throughout your journey to becoming a foster carer, answering any questions you have along the way.

If you want to be inspired further, check out the great [video](#) created by Redbridge foster carers explaining why they care!

If you are interested in finding out more, then please contact **the Borough's Fostering Team** via 020 8708 6068, email fostering@redbridge.gov.uk or complete a short [contact form](#) and a member of the Team will call you.

Places can be booked on one of the upcoming 'virtual' information sessions via Eventbrite at the link below:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/foster-for-rdbridge-virtual-information-session-010621-6-7pm-tickets-135311154305>

These sessions provide an opportunity to find out more and ask any questions that you may have. Topics covered include what different types of fostering are there, what support, learning and development is available for foster carers, what allowances are paid, what professionals do foster carers work with and what are the registration requirements.

General information on the role of fostering can be found on the Fostering Network [website](#) or you could read the latest Fostering Network [magazine](#).



RSCP Training Programme Calendar

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



@RedbridgeSCP

The RSCP Team would like to thank all our trainees who have joined us in our year of online delivery in response to Covid-19 restrictions. We are all learning to 'learn' online and many will be familiar with protestations of "You're in mute!" and lowering 'legacy' hands!

We have introduced lots of interactive methods so our multi-agency colleagues can learn together and we're happy to see our evaluations have remained very good. Here are responses from some of our courses:

"I really appreciated that the training included services available within the Borough and more practical elements of safeguarding, as well as some theoretical knowledge. I think it was really helpful to have a colleague from the police join part of the training". - *Safeguarding Children Who Go Missing*

"The training served as a reminder for me to also ensure that I am consciously challenging any pre-conceived ideas that I have to remain open minded when supervising staff/discussing families".

"Excellent course content, thought provoking. It will definitely influence my practice. The trainer was very knowledgeable and made the training interesting and varied activities to maintain our interest" - *Working with Race and culture and Belief*

"Made me aware of the differences between Level 2 and Level 3 and the need to become a 'critical thinker' when team members come to you with concerns and in my own practice". - *Designated Safeguarding Lead*

We are delivering our 2021/22 programme over an academic year so please look out for our new offer in September. If you're not currently on our mailing list, you can sign up [here](#). In the meantime, we're offering a Summer Programme of 20/21 online training events. We've included links to the course flyers below so you can click for information on the course learning objectives.

Details of [upcoming courses](#) with availability are below. Bookings can be made [on-line](#).

Course	Date(s)
Safeguarding Children with Disabilities	23 06 2021 (PM)
Safer Recruitment – a course accredited with the Safer Recruitment Foundation	21 06 2021
RSCP Designated Safeguarding Lead (Safeguarding Level 3)	29 06 2021
Working Together to Safeguard Children – A Shared Responsibility (Safeguarding Level 2)	25 05 2021

Do you know anybody who is looking after somebody else's child?

Is the child under 16 (or 18 if they have a disability)?

Is the child living with someone who is NOT their parent, step parent, sibling, aunt, uncle or grandparent? This also includes host families to overseas students

Is it due to be for more than 28 days?

This is called "private fostering" and we must be LEGALLY notified to ensure the child is safe.

Please contact the Child Protection and Assessment Team (CPAT):

020 8708 3885

CPAT.Referrals@redbridge.gov.uk

or visit www.redbridge.gov.uk/private-fostering for more information

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 they have a disability) 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.

To notify the Local Authority 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 For more information please visit the Council [website](#).

Young People's Sexual Health Survey

We are relaunching our Young People's Sexual Health Survey. This work was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We would appreciate if you can please circulate via any services you deliver to young people. Please see link below:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/bewize16-30s>

Child Sexual Abuse in the Family Environment – Consultation with the Voluntary and Community Sector

As part of the Partnership's priority on Child Sexual Abuse in the Family Environment, we are inviting voluntary and community groups working with children, young people and their families in Redbridge to complete a short on-line consultation questionnaire. It is really important that as well as the self-assessments being completed but statutory partners and schools, that we hear from those providing support in the third sector. This CitizenSpace consultation can be accessed via the link below:

<https://engagement.redbridge.gov.uk/childrens/0a132dc0>

The Amber Project – Free Webinars

Did you know that child abuse linked to faith or belief, such as accusations of witchcraft and spirit possession can result in considerable harm? It is much harder to define due to its complex nature and the prevalence of this abuse is likely to increase due to COVID-19. Do you know about this type of abuse? Could you recognise the signs? The Amber Project is facilitating two webinars on the topic, free to professionals and volunteers working with children, young people and families. The aim is to enhance the response to child abuse linked to faith or belief. The first is on 22 June at 10:30 – 12:30. Please register [HERE](#). The second, a pan-London event, will take place on 22 September at 10:30 – 12:30. Please register [HERE](#). For further information, please contact Redbridge Out of School Settings Team on: OOSS@Redbridge.gov.uk.

Contact Information

Redbridge Safeguarding Children Partnership (RSCP)

RedbridgeSCP@redbridge.gov.uk

Tel: 020 8708 5282 or 020 8708 3289

Website: www.redbridgescp.org.uk



@RedbridgeSCP



@RedbridgeSCP

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 July 2021.