

WINTER NEWSLETTER 2021

Foreword from the Independent Chair of the RSCP

Welcome to the Winter 2021 edition of the RSCP newsletter.

The full meeting of the Partnership took place 'virtually' on MS Teams on 12 January, and a summary of some of the items discussed can be found on the next [page](#).

The meeting happened shortly after the imposition of the third national lockdown, with a surge in coronavirus cases and hospital admissions, and inevitably much of the discussion again focused on the challenges of safeguarding children and young people effectively during a pandemic. All agencies reported continuing high levels of concern, in a context where once again vulnerable children were inevitably going to be less visible. Schools had just been closed again for the majority of children. Services were stretched, not only by staff absences as a result of infection and the requirements of self-isolation, but also by the impact of redeployment in response to the demands of both the pandemic response and the mass vaccination programme. BHRUT had to cancel all staff leave during January. Even before the re-imposition of lockdown, referrals to **children's social care** had not returned to pre-COVID levels, and neither had referrals to child and adolescent mental health services. This was unlikely, however, to reflect a decrease in need. Rather, it suggested that the recognition of need and risk continued to be suppressed by the impact of the pandemic. Police reported that referrals of cases of suspected child sexual exploitation were down by approximately 20% compared to previous years, but commented that this did not necessarily reflect any reduction in the incidence of sexual exploitation. Rather, it was believed to reflect the impact that the pandemic has had on the ability of

the police to recognise and respond to children at risk of abuse and exploitation of children, as criminal networks successfully adapted their methods of operation and routine interactions between the police and the public decreased in line with changing restrictions.

The Partnership also noted a national concern about the increased number of serious incidents reported where babies have died or been seriously harmed during the pandemic. A letter to all partnerships from the Minister for Children in November 2020 urged all **partners "to work collaboratively to ensure we are identifying the right support not only for those born during the national lockdown, but also those born in the coming months." This has not emerged as a significant issue in Redbridge, although some concern was expressed in the discussion about the potential impact on bonding and post-natal mental health of some of the current restrictions in maternity services.** However, the RSCP agreed to ask the BHR Partnership to review the multi-agency arrangements in place across the tri-borough footprint to ensure appropriate and adequate support to families with babies born in the current extraordinary circumstances.

The report discussed by the Partnership on 12 January concluded that, with families, children and young people having been absorbing the cumulative stresses of life in a pandemic for almost a year, the start of a new lockdown was probably the point at which the safeguarding risks were highest, while at the same time more difficult to identify.

However, things have of course moved on rapidly since then. As I write this, schools have just reopened to all children, over 22 million adults have had their first

dose of the coronavirus vaccine, and there is at least a provisional timetable in place for the removal of all restrictions on normal activity. It is to be hoped that we can look forward at last to some reduction in the stresses which families, children and young people, and not least front-line public service and other workers have had to cope with for what has seemed like an interminable year. However, the effects of this experience, the increases in family poverty, and the risks to which they expose children and young people, will be long lasting. Planning for recovery and building resilience must now be the **focus of the partnership's work.**

In the midst of much continuing uncertainty, one thing is certain. When this is finally over, you will all be able to look back with great pride on everything you have done to maintain the highest quality of professional practice possible and your commitment to children and young people through this terrible year.

Keep safe and well.

Regards

John

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Board Report

Feedback from the RSCP Meeting – 12 January 2021

Summary of items discussed by the Board

Among other items, the Partnership:

- Considered safeguarding performance data for the period July to September 2020. Performance on all key measures remained strong. It was noted that the re-referral rate, which had gone up sharply in the first phase of the pandemic, had settled back to levels comparable with previous years and with comparable authorities. Similarly, the percentage of section 47 enquiries which led to an initial child protection case conference, which fell in the first quarter, returned to previous levels. Fewer young people went missing from care; but those who did go missing did so on significantly more occasions.
- Discussed the [Chair's Annual Scrutiny Report](#), which had been published since the last meeting. It was agreed that in the report for the current year, it will be important to say more about the impact of COVID-19 on inequalities.
- Received updates on the work in hand to develop a "true for Redbridge?" self-assessment of the critical findings of two reports published in 2019/20: the first thematic review published by the [National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, "It was Hard to Escape"](#), on the multi-agency response to child criminal exploitation; and the [Joint Targeted Area Inspection report on child sexual abuse within the family](#). If you would like to know more about the work being undertaken on these topics, do get in touch with Anna.Watson@redbridge.gov.uk in relation to the criminal exploitation work, or Judy.Daniels@redbridge.gov.uk on child sexual abuse.
- 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.
- Welcomed Ian Young to the Partnership as the new Senior Safeguarding Lead for East London for the Department of Work and Pensions. In addition to his support, guidance and coaching role within DWP, Ian acts as the senior point of escalation within the DWP to seek to resolve complex cases with a safeguarding dimension. He is also a link with the national policy team within the Department, to highlight issues that arise in relation to safeguarding from the application of DWP policies and procedures. DWP support to care leavers is a priority area for consideration in East London. Ian is also keen to hear about issues in relation to modern slavery, trafficking, and the benefits system. He can be contacted at ian.young@dwp.gov.uk.
- 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, and a working group is looking at the issues raised by this. The partners plan to work together on the issue of unregulated placements for over 16s in the area. A multi-agency audit on the theme of adolescent suicide is also currently being planned.
- Noted for information the BHRUT Safeguarding Children Annual Report for 2019/20.

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.

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.

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.



Make memories. Foster for Redbridge.

We often take some things for granted. Taking our children to the park or to a playground; jumping in puddles; getting your wellies stuck in thick mud.

Many children in Redbridge, however, have never experienced these fun and free activities. One care leaver remembers the time that she was fostered and had a picnic. "I had never had a picnic in a park before. I was 11. It was so exciting."

Can you help change a young person's life? Over 200 children in Redbridge are unable to remain at home with their families. They all deserve to be cared for, loved and supported. That is where you could come in!

Foster parents provide a safe, stable and nurturing environment for vulnerable babies, children and young people – essentially a place that they can call home.

Helping children to reach their full potential can be one of the most rewarding things anyone can do. It is also challenging, but support is provided along the way.

If you would like to create happy memories for our most vulnerable children and are considering fostering, please email fostering@redbridge.gov.uk or call the Fostering Team on 020 8708 6068.

Alternatively, you can book a space on a [Virtual Information Sessions](#). These are taking place on 6 April from 18:00 to 19:00; on 23 April from 10:00 to 11:00; on 4 May from 18:00 to 19:00 and on 21 May from 10:00 to 11:00. The session is free and there is no obligation.

The sessions provide information on the role of fostering, the process of registration, what training and support is available and the different types of fostering, such as short-term, long-term, looking after children with disabilities, sibling groups or teenagers.



If you want further information now, check out the [fostering page on the Council's website](#) which includes FAQs.

RSCP Training Programme Calendar

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



@RedbridgeSCP

This year's [RSCP Multi-Agency Training Programme](#) use an 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 years' 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.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (Level 3)

"After attending this training, I feel more equipped to answer my colleagues' questions in regard to safeguarding and feel confident enough to become a safeguarding lead at my organisation."

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

Course	Date(s)
Safeguarding Children in a Digital World and Online Bullying	11 03 2021
Safeguarding Children with Disabilities	12 03 2021
RSCP Designated Safeguarding Lead (Safeguarding Level 3)	16 03 2021
Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent	17 03 2021
Working with Young People in Relation to Gangs and Knife Crime	18 03 2021
Understanding Drug Use and the Impact on Safeguarding Children	23 03 2021
Mental Health First Aid Training for Children	25 03 2021
Managing Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers	25 03 2021
Working with Race, Culture and Belief Systems in the context of Professional Curiosity	26 03 2021
Working Together to Safeguard Children – A Shared Responsibility (Safeguarding Level 2)	30 03 2021

Act Early to prevent radicalisation

Two new animated 2-minute explainer films about Prevent have now been added to the [ACT Early website](#) and [partners' toolkit](#). You can find them on the website here:

<https://actearly.uk/support/reach-out-for-help/>

<https://actearly.uk/working-together/how-we-help/>

The films are aimed at the public, concerned friends and family audience, and introduce Prevent and the work of Prevent Officers. By improving understanding of Prevent and explaining the way we work with partners, we hope more people will be encouraged and assured to seek help at an earlier stage where appropriate. The films will also help make great digital training materials or aides for talks that you or colleagues might be giving about Prevent.

The Prevent Team in Redbridge can be contacted via Prevent@redbridge.gov.uk

More information can be found on the Council's [website](#).

Reach Out

This is a reminder of the Reach Out Service, launched by the Local Authority with partner agencies to provide support to residents experiencing domestic violence. More information is available on the [website](#).

The direct contact information is for residents. Professionals requiring updates on existing cases should contact the MASH via 020 8708 3885 or CPAT.Referrals@redbridge.gov.uk to ensure that the Reach Out phone lines are left free for victims.

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 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 For more information please visit the Council [website](#).

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

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

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 early May 2021.