

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2021

Foreword from the Independent Chair of the RSCP

Welcome to the Autumn 2020/21 edition of the RSCP newsletter. The last full meeting of the Partnership took place on MS Teams on 8 October, and a summary of some of the items discussed can be found on the next [page](#).

Inevitably, the ongoing impact of the pandemic was again a major focus of discussion. There are ongoing impacts: high levels of mental health presentations by young people at A&E, the impact on families of poverty and parental ill health, the impact on staff morale of isolation from colleagues. Pre-pandemic issues are resurfacing, and some new issues arising. The number of missing episodes is going up; hospital colleagues report a 30-50% increase in children and young people presenting at A&E, and an increased number of children and babies being admitted; the police report an increase in child abuse investigation referrals and referrals for child sexual abuse. Schools are seeing increased anxiety levels among young people, pressurised by the bombardment on social media of anti-vaccination propaganda. Face to face services are resuming, but, for example, child protection case conferences continue to be held online. This has a very positive impact on professional attendance, but there are negative impacts for some families and young people trying to deal with an array of professionals in small onscreen boxes. There is a key judgement to be made as we finally emerge from the pandemic about the right model for the future.

Locally and nationally, there has been a massive increase in domestic abuse during the pandemic. The Board received a report on the incidence of and response to domestic abuse in the borough, based on a review by SafeLives carried out over more than a year from February 2020. Even though this is recognised as a massively important and prevalent issue by all local agencies, the review nevertheless found that there is very significant under-reporting to the police and other services. Perhaps most shocking was some of the professional attitudes reported to the researchers. 43% of professionals in Redbridge surveyed thought that victims and

perpetrators were 'as bad as one another'. 36% believe it is the victim's responsibility to protect children. 18% believe that there are a lot of malicious reports of domestic abuse. We have no room for complacency.

One of the key first steps in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who come into care is ensuring that they benefit from an initial health assessment within the first 28 days. In spite of all the pressures of the pandemic, the Board was delighted to see a dramatic improvement in this performance measure - up from 52% in 2020/21 to 81% in the first quarter of 2021/22. This has been achieved through unremitting hard work between NELFT, the CCG, and **children's social care, championed in particular by Sue Nichols**, Designated Nurse at the CCG, who was attending her last RSCP meeting before retiring. The Board paid tribute to her dedication over the years to partnership working and her passionate commitment to the welfare of vulnerable children.

Almost finally, I would like to use this Foreword to encourage everybody involved with safeguarding children to find time to read the recent report from the [Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, The Myth of Invisible Men: Safeguarding Children under One from Non-Accidental Injury by Male Carers](#). It paints a very challenging picture of the systematic though unwitting exclusion of male partners from the safeguarding process in both specialist and universal services, sometimes with tragic consequences. **"The involvement of men is no more evident in key statutory children's services, particularly children's social care, than it is in universal services.** Men are only partially seen (if that) and insufficient regard is given to working effectively and creatively with them. This compounds the ability of some men to evade responsibility and scrutiny from professionals for the risks they **present to their children". Research has found that fathers are only invited to child protection case conferences 55% of the time, that known violent fathers are not contacted by social workers prior to meetings 38% of the time, and that only 68% of completed assessments included contact with the father. In**

Redbridge as everywhere else, we need to challenge ourselves as to whether our own practice reflects these findings.

And finally...this is the last RSCP Newsletter to which I shall write the Foreword. I have made the difficult decision to stand down from chairing both the RSCP and the Safeguarding Adults Board in January 2022, after seven and a half years, in pursuit of what I now aspire to as a life/life balance. It has been challenging, stimulating and deeply rewarding to work with so many colleagues in the Redbridge partnerships with such a strong commitment to working together to safeguard, empower and enhance the life chances of vulnerable children and adults. I wish you all the very best for the future – and in the shorter term, I wish you all a very happy Christmas.

John

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Board Report

Feedback from the RSCP Meeting – 8 October 2021

Summary of items discussed by the Board

Among other items, the Partnership:

- Received safeguarding performance data for the period April to June 2021, with some verbal updates from partner agencies. The overall picture was that, while the expected surge in referrals to **children's social care, following the loosening of pandemic restrictions**, had not materialised, there has been a reported increase in the complexity of needs presented. Fewer referrals are leading to a S47 enquiry, but more of those enquiries are leading to an initial child protection case conference than in previous periods. The data clearly showed the continuing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the pressures on services. Fewer care leavers are in education, employment or training; there has been a big increase in waiting times for a CAMHS service from the point of referral.
- Received feedback from partner agencies on the ongoing impact of the pandemic, recovery and resilience. This is further discussed in the **Chair's Foreword**.
- Received and discussed a presentation from Superintendent John Carroll on improvement work going on across the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to improve safeguarding outcomes for children. The focus is on developing performance measures which measure quality in terms of victim outcome rather than in terms of efficiency or process completion. The initial concentration has been on developing targets for improved performance in a victim-focused approach in the areas of domestic violence, child abuse, rape, and sexual offences. Of the 40 measures so far defined, the East Area BCU is currently meeting targets in eleven of them, although this is in the upper half of performance in the MPS as a whole. An improvement programme has invested in audit activity, which is beginning to demonstrate some improvement in practice, albeit from a very low base. The Partnership welcomed a very open presentation and is keen at a future meeting to explore particular areas in more detail.
- **Received a presentation on Baby and Me, a new programme launched recently in children's social care.** The number of babies coming into care has been going up significantly. The programme aims to target assessment and support at an earlier stage of pregnancy, to engage more consistently with the fathers of unborn children, and to expand the use of Family Group Conferences.
- **Received a report on Redbridge's performance in providing alternative full-time education for young people permanently excluded from school – a key issue in reducing young people's vulnerability to criminal exploitation.** Redbridge performs strongly, with the great majority of excluded young people back in education within six days.
- Received a presentation on the review of domestic abuse services in Redbridge undertaken by SafeLives in 2020/21 and the multi-agency action plan that has been developed in response. This is discussed further in the **Chair's Foreword**.
- Considered a report from the North Central and East London CAMHS Provider Collaborative on the work they have done to improve the management of and access to Tier 4 (specialist inpatient) beds for young people with acute mental health problems. The RSCP has been concerned for some time about the impact on very distressed young people of very long waits in A&E while attempts are made to find an appropriate and local bed. The Board was pleased to learn that in the first year of the programme, admissions to Tier 4 beds had reduced by 34%, out of area placements were down by 73%, admissions for children living with autistic spectrum conditions were down by 50%, and average length of stay had been reduced by 43%. It noted, however, that out of hours response and provision remained problematic.

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. **A further planning meeting has been arranged between Redbridge Children's Social Care and Adult Social Care representatives in September.**

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 was 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 nine challenging findings which are highly critical of much practice in this area. The Partnership carried out a 'true for Redbridge?' multi-agency self-assessment against these key findings. A report on this was 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.

Focus on ... Out of School Settings



Parents and Carers play a vital role in supporting their children and young people who attend any activity outside of school hours, otherwise known as an Out-of-School-Setting. Whilst many settings provide safe environments, this vast sector is still largely unregulated without a legal framework to check on quality and safety.

Out of School Settings are varied and range from sport, arts, language, learning a musical instrument, joining a youth organisation, such as scouts and guides, doing extra maths and English in a tuition centre, private tutors, Supplementary Schools and education in children's own faith, all of which are attended without a child's parent or carer.

Safety first Coaches, tutors, religious leaders and all other providers involved in Out of School Settings have an overriding moral responsibility to protect and safeguard children and young people from the risk of harmful practices. If you are worried that your child is being abused or put at risk during any activity, it is vital that you address your concerns.

Always check that your provider has updated procedures in place, this will help you follow the process and help make a report.

As a **minimum standard ALL** Out of School Settings should have the following policies and procedures in place, these are designed to help you whilst keeping your child and young person safe:

A safeguarding policy including online and digital safety	Current DBS checks for staff and volunteers
Health and safety procedures including insurances and fire safety	GDPR compliance
	Complaints procedure

continued



If you feel that a child or young person is at risk of harm, please call the police on **999** for an immediate response. Alternatively, you can contact your local police on **101** at any time.

If your concern does not require immediate action and you have a concern about a child and would like to seek advice regarding child abuse or neglect, please contact the Redbridge Child Protection Assessment Team (CPAT). Referrals can be made over the phone or via email.

Email cpat.referrals@redbridge.gov.uk

Telephone: **020 8708 3885** (open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)
Out of hours telephone: **020 8708 5897**

Or contact:

NSPCC **0800 800 5000** or visit www.nspcc.org.uk
Crimestoppers **0800 555 111** Anonymously, or visit www.crimestoppers-uk.org

The Government has released guidance to help parents and carers choose safe out-of-school settings. **Information for parents choosing an after school club, community activity or tuition** (www.gov.uk)

*An Out of School Setting **does not** include schools or colleges registered by the Department for Education and are not required to be registered by any statutory organisation. **There are no regulations governing many out of school activities**, unless it is an Ofsted registered childcare provision, in which case it must adhere to the statutory requirements of its Ofsted registration.

Visit www.redbridge.gov.uk/schools/out-of-school-setting • Email OOSS@Redbridge.gov.uk



Amber Project – Training on Child Abuse Linked to Faith and Belief
23 November 2021 - 14:00 – 16:00
Book via [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com)

The two-hour free training webinar provides information on:

- What abuse linked to witchcraft and spirit possession is;
- the factors and indicators professionals need to look out for; and
- what safeguarding actions need to be taken by those identifying cases of concern.

There is an explicit focus on those within the education, policing, social care and health sectors. It will also be beneficial for those working in faith communities with families and children.

Safeguarding Training

Learning Together - Redbridge SCP Multi-Agency Training 2021 - 2022

Your multi-agency safeguarding training for professionals and volunteers in Redbridge is online now to support your work to safeguard children and support families.

We've all had to adapt our learning to a digital format over the last eighteen months and our evaluation of our 2020/21 online programme has been really encouraging. Through feedback our team has been improving our digital offer, utilising interactive software and developing extra resources to support trainees:

"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."

"The trainer was great, lots of real-life examples. I thought the variety of video clips and links provided for further information/reading was very useful."

"This was my first online training experience. It worked well, helped by a very skilled and engaging trainer."

This year's offer will be a blended programme, providing a mix of online sessions and some planned classroom training, best suited to multi-agency understanding. We are also offering some free briefings on a range of safeguarding issues. If you're not currently on our mailing list, you can sign up [here](#) for regular updates. Below you'll find links to some courses running in the next few weeks. Bookings can be made [on-line](#).

Course	Date
Safeguarding Young Carers	17/11/2021
Safeguarding Children in a Digital World and Online Bullying	18/11/2021
Children and Young People Mental Health Awareness	24/11/2021
Child Exploitation Training for Practitioners	02/12/2021
Managing Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers	06/12/2021
Safeguarding Children Who Go Missing	08/12/2021
RSCP Designated Safeguarding Lead (Level 3)	25/01/2022
Interfamilial Child Sexual Abuse	21/04/2022

Foster for Redbridge

Spare room feeling a little empty?



Do you miss conversations after school around the dinner table? Miss helping with homework and seeing that

lightbulb moment when they understand something they have been struggling with? And although you repeated yourself hundreds of times to tidy things away, are you now, ever so slightly, missing the mess? Bring conversation, laughter and love into your life and provide a safe, stable and nurturing environment for our most vulnerable babies, children and young people that they can call home. If you are considering fostering and would like to know more, please call 020 8708 6068 or email fostering@redbridge.gov.uk or join us at a future **'virtual' information session**.

Safeguarding Adults Training

Do you work with adults at risk as well as children? You may be interested in attending free training being offered by the Redbridge Safeguarding Adults Board.

Working Together to Safeguard Adults at Risk

21 February 2022

Safeguarding Adults at Risk of Exploitation

7 March 2022

Booking requests should be sent to:

Learning.Development@redbridge.gov.uk

Would you know how to help a child or young person who is contemplating suicide?

ASIST Training

[ASIST](#) is a workshop led by [PAPYRUS](#) which teaches individuals the most widely used suicide prevention model in the world. ASIST aims to equip those working with children and young people with the skills to recognise and act on the signs that someone may be having thoughts of suicide. ASIST is available to delivered in Redbridge schools during the autumn term. Contact REWT (Redbridge Educational Wellbeing Team) via REWt@redbridge.gov.uk or on 07741 331009 for further information.

Contact 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 January 2022.