

Safeguarding the Young and Vulnerable

The Joint Chief Inspectors'
recommendations and
the Government's responses
one year on

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1. Ministerial Foreword

In December 2008, on behalf of the Government, the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families welcomed the third joint Chief Inspectors' report into arrangements for safeguarding children and agreed that the Government would provide an annual update on the recommendations made in the report.

The third report showed that much had moved on since the last Government response to the Chief Inspectors' recommendations and I am pleased at the evidence it contained of improvements in children's services and in outcomes for children and young people. But the report rightly challenged the Government, local authorities and all those working with young people to do more to safeguard our most vulnerable children.

The country has one of the best child protection systems in the world. But good practice is not yet standard practice everywhere – and we should not rest until it is.

That is why, in November 2008, the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families asked Lord Laming to prepare an urgent, independent report of progress on safeguarding arrangements nationally. His report, *The Protection of Children in*

England: A Progress Report, was published on 12 March 2009.

Lord Laming's report confirmed that robust legislative, structural and policy foundations are in place and that our Every Child Matters reforms set the right direction and are widely supported. But he also noted that "the need to protect children and young people from significant harm and neglect is ever more challenging. There now needs to be a step change in the arrangements to protect children from harm. It is essential that action is now taken so that as far as humanly possible children at risk of harm are properly protected."

The Government welcomed Lord Laming's report and responded immediately, accepting all his recommendations and taking urgent action. On 6 May 2009, the Government published *The protection of children in England: action plan The Government's response to Lord Laming*¹ setting out in detail how central Government will work together with local government, national and local partners and front line services who work with children to drive forward improvements.

The action plan also announced an additional £57.8 million to create a Social Work

1 <http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=CM+7589>

Transformation Fund which will increase the capacity of the system to train and support social workers, and implement change in the immediate term. The Social Work Task Force will be central to taking forward these measures, which include the Return to Social Work scheme, the Graduate Recruitment Scheme, and the extension of the Newly Qualified Social Worker scheme.

Sir Roger Singleton, the newly appointed Chief Adviser on the Safety of Children, will advise the Government on strategic priorities and the effective implementation of policy, including the delivery of the recommendations from Lord Laming's report. He will produce an annual independent report on progress on safeguarding from April 2010. In addition a new cross-Government National Safeguarding Delivery Unit has been established to help drive up the quality of practice across the country, reporting directly to a new Ministerial sub-group of the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Families, Children and Young People.

We agree with Lord Laming that there needs to be "a sustained commitment to child protection and promoting the welfare of children at every level of Government and in every one of the local services". The Government will not rest until we have the very best possible arrangements to safeguard our most vulnerable children.



Baroness Delyth Morgan

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for
Children, Schools and Families

2. Introduction

The 1998 White Paper, *Modernising Social Services*, said that the Chief Inspectors would be asked to produce joint reports on children's safeguards. The Chief Inspectors published their first report, *Safeguarding Children*, in 2002 and their second, *Safeguarding Children: the second Chief Inspectors' Report on Arrangements to Safeguard Children*, in 2005.

In July 2008 the Chief Inspectors published their third joint report, *Safeguarding Children: the third Chief Inspectors' Report on Arrangements to Safeguard Children*. The report highlighted what had improved over the three years from 2005 to 2008 and assessed the extent to which the considerable activity that had taken place at both national and local levels has affected outcomes for children. It also identified those areas still in need of improvement.

The report made 22 recommendations to Government departments, agencies providing services to children and young people, Local Safeguarding Children Boards and relevant inspectorates. One recommendation was that the DSCF, supported by other relevant Government departments, should provide an annual update of progress made on the recommendations in the report.

The Government is committed to publishing and disseminating reports, research findings and policy documents which explain or shed light on the development and impact of arrangements to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children and young people. This document sets out the Government's annual update on progress against the specific recommendations in the joint Chief Inspectors' report. The Government is committed to providing further annual updates.

3. The joint Chief Inspectors' recommendations and the Government's responses one year on

Recommendation 1:

All agencies that have a statutory duty to cooperate (local authorities, district councils, police, primary care trusts (PCT), NHS trusts, Connexions, probation, Youth Offending Service, Cafcass, secure training centres and prisons) should ensure that they are fully compliant in respect of statutory membership of Local Safeguarding Children Boards by 1 September 2008.

Action Update

The Government is committed to providing support and challenge, in particular through the Government Offices, to help ensure all LSCBs work as effectively as possible and involve all statutory partners.

The Government will revise the core statutory guidance, *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, to take account of Lord Laming's recommendations to strengthen policy and practice, and to place a stronger focus on the perspective of the child, by the end of 2009. This will make it clear to every agency and practitioner in children's services, police, health and other sectors, what they need to do to keep children safe. We will be consulting

widely before issuing draft guidance for formal consultation in autumn 2009.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Department of Health (DH) commissioned research from Loughborough University into the structures and working arrangements of LSCBs. The interim report was published on 25 June 2009. It shows that LSCBs' scope, structures, membership, resourcing, and ways of working vary considerably from area to area with some models likely to be more effective than others. Each of the 124 Boards that took part in the research has a representative from children's services, the police and health. The DCSF is committed to providing practice guidance for LSCBs. This guidance will be developed in light of the report's findings.

The wider public also has an important part to play as keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility. The Government believes that LSCB arrangements should be opened up to wider public scrutiny through the appointment of two lay members drawn from the local community to the LSCB. The Government has brought forward an amendment to the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill to require this. This will support

stronger public engagement in, and understanding of, children's safety issues.

The Government has introduced new legislation to ensure that multi-agency Children's Trust Boards are operating in every local authority area.

Children's Trust Boards will have responsibility for producing a Children and Young People's Plan for the local area, improving the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people in the area. The Boards will consist of the local authority, health, police, schools and other services who will be legally required to work together to agree and deliver a Children and Young People's Plan.

Subject to parliamentary approval the legislation should receive Royal Assent by the end of November and the Government expects the clauses to be commenced by December 2009. The DCSF will be providing statutory guidance on Children's Trust Boards which is expected to be ready for final publication by March 2010. It is expected that the first joint Children and Young People's Plan for which Boards are responsible will be required for April 2011. This means that Children's Trust Boards will need to be in place by April 2010 to be able to deliver this.

Recommendation 2:

The Department for Children, School and Families, the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice should clarify the roles, functions and responsibilities of agencies contributing to multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) and ensure that relevant agencies meet them fully.

Action Update

National MAPPA Guidance issued in April 2009 underlines the requirement on MAPPA strategic management boards to ensure that the MAPPA are effectively linked with other local multi-agency forums which encompass effective mechanisms for jointly addressing common public protection issues. The Strategic Management Board must develop written protocols with, amongst others, Local Safeguarding Children Boards. The Guidance also includes a new chapter devoted to MAPPA management of children and young persons as offenders. This seeks to ensure that their needs as children are taken into account throughout MAPPA processes whilst maintaining the focus on public protection.

The Guidance states that whenever a child or young person is being discussed at a MAPP meeting, the meeting must ensure that it considers its responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children as well as the risk of harm the young offender presents to others. Children's services should always be represented at MAPP meetings. Where a child has been identified as a child in need and/or has been looked after by the local authority, it is essential that the local authority is properly represented at the MAPP meeting and is able to demonstrate that it is fully meeting its obligations to meet the needs of the child. Given these duties, MAPPA needs to take a different approach when managing children and young people. When identifying the risk of potential harm to others that the child or young person poses, any risks to the child or young person must also be taken into account. Children must not be treated by MAPPA as a 'mini-adult',

and should not be managed using the same risk assessment tools or management processes.

Recommendation 3:

Local Safeguarding Children Boards should ensure that robust quality assurance processes are in place to monitor compliance by relevant agencies within their area with requirements to support safe recruitment practices. These processes should include regular audits of vetting practice and random sampling of compliance with checks with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB).

Action Update

This will be reflected in the revised *Working Together to Safeguard Children* to be published by the end of the year. The DCSF and DH commissioned research from Loughborough University into the structures and working arrangements of LSCBs. The interim report was published on 25 June 2009. It shows that LSCBs' scope, structures, membership, resourcing, and ways of working vary considerably from area to area with some models likely to be more effective than others. The DCSF is committed to providing practice guidance for LSCBs.

Recommendation 4:

The Department for Children, Schools and Families, the Department of Health and the Ministry of Justice should increase and better target child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) in order to improve access to these services for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are in the criminal justice system.

Action Update

The independent CAMHS Review published its final report in November 2008. The report's vision is that the 20 recommendations made will enable a number of important changes to take place over the next three to five years, to improve children and young people's mental health and psychological wellbeing. The Government has demonstrated its commitment to implementing change by the immediate implementation of a number of these recommendations. This includes the recommendation that the Government's national support programme should be strengthened to facilitate consistency, improvement and sustainability in service delivery. This recommendation is building on current work being undertaken to ensure better streamlining and value for money from the field forces working with practitioners delivering children's services.

The report addressed the issue of access for all children, young people and families, including vulnerable groups such as those with learning difficulties or disabilities. The work will be a priority for the new National Advisory Council for

Children's Mental Health and Psychological Wellbeing to take forward.

The Targeted Mental Health in Schools (TaMHS) is developing innovative models of early identification and emotional and mental health interventions in schools, linked to specialist CAMHS. This is aimed at children and young people at risk of developing mental health problems. In addition, as part of the Government response to the CAMHS review, nine phase 1 TaMHS local authorities received additional funding to develop better links with special schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs). A number of TaMHS phase 2 local authorities, which started in April 2009, will be working with special schools and PRUs in the implementation of TaMHS. This programme is being evaluated so that the lessons can inform how local authorities can provide responsive and accessible mental health support.

The DCSF is currently reviewing the work being taken forward across Government to make better links and to identify what else needs to be done to address the mental health needs of children and young people in the criminal justice system. This is taking into consideration the recommendations in the recent Bradley report on people with mental health issues in the justice system and the independent review on CAMHS 'Young People in Mind'.

Recommendation 5:

All government departments, agencies and relevant inspectorates should specifically include the impact of domestic violence on children and young people within their risk assessments for planning, delivering, evaluating or inspecting safeguarding services.

Action Update

A new cross-Government National Safeguarding Delivery Unit became operational on 1 July 2009. This Unit will focus on driving improvement in safeguarding standards and better, more consistent practice across the country by promoting effective policy and good practice, co-ordinating more effective use and targeting of existing resources and support and brokering effective partnerships at the local level. It will publish its work programme in September 2009 and we expect that guidance on referral and assessments systems for children affected by domestic violence, adult mental health problems, and drug and alcohol misuse will be developed using current best practice. This guidance will be shared with local authorities, health and police with an expectation that the assessment of risk and level of support given to such children will improve quickly and significantly in every Children's Trust.

The Home Office will be exploring options for how Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) and statutory public protection bodies, such as LSCBs and MAPPAs, might better relate to each other. A National MARAC Steering Group has

been established and met for the first time in June 2009. Progress will be reported through the National Domestic Violence Delivery Plan which is overseen by the Inter-Ministerial Group on Domestic and Sexual Violence.

On 9 March 2009 the then Home Secretary launched the biggest ever consultation on ending violence against women and girls. It included a review into police powers for dealing with serial perpetrators of domestic violence and a review of the sexualisation of teenage girls. The consultation ended on Friday 29 May. The Government has already engaged with a wide range of stakeholders including from third sector organisations, women's support groups and other interested parties. The role of the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy will be to work across Government departments to link work together to end violence against women and children and so make a real difference to people's lives.

Domestic abuse is recognised as a trigger for runaways from home and is reported to the Missing Persons Bureau as part of the national reporting form for missing. Domestic abuse will also feature in the revised Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) guidance to police forces on the investigation of missing cases due for publication in late 2009. Risk assessments completed by police officers in missing cases will consider the impact of domestic abuse as a precursor or trigger for a missing incident.

Recommendation 6:

Local authorities should make adequate provision of safe, sustainable and supported accommodation and stop the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for care leavers and young people both at risk of custodial remand or returning to communities from custodial settings.

Action Update

The Government intends to consult with stakeholders on a draft of new Leaving Care Guidance in December 2009. The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 received Royal Assent in November 2008. In order to deliver the improved outcomes that we expect for all looked after children and care leavers we will be revising guidance to the Children Act 1989, which will include revision of guidance on the support that should be offered to care leavers as they make their transitions to adulthood. Future revision will include much more information about local authority responsibilities for giving young people a much stronger voice in leaving care decisions and ensuring that they only move on from their care placements when they have been properly prepared and are ready to take this significant step in their lives.

The guidance will set out the measures that local authority leaving care services will need to take in every case so that accommodation for care leavers is of sufficient quality and is better matched to individual needs. This process will require there to be an active dialogue at all levels between leaving care and housing services, to plan individual

support and to put in place local strategies for commissioning a range of suitable accommodation options for care leavers. We will be consulting on the detail of these measures towards the end of 2009.

Recommendation 7:

The Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Home Office should monitor at a national level the incidence of children missing from home.

Action Update

A new national indicator "Missing from Home and Care" was introduced in April 2009. The indicator asks local areas to assess whether appropriate systems, procedures and protocols are in place to identify the levels of running in their area, and whether the response to instances of running is appropriate to the needs of young people who run away. To perform well in this indicator, local authorities will need to demonstrate that aggregate data about the levels of running away in an area is collated by the police and children's services and shared, that key characteristics of young people who run away can be identified, and this information is used to shape appropriate responses and service provision. Improving data collection and collation at a local level is the first step in ensuring that there is more accurate information about the number of young people who are reported or known by children's services to have run away or gone missing at a national level.

On 1 July 2009 the new runaways guidance² was launched. This puts a much stronger emphasis on ensuring there are systems in place for children that run away from home as well as care. The guidance also states that local authorities must ensure young people are offered a chance to talk to a trained professional about why they ran away and what other issues are going on in their life (this is known as a 'return' or 'welfare' interview.) The guidance links to the national indicator criteria for NI71: Missing from Home and Care.

The Missing Persons Bureau, with DCSF funding, has enabled police forces using a missing case management system (COMPACT) to report NI71 data directly to local authorities using an automatic and electronic means. These 24 forces will implement this mechanism by the end of the second quarter 2009/10. The new code of practice on missing data is in force and there is a staged implementation process – the code demands data sharing with the Missing Persons Bureau and local authorities on a quarterly basis as well as on a day-to-day operational basis.

² This publication can be found online at: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/safeguardingandsocialcare/safeguardingchildren/youngrunaways/youngrunaways>

Recommendation 8:

The Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Youth Justice Board should provide guidance to staff working in custodial and residential settings on the behaviour management of children and young people. Such guidance should include a model behaviour management strategy and emphasise that restraint should only be used as a last resort and should not be used solely to gain compliance. The guidance should make clear that methods of restraint should not rely on pain compliance.

Action Update

The independent *Review of the Use of Restraint in Juvenile Secure Settings*³ makes important recommendations about approaches to restraint within the context of behaviour management strategies. The Government has accepted these recommendations and is putting in place an ambitious programme of further reform. The systems of restraint currently used in young offender institutions and secure training centres are to be replaced by a new, single system, incorporating de-escalation techniques to defuse potential incidents and restraint techniques for use in last resort. We are also developing an accreditation scheme for all restraint techniques for use in under-18 establishments (including secure children's homes), as well as the associated training and the trainers themselves.

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) expects to complete their revision of the Code by spring 2010.

Recommendation 9:

The Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Youth Justice Board should issue a requirement that all incidences when restraint is used in custodial settings and which result in an injury to a young person are notified to, and monitored and publicly reported by, the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Action Update

The Review of the Use of Restraint in Juvenile Secure Settings makes a series of recommendations about the role of LSCBs in overseeing and monitoring of restraint. The Government is working closely with the Youth Justice Board to implement the LSCB recommendations.

The Government will revise the core statutory guidance, *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, to strengthen policy and practice, and to place a stronger focus on the perspective of the child, by the end of 2009. This will make it absolutely clear to every agency and practitioner in children's services, police, health and other sectors, what they need to do to keep children safe. The YJB will be contributing to this review. Draft guidance will be issued for formal consultation in autumn 2009. The DCSF is also committed to providing practice guidance for LSCBs.

3 This Review can be found online at: <http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/>

Recommendation 10:

The Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Youth Justice Board should issue a requirement that all incidents of strip-searching of young people in custodial settings are risk assessed and recorded and that this data should be monitored by prison safeguarding committees. The Youth Justice Board should monitor the aggregated data nationally across the secure estate.

under-18s in custody. The YJB are in discussion with the ADCS about longer-term funding.

Recommendation 12:

The Department for Children, Schools and Families, Department of Health and the Youth Justice Board should make the necessary provision to ensure that all children who display, or are convicted of, sexually harmful behaviours are assessed and their needs for treatment are met.

Action Update

The YJB has carried out a comprehensive review of full searches in the secure estate and is currently finalising the report: it is expected to be publicly available by October 2009. When considering the scope of their review, the YJB took into account the recommendations made by the joint Chief Inspectors.

Action Update

The Department of Health is leading work in partnership with the Victims of Violence and Abuse Prevention Programme to develop a Framework for the Development of Services for Young People who Sexually Abuse due to be published in autumn 2009.

Recommendation 11:

The Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Ministry of Justice/Youth Justice Board should: provide long-term funding for social work input into youth offending institutions.

A Multisystemic Therapy (MST) programme for young people aged 10 – 17 years with problematic sexual behaviour and their families has been funded from the Department of Health and the Youth Justice Board to run this programme for three years (2009 – 2012). The Brandon Centre, a well established voluntary sector provider in North London with four years experience of running a standard MST programme, has been successful in tendering to run this service.

Action Update

On 13 January 2009 the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) confirmed that local authorities would be providing funding for social workers in 2009 – 10. This recognises the obligations that local authorities have towards

Recommendation 13:

The Department for Children, Schools and Families, the Department of Health and the Ministry of Justice/ Youth Justice Board should ensure continuity in the provision of mainstream services, particularly health and education, when young people return from a secure setting into the community.

Action Update

The current Apprenticeships, Children, Skills and Learning Bill contains provisions to further align education and training in juvenile custody with that in the mainstream learning sector for children and young people. Subject to the passage of the Bill, the legislation will place new duties on local authorities, as the mainstream commissioners of children's services, to lead on securing education and training in juvenile custody. The Bill would bring young people in custody under primary legislation for the first time and places requirements on local authorities in securing suitable education in custody to have regard to a range of factors, including the person's age, abilities and aptitudes' any special educational needs of learning difficulties the person may have, and the desirability of enabling the person to complete programmes of study of training which they have already begun.

The Bill also includes provisions to foster transfer of educational information, transfer of SEN statements, and a duty on the person's 'home' local authority to take steps to promote the fulfilment of the person's learning potential whilst they are in custody and on their release. These

duties will be underpinned by statutory guidance. We believe this new framework of legislation will help foster improvements in education and training for young people in custody, including in the consistency and continuity of their education when they enter custody, when they move establishment and when they are released.

The Government expects to publish Health and Social Care Strategy for Children and Young People in autumn 2009. This will take account of the findings of Lord Bradley's review of mental health provision.

Recommendation 14:

The UK Border Agency should ensure that children are detained only in exceptional circumstances and for no more than a few days. The individual welfare needs of children should be taken into account, and that process documented, in any decision to detain and throughout the detention process.

Action Update

Children are most usually only detained under Immigration Act powers where this is necessary to effect the removal of their family group.

The Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Bill will, subject to Parliamentary approval, require the UK Border Agency to carry out its existing functions in a way that takes into account the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The duty does not give the UK Border Agency any new functions or override its existing functions.

The Government intends to issue guidance, under legislation, on arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children for those exercising UK Border Agency functions.

This guidance will be issued in conjunction with the Department for Children, Schools and Families to UK Border Agency staff. It is partly based on the code of practice for keeping children safe from harm (which will be repealed) and sits alongside the statutory guidance that accompanies section 11 of the Children Act 2004.

The guidance will cover situations where, for example, children are detained or escorted under immigration act powers. It will make it clear that detention involving children must be a last resort where voluntary departure has not taken place, and must always be for the shortest possible period of time. And that there must be a realistic prospect of removing the family from the UK within a reasonable period of time.

This guidance does not replace or change the existing policy on detaining families with children but it does introduce some new considerations about how any such detention is to be carried out. The Government would always prefer voluntary compliance and co-operation with the immigration laws, including any requirement to leave the United Kingdom. There are occasions, though, when the UK Border Agency has to enforce removal because the family will not leave voluntarily. If a decision is made to detain the adults, then the children will normally be taken into detention with their parents or other adult carers since not to do so would involve the more serious course of separating them from their parents.

The guidance will also make clear that the UK Border Agency must make appropriate arrangements when detention extends beyond two to three days. Children must be allowed to maintain voluntary personal links with their school or education provider if they wish. The UK Border Agency must take reasonable steps to ensure that their education record and their medical record are available in any place where they are detained. They should be able to maintain contact with friends they have made in their schools and local communities, whether by e-mail or other means; and they should be able to worship according to their religion and custom.

Recommendation 15:

The Department for Children, Schools and Families should issue guidance to local councils to ensure that children whose detention continues for more than seven days are subject to an independent welfare assessment of their health, welfare, educational and developmental needs and have an individual care plan. The welfare assessment and care plan should inform weekly reviews of the continued detention of children.

Action Update

Given the measures already in place, as set out above, the Government does not consider that issuing guidance to local councils is necessary. Recommendation 14 contains further details.

Recommendation 16:

The Department for Children, Schools and Families and Local Safeguarding Children Boards should ensure greater consistency in decision-making about when a serious case review should be commissioned.

Action Update

On 22 October 2008 the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families announced a study to improve further the consistency, quality and impact of Serious Case Reviews. On 12 November 2008 it was announced that this work would be brought within the ambit of Lord Laming's progress report on safeguarding. This was published on 12 March 2009.

In addition, on 1 December 2008 the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families announced that all LSCBs responsible for Serious Case Reviews which had been judged inadequate by Ofsted would need to convene an independently chaired panel to reconsider the review before sending a report to the DCSF, copied to Ofsted. Ofsted have evaluated the extent to which those reports addressed the reasons for the original inadequate judgement and have reported to the DCSF that 62 out of the 63 reports received following inadequate Serious Case Reviews were judged to be satisfactory. These arrangements now apply to all future Serious Case Reviews judged inadequate by Ofsted.

Lord Laming's report made important recommendations on how to strengthen policy and practice in relation to Serious Case Reviews, so

that they can fulfil their crucial role in learning lessons and supporting improvement locally. In response the Government published a revised Chapter 8 of *Working Together to Safeguard Children* for public consultation on 31 July 2009, so that important improvements can be put in place as quickly as possible. This guidance will reinforce and clarify the fundamental purpose of Serious Case Reviews as being to learn lessons, and will address the important issues of confidentiality and the need for suitable independent persons to play their part as chairs of SCR Panels and authors of SCR Overview Reports. Ofsted have also confirmed that in parallel they will revise the evaluation framework for Serious Case Reviews to strengthen the focus on learning.

Regional Government Office staff will work as part of the National Safeguarding Delivery Unit to provide support and challenge to LSCBs on Serious Case Reviews, including challenging decisions on whether or not to conduct SCRs in individual cases, and maintaining oversight of the regional pattern of implementation of Serious Case Review recommendations and the impact on performance. They will also support regional dissemination of learning from Serious Case Reviews and help LSCBs secure an adequate and high quality supply of Serious Case Review panel chairs and authors.

Recommendation 17:

Ofsted should report annually on the outcome of evaluations of serious case reviews.

Action Update

The Government welcomed Ofsted's first annual report on the outcome of evaluations of Serious Case Reviews and have ensured that the recommendations fed into Lord Laming's progress report. It also took immediate action to strengthen the processes for following up inadequate Serious Case Reviews. This is set out in more detail in our response to Recommendation 16 above. Ofsted have confirmed that they will produce regular six monthly reports covering the lessons of Serious Case Reviews from 2009 onwards. One of these each year will be a summary report covering all SCRs in the year. Ofsted will consider the format of the second interim report to enable more in-depth analysis where this would be beneficial.

Recommendation 18:

The Department for Children, Schools and Families should ensure that the national dissemination of biennial reports on the lessons learned is timely.

Action Update

The 2005 – 2007 overview report of Serious Case Reviews was published on 25 June 2009 and its findings are being widely disseminated. The lead researchers are based at the Centre for the Research on the Child and Family, University of East Anglia, supported by colleagues at the University of Warwick and NHS Norfolk. The early findings were disseminated at a series of regional events in autumn 2008. The DSCF is planning to move to a system of making Serious Case Review reports available to the researchers as soon as they

are finalised. This would enable more timely publication of the biennial reviews.

The Government published a revised Chapter 8 of *Working Together to Safeguard Children* for consultation on 31 July 2009. It will set out explicitly that the primary purpose of Serious Case Reviews is to learn lessons which will inform improvements both with each individual agency, as well as in multi-agency working.

The new cross-Government National Safeguarding Delivery Unit will work with other partners to give strong, co-ordinated national leadership across the system. Government Office staff will work with the Unit to support the implementation of the recommendations of Serious Case Reviews and put in place systems to learn the lessons at local, regional and national levels.

Recommendation 19:

The Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Youth Justice Board should ensure that the assessment tools used within the Youth Offending Service and secure settings are robust in addressing the safeguarding needs of children and young people.

Action Update

The e-ASSET system has been rolled out across the young people's secure estate. All establishments were fully functioning from March 2009.

The cross government Programme Board for Children and Young People in contact in the Criminal Justice System has commissioned reviews

of the models of substance misuse services that exist along the current criminal justice pathway and the range of assessment and frameworks in the criminal justice pathway. An interim report on both of these pieces of work was received at the end of July and the final report by the end of autumn 2009.

Recommendation 20:

The Department for Children, Schools and Families, the Department of Health, the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice should ensure that information sharing arrangements between healthcare professionals and other professionals providing services for children are in place and monitored to ensure informed and coordinated service provision.

Action Update

The Government accepted all Lord Laming's recommendations in *The Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report* including that every Children's Trust should assure themselves that partners consistently apply the *Information Sharing: Guidance for practitioners and managers* (HMG, 2008). This will be reflected in the revised *Working Together to Safeguard Children* guidance. In January 2009 ContactPoint was made available to 19 Early Adopter organisations – 17 local authorities in the North West of England and two national voluntary sector partners; Barnardo's and KIDS – to train their ContactPoint management teams. It also allowed local authorities to shield a small proportion of records on ContactPoint. This

additional precautionary measure is appropriate for records of some children who are at risk of significant harm.

On 12 May 2009 the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families announced the second phase of delivery. From 18 May 2009, and over a period of several weeks, ContactPoint Early Adopters have trained around 800 hand-picked practitioners to use ContactPoint.

We will carefully monitor the activity of these practitioners considering what further improvements may be required in the light of their experience of using the system.

From June to August 2009, management teams in the other local authorities and national partners will undertake training to allow them to prepare for deployment of ContactPoint more widely in due course.

Recommendation 21:

The DCSF, supported by other relevant government departments, should provide an annual update of progress made on the recommendations in this report.

Action Update

The Government welcomes the opportunity to provide an annual update on the recommendations made in the third joint Chief Inspectors' report on arrangements to safeguard children and we will continue to provide further regular updates.

Recommendation 22:

All agencies that have a statutory duty to cooperate (local authority children's services, district councils, police, primary care trusts (PCT), NHS trusts, Connexions, probation, Youth Offending Service, Cafcass, secure training centres and prisons) should clarify the chain of accountability and responsibilities for child protection from the front line through to their most senior level.

Action Update

One of the fundamental roles of central Government is to set clear expectations in legislation and guidance. Lord Laming's report rightly underlines the crucial importance of strong leadership nationally and locally with clear accountabilities and effective working between children's services, police, health and other agencies involved in the safety of children.

The government announced on 12 March 2009 the appointment of Sir Roger Singleton to the new role of Chief Adviser on the Safety of Children. The Chief Adviser will be independent of Government. In addition to advising Ministers on the implementation of safeguarding policy, the Chief Adviser will have a particular responsibility to influence and monitor the co-ordination of central Government departmental policies and approaches towards safeguarding and to assess the extent to which the advice and guidance issued by professional bodies contributes towards

effective multi-disciplinary working at the front line.

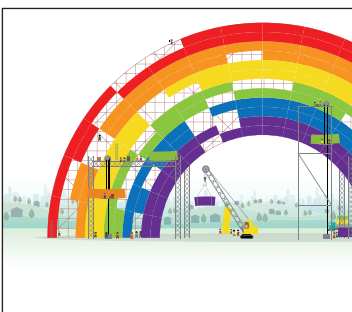
In addition a new cross-Government National Safeguarding Delivery Unit became operational on 1 July 2009. This Unit will focus on driving improvement in safeguarding standards and better, more consistent practice across the country by promoting effective policy and good practice, co-ordinating more effective use and targeting of existing resources and support and brokering effective partnerships at the local level. The Government also announced the establishment of a Partnership Network to work with the Unit to pursue specific issues impacting on effective front-line safeguarding practice. The Unit will publish its work programme in September 2009.

The Government will revise the core statutory guidance, *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, to place a stronger focus on the perspective of the child, by the end of 2009. This will make it clear to every agency and practitioner in children's services, police, health and other sectors, what they need to do to keep children safe.

It is also important that there is a strong relationship between the LSCB and the Children's Trust. The responsibilities of the LSCB, in ensuring that the multi-agency partners in each local area are co-operating to safeguard and promote the welfare of children effectively, are a fundamental part of the overarching responsibilities held by the Children's Trusts.⁴

⁴ The guidance, *The Roles and Responsibilities of the Lead Member for Children's Services and the Director of Children's Services*, published in July 2009, can be found online at: <http://publications.everychildmatters.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCS-F-00686-2009>]

The Government has brought forward amendments to the Apprenticeships Children Skills and Learners Bill to require LSCBs to produce annual reports for the Children's Trust Boards. Subject to Parliamentary approval, this will be reflected in revised *Working Together to Safeguard Children*. Such reports will assess the effectiveness of arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the area.



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