



## Safeguarding children and young people: Aug 2020

### Message from the KRSCP Chair, Ian Thomas

I trust that colleagues are getting some rest as we predict our work will be busy in the autumn, as schools open. I am encouraged by the Post-Covid 19 planning work which has been taking place regularly in our two boroughs, led by Louise Doherty, Designated Nurse, Kingston CCG. This has led to identification of good practice and innovative ways of working, which we want to retain to strengthen our Partnership. Please be thinking about how you can create **Reachable Moments** and enable children to disclose safely any risky issues they face. Our important local news this month includes a reminder of the risks of Substance Use and a Partnership call to work to overcome discrimination of any kind, particularly racism.



### Substance Use

The impact of coronavirus has limited access to advice and support about mental health for many young people. This can make it more likely that they may experiment with more dangerous activities to help them cope with their situation, including misusing drugs or alcohol. As a result, it's important that we continue to encourage people - not just parents - across our boroughs to be aware of changes in behaviour, and other warning signals, that might suggest a young person is at risk and may need extra support. Nearly 1 in 5 young people who have taken drugs say they did it to forget their problems. Experimental use of substances is common with teenagers, and an open and honest dialogue with care givers is good way to help educate young people. Some young people misuse substances to cope with traumatic stress, but family support can make a big difference to help them get back on track. Mood swings, falling out with old friends or suddenly behaving badly could all be signs they need help. If you're concerned or even unsure, call 020 8547 5008. #KeepOurChildrenSafe.

Find out more here about Achieving for Children's Early Help Offer [here](#).

### Learning and Development

The KRSCP only offers online safeguarding training at this time, please click [here](#) to create an Account for our free eLearning courses. Please note that at this time we also provide interactive webinars for people to book onto please look at our training calendar [here](#). If you work within education and are interested in going on any of these courses and you can apply [here](#), Otherwise you can apply for any [here](#).

### Overheard - "How can I describe people's heritage"

The issue of describing heritage is so important to all of our Partners so this Overheard article is going to address some of the difficulties we face in capturing ethnicity information in our work and why it is so important to do so in Kingston and Richmond.

**What might an anti-racist culture look like and how can we start working towards achieving the vision within our Partnership? We need to take action and the first step is to identify the children and young people from minority ethnic groups so we can start to understand how their cultural differences can put them at greater safeguarding risk.**

## **Overheard - “How can I describe people’s heritage”**

### **Continued**

Knowing the local experiences of local children and families from a Black and Minority Ethnic Heritage can help us to understand their needs and help to support them and improve their outcomes. Why not find out?

Our multi-agency audits have shown that practitioners have not always considered the impact of ethnicity on the child and family, and some children had no ethnicity identified at all. Practitioners talk about feeling ‘uncomfortable’ or ‘uneasy’ about asking service users questions about their race, heritage and ethnicity.

### **A fear about discussing heritage in case we offend can really impact on people’s confidence when talking about ethnicity.**

For example, the term Afro Caribbean is often used to refer to people of Caribbean descent with African ancestry. The concern with this term is that the word ‘Afro’ refers to a hair style and not a continent so a more appropriate description should be ‘African or Black Caribbean’.

As Safeguarding Children Partners, we need to have confidence to ask and find out about the heritage and culture of every family we work with to establish an understanding of cultural norms, practices and belief systems. Asking questions can provide insights into cultural practices which are linked to safeguarding concerns such as FGM or belief in spirit possession and witchcraft. Practitioners should increase their knowledge of such practices and beliefs by attending training courses and feel confident to ask questions.

### **Tips on how to ask about heritage, culture & ethnicity**

- What ethnic group would you say you belong to?
- From the following categories (read list for your agency) which one would apply to you and your family?
- I need to ask these questions of all families that I work with/use our services so we can understand a bit about your background
- Are there any festivals/rituals which are important to you and your family? Can you tell me why they are important and what you do to mark them?

### **Tips to develop confidence**

- Spend time in a team meeting asking each other how you describe your heritage;
- Think about how you would describe your own culture;
- Ask each other about language and terminology;
- Have open and honest conversations with your team and colleagues about words, statements and phrases that make you feel uncomfortable and think about why
- Find out who are the BAME communities in your area and try to learn more about their belief systems and cultural practices

Find out more [here](#).

Please also note that the KRSCP is delivering training on Working with Race, Culture and Belief Systems in the Context of Professional Curiosity Webinars on the following dates;

- 07/10/2020
- 17/11/2020
- 10/12/2020

Please book on [here](#).