

### Message from Deborah Lightfoot, LSCB Chair

This month we are devoting the LSCB newsletter to setting out the findings of the Serious Case Review (SCR) into the tragic deaths of three children in Kingston in April 2014. Please distribute this newsletter widely to all colleagues.

### Family A Serious Case Review Publication

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2015, Kingston LSCB published its serious case review under our learning and improvement framework regarding the A Family. The review can be found at <http://kingstonandrichmondscb.org.uk/about-kingston-lscb/serious-case-reviews-168.php>.

Three children with SMA Type 2 (Spinal Muscular Atrophy) were smothered by their mother in April 2014. The mother admitted manslaughter by diminished responsibility and was sentenced to a Hospital Order in November 2014.

The SCR was carried out using a systems' methodology which focuses on practice as opposed to 'blaming' individuals. Over 100 staff from 3 boroughs and 9 health agencies took part in the learning - they were without exception very distressed. The review notes the commitment of the many professionals involved with the family, who without exception went out of their way to provide services for the family. There are always areas that we can improve and the findings from this SCR set these out.

The diagnosis of the children's condition meant a huge practical and emotional adjustment for the parents. There were professional concerns regarding the mother's low mood. The parents wanted the children to have a good quality life and experience as little pain as possible. The children's specialist doctors though were of the view that medical intervention was needed for one of the children in order to decrease her current discomfort and to maximize her potential. Alongside concerns about medical intervention, some health professionals were of the view that the mother did not consistently accept and act on advice. Debates between the parents and health care professionals took place for several years. In the last months, there appeared to be progress made.

The learning has raised the tension of whether to focus primarily on providing support to a family so that parents are better able to care for their children or to also move into more assertive intervention using child protection procedures. There are also challenging ethical dilemmas around quality of life and parental views. The tragic killing was unexpected and could not have been predicted by those working with the family.

### The review brings forth findings relating to:

#### Family and professional interactions:

- Practitioners had insufficient understanding of how parents' backgrounds and experience impacted on parental views of disability and the way services were provided;
- The Family could be extremely challenging for practitioners to work with due to Mother's antagonism, lack of communication of feelings, except in bursts of anger.

#### Professional and organisational culture:

- Commendable commitment of large number of professionals, but led to some working beyond role and responsibilities, including involvement of senior managers: leading to an unintended loss of objective oversight at times;
- Obstacles in multi-agency co-ordination at times;
- Shortcomings in transfer process of social work case responsibility;
- Lack of facility to provide direct payments contributed to children not receiving the level of support for which they were assessed

#### Safeguarding practice:

- Parents provided general good care, but specific concerns relating to neglect of medical, health and developmental needs;
- Professional dilemmas about best way to proceed: continuing support and gradual persuasion or child protection?
- Obstacles in search for consensus of medical practitioners: consideration of legal processes, but not of the child protection process led to mixed messages given to parents.

### Further information

- The findings and 14 recommendations from the report can be found reading [the LSCB Response regarding Family A Serious Case Review](#).
- The LSCB is offering local learning seminars in December, January and February. To find out more please visit [AfC CPD Online](#).
- Ofsted produced a thematic review regarding safeguarding disabled children in 2012. Please see following link [Protecting Disabled Children: Thematic Inspection](#) to read the review.
- Find out more on [SMA \(Spinal Muscular Atrophy\) Type 2](#)

### LSCB Workshops to Launch the CSE and CME Strategies

The LSCB will be providing workshops regarding the launch of the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Children Missing in Education (CME) Strategies.

**Please see details below regarding the workshops taking place in Kingston and Twickenham:**

- **Kingston** – Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December from 13.00 to 14.30
- **Twickenham** – Monday 14<sup>th</sup> December from 12.15 – 13.45

To book the workshops contact : [vivienne.white@achievingforchildren.org.uk](mailto:vivienne.white@achievingforchildren.org.uk)

### LSCB Private Fostering Protocol

The LSCB has published its Private Fostering protocol for agencies to utilise and identify Private Fostering arrangements. Please click [LSCB Private Fostering Protocol 2015](#) to read.

**LSCB Private Fostering Training** will take place on **Tuesday 8 December 2015, 09:30 - 12:30 at the Twickenham Training Centre, 53 Grimwood Road, TW1 1BY**. There are still places remaining so please book via [AfC CPD Online](#).

### NSPCC Free Share Aware Lesson Plans

The NSPCC has launched free Share Aware lesson plans and classroom guidance for teachers on helping children to stay safe online. These teaching resources have received the PSHE Association quality assurance mark. To find out more information please visit - <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/shareaware-schools>

### CEOP's warning regarding 'Sexting'

The Guardian reports on Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP's) centre warning that sexting has become the norm for young people who are often unaware that they may be acting illegally. To read the article please read the please visit – Guardian's report on ['Sexting becoming 'the norm' for teens, warn child protection experts'](#).

### The Railway Children and British Transport Police's Training

The Railway Children and the British Transport Police will deliver training to railway station staff on how to spot vulnerable children who might have run away from home and are at risk of exploitation. To find out more information please read the Guardian's article – ['UK station staff to look out for children at risk'](#).

### Road Safety Week – 23<sup>rd</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> November 2015

Road Safety Week took place from Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> November to Friday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2015. The LSCB was keen to raise awareness about road safety and therefore worked in partnership with the London Fire Brigade and Richmond upon Thames College to put on a fantastic demonstration. Students from the college were invited to watch a demonstration performed by Twickenham Branch of the London Fire Brigade which showed how a person in a road traffic accident was safely removed from a car. Check out some of the pictures from the event on our Twitter page - [@KR\\_LSCB](#)

The LSCB would like to say a very big thank you to the Twickenham Fire Brigade!