

Message from Deborah Lightfoot, LSCB Chair

In this newsletter we continue to discuss key areas of learning and improvement which stems from the serious case review in Kingston published earlier this year. We focus on recognising self harm and possible suicidal ideation and set out some resources for practitioners to help understand this important issue. Other areas of partnership work in child protection are also included in this newsletter. This includes a link to our work on neglect discussed at the LSCB Annual Conference and the importance of partnership involvement in strategy meetings.

Self Harm and Suicide

The recent publication of the [Child B Serious Case Review](#) demonstrates the local and national issues surrounding self-harm and suicide and the importance of professionals, parents and carers and the safeguarding community to understand and address the issues.

What is self-harm?

Self-harm is when an individual intentionally injures or hurts their body as a way of coping or dealing with overwhelming emotional distress or difficult feelings. It can be when an individual's intention is to physically hurt, punish themselves or could relieve tension that they feel is unbearable. According to mind.org.uk self-harming can include: cutting yourself, poisoning yourself, over-eating or under-eating, burning your skin, inserting objects into your body, hitting yourself or walls, overdosing, exercising excessively, scratching and hair pulling. It is not always easy to try and work out why children and young people self-harm and in actual fact children may not even know why they do it.

There have been references that self-harm may be linked to; depression, being bullied, loss of a relationship with a close one or family member, feeling under pressure or facing emotional abuse. The physical pain inflicted by self-harming may be easier for a child or young person to deal with, compared to the emotional pain they are dealing with. It may be a way of the child or young person feeling like they are in control.

Suicide

Suicide is an act committed by an individual to end their own life. It has been noted that over half of people, who take their own lives have had a previous history of self-harming. According to the organisation [Papyrus](#), over 1600 young people in the UK decide to take their own life. Some of the issues that put children and young people at risk may be; the loss of a loved one, break up of a close relationship, an unhappy change in circumstances, physical illnesses that causes physical pain or disabilities, alcohol and substance misuse dependency, depression, previous history of self-harm or suicide attempts committed by the individual or family member.

The signs below may demonstrate someone is going through poor emotional health:

- Lack of energy or particularly appearing tired;
- Seemingly more tearful;
- Becoming more isolated and not wanting to talk to others;
- Lack of interest in activities they would normally do;
- Change to routine, such as eating and sleeping more or less than they normally would;
- Alcohol and drug usage;
- Difficulty in dealing with everyday tasks;
- Feeling agitated or restless;
- Not looking after themselves as they normally would;
- Being more accident prone or clumsy;
- Losing in touch with friends or becoming withdrawn.

It is important to recognise when a child or young person may need help. [Samaritans.org](#) provide examples of statements that may help people to recognise if an individual is at risk. Some examples could be; '**You wouldn't believe what I've been through**' or '**It's like the whole world is against me**'. Other examples can be negative statements where the individual may say "**Oh, no one loves me**", or '**I'm a waste of space**', even if it sounds like they are joking."

Recommendations from the Child B SCR highlighted that even though some professionals had confidence when young people expressed that they would like to take their life, however this confidence did not spread across the multi-agency work group. Therefore it further stresses the need for professionals and partners to develop the skills and understanding surrounding the issues of self-harm.

Below are some sources of information for professionals, parents/carers or someone who you know who may be facing the issues of self-harm and suicide:

- www.nhs.uk
- <http://www.samaritans.org>
- www.nspcc.org.uk
- www.papyrus-uk.org/
- www.youngminds.org.uk
- www.nshn.co.uk
- [Child B Serious Case Review](#)
- www.kingstonandrichmondscb.org.uk

LSCB Annual Conference 2015

The LSCB would like to say a very big thank you to those who attended the LSCB Annual Conference 2015. Delegates from a variety of organisation attended the event which demonstrated the local safeguarding communities commitment to ensuring that children and young people within Kingston and Richmond achieve the best possible outcomes. A special thank you has to go to a group of media students from Richmond College who filmed the entire event, including the individual workshops. Therefore, if you were unable to attend the conference you will be able to shortly watch the Annual Conference films including all the workshops. In the mean time please visit the [LSCB website](#) in order to download the workshop presentations .

Strategy meetings/discussions

[Section 47 of the Children Act, 1989](#) outlines that an enquiry should be undertaken when there is a disclosure, allegation or evidence that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. We want to encourage investigations to involve as many different professionals who, are known to a child or family - **not only social workers and Police, but health, education, Housing, Adults' Services**. Please remember to invite everyone to contribute and let each other know if someone is missing from providing vital information and another perspective.

ChildLine Annual Review 2014-2015

The [NSPCC](#) has published the ChildLine annual review 2014-15. Last year, ChildLine provided nearly 290,000 counselling sessions to children and young people at all times of the day and night. 4 of the top 10 issues children contacted ChildLine about related to **mental health** (self-harm, suicide, low self-esteem / unhappiness and mental health conditions). There was a 124% increase in the number of counselling sessions where young people talked about problems accessing services. To read the full report please visit www.nspcc.org.uk/

ChildLine Free School Services

The ChildLine Schools Service (part of the NSPCC) is a FREE OF CHARGE, interactive and engaging programme for all primary schools across the UK. Please follow the link for more information - <http://bit.ly/1LJHLtp> or contact **Angela Wright, Area Coordinator , South West London NSPCC Schools Service** at angela.wright@nspcc.org.uk

Interpreting and Translation Services Questionnaire

The LSCB would like to establish from partners what arrangements are in place within their service to facilitate access to interpreting and/or translation services in cases of general, planned or urgent contact with families for whom English is not a first language. We would be very grateful if you could let us know by completing this short questionnaire <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/65YKTJT>. Please feel free to use the comment boxes, or email any queries about this questionnaire to vivienne.white@achievingforchildren.org.uk

LSCB Twitter and CDOP Newsletter

The LSCB would like to ask all those reading this newsletter if you could please start following the LSCB - [@KR_LSCB](#) . The LSCB will continuously tweet interesting and important information about safeguarding children locally and nationally. [#KR_LSCB](#). The CDOP has published its latest newsletter on [#Roadsafetyweek](#). Please could you circulate to colleagues and member's within your networks.