

London Safeguarding Children Pledge

2009 has been a challenging year for everyone involved in safeguarding the well-being of children – not just in London, but across the UK. Currently, there are over 6,000 children and young people on a child protection plan in London, which marks an increase of 17% since 2005. Lord Laming's report following the tragic case of Baby Peter was explicit in the necessity of a strategic approach to protecting children, and that strong safeguarding partnerships will be crucial in addressing the challenges that safeguarding partners are faced with.

"At senior level there should be a culture of mutual challenge, improvement and openness" Lord Laming

The London Safeguarding Children Board – the multi-agency strategic board dedicated to safeguarding children across the capital – is uniquely placed to help all agencies involved in protecting children adjust to the rapidly changing environment in which they operate. Estimates suggest that the cost of tackling safeguarding in London is as much as £500 million, further emphasising the scale and scope of the issue and the clear need for a co-ordinated and collaborative approach.

The increased spotlight on children's services over the past year has posed many challenges but it also provides an opportunity to make real improvements to how we safeguard children in London.

Progress so far...

Already, the partnership approach adopted in London through the London Board has meant that significant steps have been made to ensuring London is a safer place for children to grow up. The Board's ambitious workplan has included:

- the adoption of pan-London child protection procedures, followed by every agency in every local authority in London, allowing a uniformity in safeguarding responses that is unmatched across the UK
- investment in training London's elected members as well as providing detailed guidance to council leaders and chief executives
- specific projects to tackle child sexual abuse, scope the needs of London's BME communities, and support local arrangements for serious case reviews
- issuing London's first safeguarding support work plan, detailing the wide range of pan-London strategic initiatives currently underway and the main agency responsible for delivery
- a programme of monthly business meetings with high level representatives from each agency to monitor progress and identify any potential gaps for further work

2010 and beyond...

Building upon the progress of the last year, the London Board has appointed three London Regional Safeguarding Advisers, who will begin work in the new year. These senior officers will work across partner agencies, as well as being able to provide a rapid response to arising issues in local authorities. The Regional Advisers will give London a unique opportunity to examine current multi-agency responses in an unprecedented depth. This will include a strong focus on first response services, and all agencies will work to ensure constant improvement in the way they receive and respond to referrals to ensure the best possible service for children and their families.

There remains much more work for the London Board to do. The Board's successes so far would not have been possible without the commitment and determination of leadership across London – in the councils, the NHS, the police, GOL, and voluntary sector partners. It is vital that this commitment from London's leaders is maintained if we are to be able to build upon the real progress made over the past year.

London Safeguarding Children Pledge

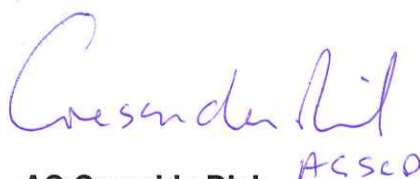
This pledge represents an ongoing commitment on behalf of all signatories to work in partnership through the London Safeguarding Children Board on the whole safeguarding children agenda and to continue to prioritise investment in safeguarding.

Given the ever-changing environment that we operate in, this pledge recognises the vital need for partners to continue to support each other, to share their experience and good practice, and to work together to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

Signatories



Cllr Merrick Cockell
Chairman, London Councils



AC Cressida Dick
Assistant Commissioner,
Metropolitan Police Service



Delroy Pomell
Chair, Children England, and
Regional Director, Barnardo's London, East,
and South East



Alan Bedford
Safeguarding Improvement Director,
NHS London



Jo Hawley
Deputy Head, Children and Learner's
Division, Government Office London



Alan Wood
Safeguarding Lead, Association of London
Directors of Children's Services

Cheryl Coppell
Chair, London Safeguarding
Children Board

