

## The London Regional Safeguarding Advisers



### End of project case studies

Three London Regional Safeguarding Advisers (LRSA) were appointed by the London Safeguarding Children Board in April 2010 to offer additional capacity to support improvement in arrangements to safeguard children in London.

Since then, the advisers have been working within a host borough one day a week on agreed safeguarding issues, as well as responding to commissions from local areas for specific pieces of work to support local improvements and service developments. In addition, the advisers support some of the priorities of the London Safeguarding Children Board in developing how partners work together across London to keep children and young people safe.

The advisers are experienced in working in a range of safeguarding settings and benefit from having built up good intelligence about safeguarding practice across London. They have knowledge about service developments and innovative practice in individual boroughs, good contacts across local authorities and partner arrangements and close contact with the London Safeguarding Children Board and its networks of safeguarding professionals from across London.

The advisers will undertake planned work with local areas in response to commissions, as well as prioritising safeguarding support where there may be a more urgent need. Advisers can be commissioned to provide a block of support or to provide support over time, e.g. one day a week over the medium / longer term. A template is available on the London Board's website for local areas to complete and request support from an adviser, or they can be contacted direct if you'd like to discuss a possible project.

At the conclusion of each project, the adviser will work with the borough to complete an end of project case study to be shared online at [www.londonscb.gov.uk](http://www.londonscb.gov.uk). See overleaf for a collation of case studies from the projects completed to date. These are also available to download individually, and include:

- [Harrow \(August – October 2010\)](#)  
Improving quality assurance arrangements
- [Haringey \(July – December 2010\)](#)  
Strengthening child protection services
- [Bexley \(August and December 2010\)](#)  
Service reviews – referral and assessment / fostering and adoption
- [Haringey \(July 2010 – Feb 2011\)](#)  
Promoting First Response / embedding Family Intervention Projects
- [Lambeth \(October 2010 – January 2011\)](#)  
Reviewing services for disabled children and young people
- [Kensington and Chelsea \(April 2010 – March 2011\)](#)  
Reviewing parental mental health services
- [Croydon \(January – March 2011\)](#)  
Auditing care plans of children in care / reviewing partnership work
- [Barking and Dagenham \(ongoing host borough arrangement\)](#)

**Harrow**  
**August – October 2010 (10 days)**

**Improving quality assurance arrangements**

Details of project request

Support to develop improved safeguarding quality assurance arrangements within the LA which connects effectively to the role of the LSCB.

Details of work undertaken by LRSA

Many London Boroughs recognise that an effective local quality assurance framework for safeguarding services is crucial as the use of national performance indicators and inspection changes.

Harrow commissioned one of the LRSA's to identify what quality assurance activity was working well locally and where their gaps were in terms of knowing how well all agencies were carrying out their safeguarding children responsibilities and whether this was leading to children and young people being safer locally.

The work involved interviews with key operational staff and managers to identify existing approaches, resources available locally for quality assurance – both in the LA and through the LSCB. The final report set out the national perspective on quality assurance for safeguarding, including reference to the messages from the Munro review. The report set out strengths and weaknesses of the current local approach and suggested an alternative model for the future.

Specific safeguarding outcomes achieved

This work is enabling the Borough to develop more effective use of their resources in this area and to know the strengths and areas for development in their safeguarding practice better which will help them target improvement activity effectively.

The LA is currently consulting on a new operating model for its children's services which includes a Division with clear leadership and capacity for safeguarding quality assurance – in line with the recommendations of the LRSA's report.

Next steps

This project led to the LRSA working closely with Local Government Improvement and Development to support the development of a new safeguarding quality assurance framework for local areas and to support a number of pilots around London on specific safeguarding issues.

Client review

Very useful.

*"Thanks for all your work on this. I think it will give us a sound foundation to build on and to ensure we develop further as a learning organisation with robust QA systems in place."*

Catherine Doran

Corporate Director of Children's Services, Harrow

**Haringey**  
**July – December 2010 (30 days)**

**Strengthening child protection services**

Details of project request

The Borough commissioned a LRSA to support them in taking forward a recommendation from a serious case review relating to the quality of specific elements of child protection practice locally.

Details of work undertaken by LRSA

The LRSA has worked with staff from all agencies to identify local practice issues and strengthen the safeguarding process drawing from international research and good practice emerging from around London and the rest of the Country.

The work commenced with a multi-agency audit of CP cases, including S47 decision making, the strategy meeting process, decision making and the child protection conference. This identified a number of areas which could be improved locally such as ensuring strategy meetings record the details of the planned investigation into the concerns about significant harm, the role of the CP Adviser in supporting decision making and preparing for the CP conference, the analysis of risk in the SW report for CP conference and the effectiveness of the CP conference in putting together a high quality CP plan which was clear about what all agencies needed to do to bring about safety for the child.

As a result, the LRSA worked with managers and conference chairs to put in place a range of measures to address these findings. A development day was held for CP Advisers focusing on the effectiveness of CP conferences. Principles of the Signs of Safety methodology were discussed and how they might be used to strengthen a focus on risk and outcomes in the CP process. The LRSA also engaged the LSCB in the proposed changes and attended a number of multi-agency events such as with health professionals and designated teachers to engage partners about proposed local developments.

In addition, the LRSA has been part of the Review Group for a current case review as part of the pilot of the SCIE case review methodology. This has led to a review of historical and current practice issues.

Specific safeguarding outcomes achieved

This work is enabling improved multi-agency investigation, assessment and child protection planning with a view to improving the experience of children and families and the effectiveness of agencies in keeping children safe.

Next steps

In the process of this project the LRSA has supported the sharing of emerging good practice between a number of London boroughs.

A number of boroughs have been looking at drawing from the Signs of Safety approach, an event was held at London Councils to share thinking and ongoing support is being offered to share resources and developing expertise between interested boroughs.

**Bexley**  
**August and December 2010 (10 days)**

**Service reviews – referral and assessment / fostering and adoption**

Details of project request

To undertake short reviews of the effectiveness of specific service areas to inform service development.

Details of work undertaken by LRSA

The LRSA was commissioned to undertake two short reviews of specific service areas;

- The effectiveness of referral and assessment arrangements across the borough
- Whether or not the fostering and adoption service is meeting national minimum standards on safeguarding.

The review involved looking at cases, reviewing key documents provided by the authority, observation of on site practice and interviews and focus groups with key staff.

Findings were communicated to staff in a written report and events were held with relevant frontline staff and managers to consider how to take them forward locally.

Specific safeguarding outcomes achieved

Measures were put in place in response to the findings, such as improved arrangements for CRB checking and unannounced visits to carers.

The review enabled the borough to get a positive outcome in the unannounced inspection which followed shortly after. Staff were better able to demonstrate the positive practice which had been put in place in the referral and assessment service.

Next steps

None identified.

Client review

Very useful:

*“The work you did with us in August was very beneficial and the duty team workers commented (to me not the Ofsted inspector!) how helpful that experience had been even though they perceived it to be more challenging professionally than the unannounced inspection!”*

Sheila Murphy, Deputy Director Children’s Services.

**Haringey**  
**July 2010 – February 2011 (15 days)**

**Promoting First Response / embedding Family Intervention Projects**

Details of project request

The Borough commissioned an adviser to:

- 1) support them in looking at promoting First Response (duty & assessment) through quality assurance mechanisms and awareness raising with other boroughs.
- 2) be involved in the development of the Strategic Commissioning Project set up to look at integrating services targeted at 14 -24 year olds
- 3) work with Haringey FIP to look at ways of embedding model across services

Details of work undertaken by LRSA

- 1) First Response - The LRSA initially began the work by meeting key managers and practitioners in the First Response multi-agency team based in Haringey offices. The LRSA also observed the various operations of the First Response MAT (FRMAT) and was able to offer written feedback to Haringey on strengths and areas for development. The LRSA brokered a meeting with C4EO to look at validating the work of the FRMAT. The FRMAT was eventually validated as “promising practice”. Feedback comments from C4EO included that the FRMAT was not yet able to evidence outcomes. In response to this, the LRSA led a FRMAT Development Day where the OBA model was introduced in order for the FRMAT to identify how it was impacting on the wider community / professionals / children and young people. This led to more detailed work on developing outcomes using this model.
- 2) Strategic Commissioning Project – The LRSA attended a number of Project meetings and was able to identify and signpost officers to good practice models both within London and across the country as well as linking the borough’s FIP to the Project, which hitherto was missing. Unfortunately, due to other borough priorities, this Project was put on hold.
- 3) Haringey FIP – the LRSA spent a number of days with the FIP observing practice as well as working with the FIP Manager to support evaluation of the Project. Whilst the commissioned work in itself was initially straightforward, due to ongoing strategic discussions about potential changes to Children’s Services, together with uncertainty about the future of the FIP, it has become difficult to fully complete this assignment. The LRSA intends to finalise engagement with the FIP by auditing a small sample of completed cases to gauge the level of input from Adult Services and also to look at outcomes.

Specific safeguarding outcomes achieved

This work overall has helped to improve multi-agency working in the borough as well as providing mechanisms for the FRMAT to self-evaluate itself more robustly. It has also helped to raise the profile of Haringey in a positive manner, for example, the FRMAT was invited to present at the annual London Board conference which was very well received by conference delegates. In addition, the added capacity and objectivity of the LRSA on both the Strategic Commissioning Project and work with the FIP has enabled the borough to be more focused on its priorities as well as to seek to target more effectively its resources in some elements of children’s services.

Next steps

In the process of this work the LRSA has supported the sharing of emerging good practice across London Boroughs in relation to duty and assessment models. A number of boroughs are also using the OBA approach through the QAF Pilots recently introduced.

**Lambeth**  
**October 2010 – January 2011 (12 days)**

**Reviewing services for disabled children and young people**

Details of project request

Lambeth C&YP Plan identified the need to improve services to disabled children and young people and those with special needs. The LRSA was commissioned to undertake a review with multi-agency stakeholders and provide a paper setting out options for potential redesign of current provision.

Details of work undertaken by LRSA

The LRSA met individually with key senior managers and practitioners from across health, children's and adult's social care; provided advice and input to the borough's multi agency Project Steering Group, led a workshop on care pathways, undertook a desktop review of disabled children's services from other boroughs / LA's outside London and completed the review by providing a high level design options paper

Specific safeguarding outcomes achieved

Following further discussion and agreement, the Project Steering Group would present final options to the Children's Trust during 2011 based on the review undertaken. It also provided positive opportunities for professionals from different agencies to work more effectively together and offer time for reflection on current practices and how to improve outcomes for disabled children.

Next steps

During the review the LRSA was able to signpost Lambeth to other borough's / LA's where good practice in this area was evident.

**Kensington and Chelsea  
April 2010 – March 2011**

**Reviewing parental mental health services**

Details of project request

A key element of the secondment was for the LRSA to review the work of the Parental Mental Health Service within the borough as well as to improve partnership working between Adult and Children's Services.

Details of work undertaken by LRSA

The work included a multi-agency review of parental mental health provision in the borough; establishing and chairing a multi-agency/disciplinary Think Family Project Group; working with CAHMS Commissioning Group; undertaking an internal audit of CIN and CPPs to establish the extent of parental mental health issues, gaps in provision as well as identify good practice; and closely worked with the voluntary sector and disabled children's services and the CAF Implementation Manager.

Specific safeguarding outcomes achieved

The LRSA presented the findings of the review to Senior Managers within the RB, Kensington & Chelsea's Local Safeguarding Board Executive, and to Senior Managers at Central and North West London Health Trust. In relation to the RB, the review will feed into its ongoing development of redesigning early intervention / high level needs provision. CNWL is also considering the findings of the review as part of its ongoing redesign of complex care services as it relates to mental health. In addition, through the multi-agency Think Family Project Group there has been increased working together across agencies, with Adult and Children's Services. This has included involvement in the development and delivery of the RB's Joint Protocol on Young Carers and increased delivery of joint training with Adult MH practitioners and CAF Team members.

Next steps

In the course of this work, the LRSA has involved other boroughs where there are examples of good practice in Think Family approaches. These boroughs have presented to practitioners and managers in K&C or have provided documentation such as referral and assessment forms or joint protocols. Given the interest shown in the TF approach, one borough was invited to present at the London Board annual conference where the seminar was fully attended.

**Croydon**  
**January – March 2011 (12 days)**

**Auditing care plans of children in care / reviewing partnership work**

Details of project request

Two LRSA's commissioned to undertake audit and review of CIC care plans and also to review strength of partnership working across LSCB following a period of restructuring within CSC, finding of which would support preparation towards full Safeguarding and LAC Inspection.

Details of work undertaken by LRSA

CIC Case file audit and short report. LRSA reviewed 10 cases, identified strengths and weaknesses and provided recommendations.

Review of LSCB partnership – this included the LRSA interviewing several partner agencies to gauge and report on their views using the Ofsted Inspection Framework. The LRSA produced a final report with recommendations for future action together with presentation slides for LA use.

The LRSA also prepared and delivered two half-day LSCB Development Days based on the findings of the report and introducing the QAF and OBA approaches.

Specific safeguarding outcomes achieved

The CIC audit has directly fed into improvements being undertaken by the senior management team. The review of the LSCB partnership enabled the borough to examine more closely its relationship with its partners, identified good practice and areas for development. The findings from the report informed the LSCB Development Half Days. The LRSA worked with the LSCB partnership to identify high level improvement outcomes using the QAF and OBA principles. The LSCB has already taken this work forward. The DCS is also looking into utilising the QAF approach within Children's Services. Consideration is also being given to embedding an LRSA within the borough on a longer term basis to support some of the recently appointed the senior management team, as well as introduce the QAF and potentially the Strengthening Families / SoS model.

Next steps

The use of the QAF is already being piloted with a number of LSCBs. The findings from these will be disseminated widely. Similarly, a number of boroughs are being supported in developing the Strengthening Families model.

The use of the LRSAs to undertake reviews / audits on behalf of boroughs / partnerships is proving to be a highly useful and effective approach.

Client review

*“Joan and I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Kay Bell for her hard work and skill in facilitating these Development Days for Croydon.”*

Joan Prokop (CSCB Board Manager)

Trecina Pia Rajakone (CSCB Administrator)

*“Thank you for the offer of support and for that which we have already received from Kay and Vivien; it has been very valuable and much appreciated.”*

Di Smith (Interim DCS)

## **Barking and Dagenham**

### **Host borough (1-2 days for duration of the project)**

#### Details of project request

The Host Borough arrangement enables the LRSA to get to know the LA well and provide support on a range of safeguarding developments over time as the arrangement is for LRSA support a day a week over the two years of the project. In one Borough this has meant that the LRSA has been able to develop relationships with the DCS, AD, third tier managers and partners to support safeguarding developments in identified areas. This included:

- Support to the Disabled Children's Team to improve safeguarding
- Support to the Assessment Team to improve timeliness and quality of assessment and decision making
- Support to develop stronger safeguarding quality assurance arrangements and strengthen the role of the Independent Reviewing Officer.

#### Details of work undertaken by LRSA

A review of safeguarding provided to disabled children, which included meeting staff, managers, partners, a review of cases and the findings from a recent SCR in order to develop and implement required improvements. The LRSA was able to identify opportunities to work more efficiently by social workers working more closely with other parts of children's social care and partners and to improve the quality of their assessment and safeguarding decision making and service planning.

The work with the Assessment Team involved close mentoring of key managers and working with them to undertake an in depth analysis of service performance data and close ongoing monitoring to ensure improved timeliness and quality of response. This led to support to redesign the 'front door' to enable a better access point to targeted and specialist services when there are concerns about children.

In order to improve the LAs ongoing quality assurance approaches the LRSA worked closed with the relevant manager to look at effective approaches operating elsewhere in London and, learning from this, develop a new framework for ongoing QA including improved case audit approaches which leads to learning and improved mechanisms for the views of service users about services being considered on an ongoing basis.

#### Specific safeguarding outcomes achieved:

Improved assessment and protection planning and improved safeguarding outcomes for disabled children by improving the skills and knowledge of the team. Support to a redesign of the team leading to better focus by social workers on safeguarding priorities.

Supporting the Assessment Team Group Manager has improved the timeliness of assessments and now a focus on the quality of assessment and safeguarding interventions. Redesigning the 'front door' will lead to better targeting of preventative services – enabling social workers to concentrate on situations where risk is a core element.

Improved QA approaches which enable a better focus on quality of interventions and learning from practice. Development work with chairs of child protection conferences will improve their advice and guidance, the quality of child protection planning in the Borough and an improved focus on outcomes.

#### Next steps

The work to redesign the front door has been shared with local boroughs and the MASH multi-agency information sharing project.

The review of the DCT has also been shared with a number of boroughs where the LRSA was aware work was also going on to strengthen the safeguarding of disabled children.

The QA work will lead to a draft strategy and tools which can be shared through the LSCB development officers' network.

The IRO development will be undertaken with other local boroughs.

The IRO development work is underpinned by learning from approaches being developed by a number of other boroughs, using the Signs of Safety model, which the LRSA is supporting and sharing between interested Boroughs.

#### Client review

Very useful.

*"B&D have been "heavy users" of the project and if any Boroughs are not certain whether it's for them I am happy to let them know what excellent value for money the LRSAs are".*

Helen Jenner, Director of Children's Services