

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.