

LRSA Project Case Study – 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