



News release 59/11

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London cracks down on child trafficking

The London Safeguarding Children Board and Greater London Authority are working together to help agencies identify and support children who have been trafficked.

The London Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) launched a pioneering set of tools and guidelines six months ago, aiming to support social workers, teachers, police, health workers and other professionals who may come into contact with suspected victims of trafficking.

Supported by expert input from the LSCB, the Deputy Mayor of London hosted a seminar at City Hall today (1 November) as an opportunity for statutory and voluntary agencies to take stock of the current position and consider what more can be done to help professionals identify and protect these vulnerable children and young people.

With speakers from local authorities, the police, voluntary agencies and the Home Office joining Richard Barnes on stage, the seminar highlighted the commitment and dedication of all agencies to tackling this complex issue and ensuring London is at the forefront of efforts to stamp out child trafficking.

Trafficked children can be subjected to sexual exploitation, enforced labour or drug dealing, sold or forced to commit crime by the organised gangs or individuals who have brought them into the country or trafficked them between cities within the UK.

The adults who traffic children take trouble to ensure that they do not come to the attention of the authorities, or disappear from contact with statutory services soon after arrival in the UK, or in a new area within the UK.

Chair of the London Safeguarding Children Board, Cheryl Coppell said: "Trafficking is a complex form of child abuse and it is essential that agencies proactively work together to identify, assess and help trafficked children to recover from their ordeal.

"There are very specific challenges surrounding trafficked children and there could be as little as a crucial first hour to take action to help them before they go missing.

"We hope our comprehensive guidance will be a useful source of information for local authorities and their partners in safeguarding these vulnerable young people from further harm, and this seminar is a valuable opportunity to raise further awareness of the key issues that all agencies need to be aware of."

Deputy Mayor of London Richard Barnes said: "These are vulnerable young people at an increased risk of significant harm because they are often invisible to the professionals and volunteers who would be in a position to assist them. What we are doing is making it much harder for those adults who go out of their way to hide these children to stay in the shadows".

ENDS



Notes to editors:

For a copy of the London Safeguarding Children Board's Safeguarding Trafficked Children Guidance and Toolkit, visit www.londonscb.gov.uk/trafficking

For media enquiries please contact the London Councils press office on: 020 7934 9970 or pressoffice@londoncouncils.gov.uk

Or Fiona Laurent Deputy Head of Media in the Mayor of London's Press Office on: 020 7983 4635 or Fiona.Laurent@london.gov.uk

For non-media enquiries contact: London Councils,
59½ Southwark Street, London SE1 0AL Tel 020 7934 9999 www.londoncouncils.gov.uk

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