

The BSCB is a statutory partnership responsible for coordinating local arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and ensuring these arrangements are effective.



## Introduction

Welcome to the first edition of the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) Information Update. This will be published after each BSCB meeting (approx. every 2 months) to provide information on the topics the Board has been discussing along with other key safeguarding matters. We would encourage you all to share this as widely as possible.

If you have any feedback or suggestions for improvement, or want to discuss anything else relating to the BSCB contact Matilda Moss, BSCB Business Manager – [moss@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:moss@buckscc.gov.uk)

## BSCB Priority: Early Help, Front Door and Thresholds

### Revised Thresholds document

To ensure that we all take responsibility for safeguarding children and considering their welfare, we want to identify vulnerable children and young people as early as possible, and work in a coordinated way to help them before things reach crisis point. We also want to ensure that children who are being abused or who are at risk of significant harm, are promptly referred to Children's Social Care. The **BSCB Thresholds document** outlines 4 levels of need to identify when a child may need additional support to reach their full potential.

Following a recent consultation the Thresholds document has been revised. Thank you to the 241 colleagues across our partners who gave us their views – we hope the changes will make the document easier to use.

Key changes include:

- Better alignment to the proposed single 'front door'
- Clearer reference to children with disabilities, child sexual exploitation (CSE) and to how children in need (CIN) fit into the different levels of need.
- Improved reference to the Buckinghamshire Family Information Service (BFIS)

The consultation provided useful feedback on how many people are aware of the Thresholds document – 40% of respondents had not heard of it before starting the survey. This is a key document for anyone working with children and young people and we will now be doing some work to increase knowledge across partners.

### To do

- ✓ Cascade the new Thresholds document within your organisation
- ✓ Ensure the Thresholds documents is embedded into safeguarding training provided by your organisation. If you need help with this email [anmckenzie@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:anmckenzie@buckscc.gov.uk)
- ✓ Email [cgorley@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:cgorley@buckscc.gov.uk) if you would like any free A3 laminated copies of the Thresholds document to display in your workplace

### Further Information

- ✓ Revised Thresholds document: [www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/professionals/thresholds-document/](http://www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/professionals/thresholds-document/)
- ✓ Full consultation feedback: [www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/about-the-bscb/bscb-newsletters/](http://www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/about-the-bscb/bscb-newsletters/)

## Update on Early Help Panel Process

Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life. Effective early help relies on local agencies working together to:

- Identify children and families who would benefit from early help
- Undertake an assessment of the need for early help
- Provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of the child and their family that focus on activity to significantly improve outcomes for the child.

Recent work locally has focused on establishing a single 'front door' or point of contact for all safeguarding referrals about children, agreeing shared assessment tools, and developing a model to support those who need complex support at level 3 of the Thresholds document.

A panel process has now been set up to manage complex level 3 referrals with the first panel on 24<sup>th</sup> June. These fortnightly, multi-agency meetings will identify a lead family worker for each family. A single assessment and single plan will then be used to facilitate coordinated multi-agency working.

### Further information

- ✓ Attend a free early help awareness raising session. For dates visit: [www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/training/early-help-awareness-raising/](http://www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/training/early-help-awareness-raising/)
- ✓ Visit the BFIS website for a full directory of services for children and young people and to find out more about our Early Help Offer: [www.bucksfamilyinfo.org/kb5/buckinghamshire/fsd/home.page](http://www.bucksfamilyinfo.org/kb5/buckinghamshire/fsd/home.page)

## BSCB Priority: Child Sexual Exploitation

### CSE Pop-Up Event and Challenge Session

Our successful CSE Pop-Up Event in May 2015 was attended by over 130 colleagues from across partners. It helped us raise awareness and start a dialogue about some of the issues and challenges in terms of our local response. In August we will be holding a smaller 'challenge session' to allow some focused challenge and thinking around the next steps we need to take to ensure our children are effectively protected from CSE. We will feed back in the next edition.

### Further information:

- ✓ CSE Pop-Up Event feedback: [www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/about-the-bscb/bscb-newsletters/](http://www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/about-the-bscb/bscb-newsletters/)
- ✓ Information and resources for professionals, parents, carers and young people: [www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/child-sexual-exploitation-launch/](http://www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/child-sexual-exploitation-launch/)



## BSCB Priority: Increasing the effectiveness of the BSCB

### Become a BSCB Multi-agency Trainer

The BSCB runs a programme of multi-agency safeguarding training. Where possible we use local trainers from across partner organisations to deliver this. We are currently recruiting to our training pool and would like to hear from anyone interested in supporting us to deliver training.

Benefits of joining the pool include:

- Access to single agency training resource to use within your own organisation
- Free annual training and development day and free access to all BSCB courses
- Opportunity to be involved in developing new courses
- Opportunity to develop new skills and further personal development

Trainers need to have attended the BSCB course Working Together or Everyone's Responsibility within the last 2 years, and will need to attend a Train the Trainer session.

### Further Information

- ✓ Contact Ann McKenzie, BSCB Training Manager – [annmckenzie@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:annmckenzie@buckscc.gov.uk)
- ✓ BSCB multi-agency training programme: [www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/training/courses/](http://www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/training/courses/)

## BSCB Priority: Voice of the Child

*"I feel so grateful to have the opportunity to play a role on the BSCB. I have a strong sense of responsibility for protecting children and I know I am working with a committed multi-agency team across the county who feel the same. The Board values what I bring in terms of my working experience but also my experience as a Child in Need and a Child in Care.*

*The objective I feel most strongly about is the Voice of the Child. We are currently surrounded by inquiries into historical abuse, concerns about exploitation and allegations of cover ups across the country. Ensuring we listen to the Voice of the Child and those who have had experience, in a non-judgemental and curious way, is the only way to truly understand how we tackle getting things right, how we challenge ourselves and ask the right questions. A lot of us are learning, or unlearning. Some of what we have been taught over years, directly as a result of hearing the Voice of the Child through inquiries in a new way. We want to embrace the opportunity to use this to make meaningful changes.*

*I have personally been trying to connect with the Voice of the Child in a number of ways. I will be spending time shadowing Board members to understand how they connect with the Voice of the Child in what they do and how we use this in our work. I have also been trying to have open and frank conversations with a range of survivors. These discussions have been insightful, uncomfortable and at times painful. But I think we need to feel and connect with some of the consequences of not getting it right in order to move to a place where we do. This is more than learning from reports, this is having real conversations with people.*

*The Board is keen to hear about how we are all enhancing the Voice of the Child, and our September Board meeting will have a substantial focus on this. If anyone has any ideas on how we strengthen this in Buckinghamshire then please send your ideas to [mmoss@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:mmoss@buckscc.gov.uk) " Alison Foster - Director of Quality, Aylesbury Vale CCG and BSCB Vice Chair*

## Performance and Quality Assurance

### Learning from multi-agency audits

The BSCB conducts multi-agency audits to help us assess performance. We will publish the headline findings from audits on the BSCB website so that learning can be shared and used to improve practice.

The Board has now received feedback on the **Transitions Audit**. This was jointly commissioned by the BSCB and the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Adult Board and considered how effective current processes are at safeguarding statemented young people aged 16+ as they transition from Children's to Adult's Services.

Findings focused on the fact that Transitions processes were unclear to many staff and that young people are not being routinely involved in discussions about themselves. A number of recommendations have been made and these are being taken forward through the Local Authority Transitions Board. The BSCB will monitor progress.

### Further information

- ✓ Key findings from Transitions Audit: [www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/about-the-bscb/bscb-newsletters/](http://www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/about-the-bscb/bscb-newsletters/)

### Summer Water Safety

Following a recent drowning locally we are issuing a reminder about water safety. Over the summer it is particularly important to remain aware. The linked poster provides some tips for spotting potential dangers and how to get help.

#### To do

- ✓ Please display this poster in public areas: [www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/About/The\\_Water\\_Safety\\_Code.pdf](http://www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/About/The_Water_Safety_Code.pdf)

## Messages from the Improvement Board

The Ofsted Improvement Board is made up of representatives from Buckinghamshire partner organisations. Its role is to oversee the progress the Local Authority and the BSCB are making against the recommendations made by Ofsted in their inspection last year.

Key message from this month's Board are:

- Internal audit and a recent Ofsted visit confirm social workers are consistently undertaking direct work with children on their caseload, and that the voice of the child is being strongly heard.
- A stable workforce is critical to achieving and sustaining improvement in Children's Services. The recruitment of permanent social work staff has been strong recently. 17 permanent Social Workers have started since January with a further 19 due to start within the next 2 months. 5 new Consultant Social Work Managers have been appointed and by August, the Senior Management Team in Children & Families will be fully staffed with permanent appointments.
- The Board strongly endorsed proposals for restructuring the MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) which it believes are crucial to getting things right at the 'front door'. It also welcomed the progress in securing multi-agency commitment to the chairing of Early Help Panels. The development of an early help offer in Buckinghamshire is still at an early stage, but progress in the last couple of months is encouraging.
- We received a report from Health partners on the action they are taking to address the weaknesses highlighted in the 2014 Ofsted inspection. The Board welcomed the strong commitment to improvement.
- The Board continues to seek assurance about the effective operation of the child protection system – are the right thresholds being applied when decisions are made to initiate Section 47 (child protection) inquiries, convene a child protection case conference, or make children subject to plans? This will be the subject of detailed scrutiny at the September meeting.

## Other Messages

### Help Prevent Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is a procedure which involves partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. Over summer an increased number of young girls are taken abroad to have FGM performed so that they can 'heal' over the long holidays – mainly to avoid detection when they return to school.

Frontline staff are crucial in identifying and protecting against FGM and are asked to be more vigilant in the coming weeks. Some signs to look out for are:

- Young girls attending for inoculations to travel to countries with high FGM prevalence
- Young girls talking about travelling home for 'special' ceremonies or rituals
- Families planning absence from school that would extend the summer holiday period

If you have concerns that a girl or young woman is at risk of FGM, call the Police on 101. In an emergency call 999. The NSPCC provides a 24/7 FGM helpline, which can be used for advice and support: 0800 028 3550.

#### Further information:

- ✓ Female Genital Mutilation: The Facts leaflet: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/300167/FGM\\_leaflet\\_v4.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/300167/FGM_leaflet_v4.pdf)
- ✓ Information and resources on FGM: [www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/professionals/female-genital-mutilation/](http://www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/professionals/female-genital-mutilation/)
- ✓ Free Home Office FGM E-Learning: [www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/training/e-learning-courses-for-professionals/](http://www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/training/e-learning-courses-for-professionals/)

