



“Safeguarding children is everybody’s responsibility”

A protocol for joint working agreed between Redbridge Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and Redbridge Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB)

Introduction

1. Analysis of findings from Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) indicates that where children are being cared for by adults with significant needs of their own, particularly those with substance misuse or mental ill health problems, or are witnessing repeated domestic violence, they are more likely to be at risk of being harmed within their families. Inquiries into child deaths have shown that close joint working between professionals involved with the whole family can impact positively on child protection planning and is vital for a full understanding and assessment of risk.¹
2. This Protocol has been agreed to ensure that professionals who work primarily with vulnerable adults or adults at risk understand and deliver on their responsibilities in relation to the protection of children within those households.
3. The LSCB recognises that professionals who work primarily with children have equivalent responsibilities in relation to the protection of vulnerable adults. These will be the subject of a separate but complementary protocol.

The Principles

4. All agencies engaged with work with vulnerable adults or adults at risk, or adults in need because of illness or disability, endorse the following principles and will take any necessary action to ensure that they are implemented.

All professionals working with adults at risk or in need will ensure that:

- They gather and record information at first contact about the presence of children under 18 in the adult’s household. This includes medical and nursing staff in both hospital or community settings.
- They give explicit and recorded consideration to the welfare of children in the household and whether there is any cause to refer to children’s social care for further investigation, assessment or support. Referrals should be made to the Child Protection and Assessment Service, telephone 0208 708 3885 (09:00 – 17:00) or 0208 708 5897 (evenings and weekend), or via email to CPAT.Referrals@redbridge.gov.uk.
- They share information which may be relevant to safeguarding or promoting the welfare of children fully and without delay with children’s social care, and respond promptly to requests for such information. In March 2015 the Secretaries of State for Education, Health, Justice, Communities and Local Government and the Home Office wrote a joint letter to local authorities and others stating very clearly that *“there can be no justification for failing to share information that will allow action to be taken to protect children”*.²

¹ [New Learning from Serious Case Reviews \(SCRs\): a two year report 2009 to 2011, Brandon et al, DfE, 2011](#)

² https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/408843/info_sharing_letter5.pdf

- They will discuss their concerns with the child or young person’s parents or carers and seek their consent to share information, **unless** they have reasonable cause to believe that to do so would place the child at risk of significant harm. Guidance in relation to information sharing is available in the Government publication [Information sharing – advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers, March 2015](#).
- They will contribute fully to joint risk assessments which ensure clear and sufficient information about particular cases and joint plans for individual interventions.
- They will participate in and provide any requested reports for child in need meetings and child protection case conferences.
- They will familiarise themselves with the multi-agency threshold document, [“Are you worried about a child? How to access early help, and thresholds for referral to children’s social care”](#), published by the LSCB, which gives guidance on levels of need and what and how to refer to children’s social care. An extract from this document is attached as **Appendix A**, setting out the levels of need which any professional concerned about a child should consider.
- Professional disagreements relating to the safeguarding of an individual child or children will be addressed through the [LSCB Escalation and Resolution Policy](#) and related procedure.
- If any worker has concerns that a person who works with children
 - has behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
 - possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
 - or behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children
 they will ensure that the [Local Authority Designated Officer \(LADO\)](#), based in Children’s Services, is informed. It is the LADO’s role to ensure that relevant allegations are appropriately managed and monitored, with any necessary strategy discussion, action or intervention until such time as the matter has reached an outcome.

Agency responsibilities

5. It is the responsibility of individual employing and commissioning agencies to ensure that all relevant staff are familiar with and abide by this protocol.
6. The LSCB will facilitate where required essential child safeguarding training (Safeguarding Level 1) for voluntary and sector agencies engaged in work with adults who are vulnerable or at risk. It is the responsibility of statutory agencies to ensure that their staff have the training and skills required to fulfil this aspect of their role.
7. The LSCB offers an extensive multi-agency [training programme](#). All courses are open to staff from statutory, private and voluntary agencies working with adults who are vulnerable or at risk.

Useful Links

- [Multi-Agency Resource Centre online \(MARCo\)](#) – information for practitioners working with children, young people and their families/carers.
- [Redbridge Information, Advice and Support Service \(RIASS\)](#) – information and support for families where young people (0 – 25 years) have Special Educational Needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.

Levels of Need

Level 1: Children with no additional needs

Children with no additional needs are children whose health and developmental needs will be met by good parental care and the universal services that are available to all children – health services, education etc. Information about other resources available to families can be through the [Redbridge Family Services Information Directory \(FiND\)](#).

Level 2: Children with additional needs

Children with additional needs are children who require additional support to ensure that their health and developmental needs are met. They may be vulnerable and showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect, but often their needs are not clear, not known or not being met. Additional support may be provided by a single agency, or by a number of different agencies working together, with a lead professional co-ordinating the work. Additional services from providers such as family support services, parenting programmes and children's centres may be required. This kind of support is described as 'early help' or 'early intervention', as it seeks to provide help and support to children, young people and their families in the early stages when concerns are identified, and to avoid those concerns escalating. However, the level of need or risk is not such that involvement by statutory children's social care services is required.

Level 3: Children with complex multiple needs

These children require specialist services in order to achieve or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development or to prevent significant impairment of their health and development and/or who are disabled. They may require longer term intervention from specialist services. This is the threshold for a children and families' assessment led by a qualified social worker under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, although the assessments and services required may come from a range of provision outside of children's social care. If the conclusion of the assessment is that continued social care involvement is required to prevent impairment of the child's health or development suffering, a 'child in need plan' setting out the contribution of all agencies to meeting the child's needs will be drawn up and implemented.

Level 4: Children with acute needs

These are children where there is reasonable cause to suspect that they are suffering or are likely to suffer significant harm. For further discussion of the concept of 'significant harm', you should refer to [London CP Procedures, 1.1](#). Inquiries under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 will be undertaken, and if necessary emergency action to secure the child's safety will be taken. If the suspicion of significant harm is substantiated, a multi-agency child protection case conference will consider what further action is required to protect the child. This level also includes children in Level 4 health services which are very specialised services in residential, day patient or outpatient settings for children and adolescents with severe and /or complex health problems, and children remanded into custody.