

LSCBN

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

'Protecting children is not the sole responsibility of one person or organisation but of all of us'.¹

The Local Safeguarding Children Board Northamptonshire (LSCBN) was set up in accordance with the Children Act 2004 and the statutory guidance of *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006* Chapter 3. It is the statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in each local area will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in that locality and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do. It co-ordinates local work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children by developing policies and procedures in this field; participating in the planning of services for children in the area, communicating the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and having procedures in place to ensure a co-ordinated response to unexpected child deaths. It has to monitor the effectiveness of this local work principally by monitoring the areas outlined above, as well as undertaking Serious Case Reviews and ensuring that information on child deaths is collected and analysed.

Effective communication is crucial to ensuring that the core business of the LSCBN outlined above is implemented and thus that the children and young people in Northamptonshire are effectively safeguarded.

The purpose of this document is to outline the LSCBN's communication strategy by explaining the following:

- The **purpose** of the strategy
- The **principles** this strategy intends to encompass and endorse
- The **objectives** that will clearly outline how the Board intends to communicate
- The **key messages** that the Board intends to publicise
- The **channels of communication** that LSCBN intends to use
- Reference to the **action plan** that sits behind this strategy
- A **commitment to the evaluation** of how the Board communicates and reference to the **Engagement Strategy**

¹ Ed Balls, Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, extract from the letter accompanying *The Protection of Children in England: Action Plan – The Government Response to Lord Laming*, May 2009

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Communications Strategy is to ensure that the Northamptonshire Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCBN) fully discharges its core responsibility to:

"communicate to people and bodies in the area to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, raising awareness of how this can best be done, and encouraging them to do so"²

PRINCIPLES

- We will seek to be open and transparent
- We are committed to two way communication
- We will endeavour to make communication accessible to all sections of the community, particularly children & young people

OBJECTIVES

- To promote awareness in all our communities of how everyone can contribute to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- To give reassurance and confidence regarding Safeguarding Children in Northamptonshire
- To promote awareness across organisations of how to cooperate to safeguard children
- To encourage the participation of children and young people
- To raise awareness of the work of the LSCBN

KEY MESSAGES

- The responsibility to keep children safe and well belongs to everyone
- LSCBN will be transparent and open in its activities and make the reasons clear when information cannot be shared
- LSCBN will work in a way that helps people to have confidence that their activities are keeping children and young people safe
- The activities of the LSCBN will assist its partners to work together in the best possible way to keep children and young people safe and well
- LSCBN will work to ensure that children and young people are included in its activities including making decisions
- Communication from LSCBN will have a focus on making information available to everyone who may be interested in its work
- LSCBN will give opportunities for others to tell it what they think about its work.

² Working Together, 2006 page 80

CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION/CONTACT

The LSCBN will use a variety of different ways to communicate with its various audiences, co-ordinated through the LSCBN Business Office.

The communications channels below are an example of where people can find out about the work of the LSCBN:

- LSCBN website (www.safe-child-northants.org.uk)
- The media
- Door to door magazines from District, Borough Councils and the Police:
 - Nene Valley News
 - Voice
 - One
 - The Link
 - Daventry Calling
 - SNC Review
 - Home Beat
- Schools - Schools Fact Sheet; Schools Forum; Primary and Secondary Heads Forums; Gateway communication to head teachers
- Children and Young People's Partnership communication channels: Web-site, Moving Forward Together newsletter, LSCBN and CYPP staff within each office, LAA Newsletter, Early Years newsletter, Partners in Print

ACTION PLAN/PERFORMANCE

The Communications Action Plan is part of the LSCBN main Action Plan. It is designed specifically to ensure Publicity, Communications and Engagement Committee have clarity regarding their work and the timescales set to for completion. The plan is a visible tool which reminds the Committee of its accountability and is audited and scrutinised in line with the main Action Plan.

This Committee reports to the LSCBN updating it regarding its activity. It is also important the Committee is able to demonstrate its ability to perform well and so achieving the appropriate outcomes. These outcomes are: to inform its audience, raise awareness and knowledge about the safety of children as well as helping to understand the function of the LSCBN.

COMMITMENT TO EVALUATION

The Board is committed to making sure when it communicates it does so successfully. In recognition of this, the Board will evaluate how well it is communicating with the public and its partners and where problems are found work quickly to put them right.

REVIEW

"Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility"

July 2009

This Strategy will be reviewed annually following agreement of the LSCBN Business Plan for the following year.

It may also be reviewed within the year if substantial changes to practice or procedure require this, for example new or revised Working Together guidance.