

The Protection of
Children in England:
A Progress Report

The Protection of Children in England

Lord's Laming's Report
March 2009

www.newcastle.gov.uk/lscb

The Lord Laming

March 2009

Context and Background

- **2003 Initial Laming Report following death of Victoria Climbié in 2000**
 - **Every Child Matters 2003**
 - **The Children Act 2004**
 - **Working Together 2006**
- **Nov 2008**
 - **Response to death of baby P in Haringey**
- **March 2009 Laming's 'progress report' on implementing effective arrangements for safeguarding children (58 recommendations)**
- **May 2009 Government Action Plan**

The Protection of Children Act 1989 **Remit** A Progress Report

- 1. What good practice has been achieved since 2003**
- 2. What are the key barriers, including the legal process, that may impede efficient & effective work with children and families**
- 3. What specific actions should be taken by Government and national and local agencies to overcome these barriers and accelerate systematic improvements in safeguarding practice across the country**
- 4. Report addressed 7 key areas**

Contd.....

- Leadership & accountability
- Support for children
- Inter-agency working
- Children's workforce
- Improvement & challenge
- Organisation & finance
- Legal



The Protection of Children in England **Introduction**

- **The complexity of safeguarding must not be underestimated**
- **Progress... The Framework is in place**
 - Every Child Matters
 - Working Together 2006
 - Early Intervention
- **But the Challenge is growing...**
 - Large numbers of children at risk and in need
 - Framework is not universally understood or implemented



The Protection of Children in England **Introduction**

- **Laming identifies:**
 - **The need for a ‘step change’ in arrangements to safeguard children**
 - **The time to act is NOW!**
 - **Accountability of leaders – translating policy in to practice and ensuring quality**
 - **More early intervention**
 - **Working environment – appropriate skills, support and supervision**

Problems ?

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- High case loads (HVs & SWs)
- The profile of CP within police forces is variable
- A lack of high quality specialist training across services
- A lack of effective challenge and support

“ there remains significant problems in the day-to-day reality of working across organisational boundaries and cultures...”

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Leadership and Accountability

- **Collaboration between Govt. Departments**
- **Better oversight of the frontline**
- **Accountability & commitment from the top**
- **Senior managers must have the right knowledge and skills**
- **More robust needs analysis to inform the Newcastle Plan for Children and Young People**
- **Must understand the impact of work to keep children safe**

Support for Children

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- **Time spent with children and families**
 - The child's perspective
- **Early intervention**
 - universal services are key
 - BUT workers must be confident about using full range of options inc legal/care
- **Health settings – A & E**
- **Thresholds – Inconsistent & too high?**
- **Evidence based interventions**
- **Supervision – critical**

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Inter-agency Working

- **Essential – but too often dependent on the goodwill of individuals**
- **All profs working with a child should understand their responsibilities**
- **Profs working with adults must be trained to identify and assess needs / risk of children**
- **Information sharing – confusion concern**
- **Agencies need further help in using CAF effectively and in managing the role of lead practitioners**

Children's Workforce

- Numbers of key staff – SWs & HVs
- Quality of training
- Newly qualified SWs must have guaranteed support & supervision during 1st year...CPD
- Recognising signs & symptoms and knowing what to do
- Safeguarding - A priority for GPs..?
- Paediatricians reluctant to become involved in CP work
- Police must receive specialist training on CP

Improvement and Challenge

- **Need for a determined focus on improving CP practice across all agencies**
- **Changes to Inspection processes –some weaknesses reflect lack of expertise in CP...including Ofsted**
- **SCRs –too narrow – must focus on learning lessons which must be shared quickly locally and greater use made nationally**
- **SCRs –Independence / consistent decision making**
- **National Safeguarding Delivery Unit**

Organisation and Finance

- **LSCBs have made an impact BUT there is potential for more - CHALLENGE**
- **Distinction between Trusts & LSCBs**
- **Trusts & LSCBs not chaired by same person**
- **LSCB should report to the Trust on the effectiveness of safeguarding**
- **Accurate planning to finance services for safeguarding children / Protection for safeguarding budgets from Govt – Investment in early intervention and CP**



The Protection of
Children in the
Legal System
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Legal

- **Legislative change is not required – people must understand and implement the current framework...**
- **Paper work should not delay the decision to act when a child is at risk**
- **Staff trained on legal work (B4 going)**
- **Unacceptable delay in timescales**
- **Public Law Outline – concern that fees may prevent action**

Progress in Newcastle.....

- A great deal of progress already as a result of Every Child Matters
- Executive Director and Lead Member for Children's Services are active NSCB members
- NSCB currently appointing an independent chairperson
- Review of Children's Trust arrangements ongoing
- Local audit of recommendations
- NSCB annual report on safeguarding July 2009
- NSCB Business Plan and Action Plan
- Awaiting revised Working Together guidance (Dec 2009)
 - Review of SCR process
 - Revised multi-agency roles & responsibilities
- Early intervention & prevention including thresholds
- Children's Workforce strategy
- Robust safeguarding training programme & integrated induction
- Implementation of Contactpoint & CAF (2009)
- Development of an integrated supervision framework

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**‘Staying safe is the very
minimum on which children
and young people should be
able to depend’**

‘A failure to protect children already identified as being in danger is a reproach to us all’