



Merton Safeguarding Children Board
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Children Schools And Families Department
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Dear Colleagues,

We attach a joint letter from ministers from a range of portfolios reminding us all of our collective duties to safeguard and protect children and young people including the particular statutory duty to share information.

As Chair of the MSCB and DCS we are absolutely clear that the current legislation expects as well as allows information to be shared if we have a child protection concern. We do, however, welcome the simplified guidance to support this.

There are 5 principles set out in the ministerial letter:

- Integrated working;
- Joint risk assessments;
- A victim focussed approach;
- Good leadership and clear governance; and
- Frequent reviews of operations

These principles are clearly reflected in our local Children's Trust values

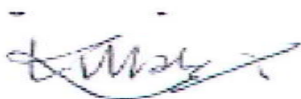
- Keeping the child / young person at the heart of our work;
- Equality, equity, inclusion and valuing diversity — judged on our impact on the most vulnerable;
- Local accountability and partnership;
- Making a difference — quality assurance and continuous improvement;
- Promoting a learning culture;
- Promoting a culture that listens to, responds to and which values children and young people.

Following the publication of the Jay Report on Children at Risk of Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham the MSCB partners have conducted a self-evaluation and have participated in a regional peer challenge process to ensure that we are clear about our local partnership strengths and areas for improvement in tackling CSE. We have recently agreed a refreshed strategy and risk assessment tool which partner agencies are cascading within their own agencies. Individual agencies offer specific training on safeguarding and CSE and we have an offer in our MSCB programme: <http://www.merton.gov.uk/health-social-care/children-family-health-social-care/fiscb/mscbtraining.htm>. We would urge colleagues to ensure that staff and volunteers access the appropriate training.

The MSCB will be holding each other to account in the coming months with regard to each agency's response and our collective action plan. In the meantime our message to frontline practitioners across all agencies is a simple one. In Merton we will not tolerate the sexual exploitation of children. Sex, or indeed grooming a child under 16 for sex, is a crime. We will work proactively to identify and respond to the victims of these crimes as the victims they are — even when they do not identify themselves as victims because of the grooming they have experienced. We will work to identify and prosecute perpetrators and to create a climate of zero tolerance.

We would encourage you to distribute this letter and the ministerial statement widely within your organisation and to join with us on the 18th March — national CSE Awareness Day — in committing to continuing to work in partnership to protect and safeguard our children and young people from sexual exploitation.

Yours sincerely



Yvette Stanley

Keith Makin
Chair of the MSCB
Families

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