New Link For Worcestershire Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures

The Worcestershire Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures have a new home and a new web address - http://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk

The new regional procedures are part of a West Midlands wide project involving nine Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCB). These are Birmingham, Dudley, Herefordshire, Sandwell, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin, Walsall, Wolverhampton and Worcestershire. The project came about as it was felt that it would be sensible to move to a more regional approach to multi-agency working around safeguarding, especially in light of the fact that so many partner organisations (including Police, Probation, Health and many others) span an area that crosses local authority boundaries.

Children are best protected when professionals are clear about what is required of them individually and understand how they need to work together. Research has also demonstrated that every day counts for children who need additional help. Co-ordinated multi-agency action can be crucial to safeguard and promote their welfare.

The inter-agency guidance provides easy access to the core procedures that should be followed by professionals (including unqualified staff and volunteers) and managers in agencies who provide services for children, families or parents in the participating LSCB areas. The procedures are in line with the guidance in ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ (March 2015). Check the site out as soon as possible and don’t forget to update any links or shortcuts to the new address in documents or on web pages that you are responsible for. To take a look at the site, go to http://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk

Together, we can tackle child abuse is a Government campaign to raise awareness and reporting of child abuse and neglect. The campaign encourages the public to report their concerns in order to get help to children more quickly. The core audience is parents aged 25-40. Research shows that this group is most likely to feel confident about reporting and can therefore be nudged into action. The campaign will also serve as a reminder to professionals such as teachers and healthcare professionals who work with children, of their safeguarding responsibilities.

The DfE has produced a campaign toolkit that includes ready-to-use materials such as printable campaign leaflets and engaging digital graphics which can be shared on social media. Please share the toolkit with relevant partners who have safeguarding responsibilities or may want to raise awareness of this important issue.

For more information about the campaign and to download the toolkit go to: https://www.dfechildprotection-munroforster.com/
Reach4Wellbeing: New Service Launched

The Reach4Wellbeing Team is part of Starting Well Service which is run by Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust. It promotes and supports emotional well-being for children and young people aged 5-19 years old, offering short-term group support programmes for those experiencing emotional difficulties, specifically anxiety, low mood and self-harm.

Kooth counselling
Children or young people aged 10-25 who feel they need more immediate help and/or would like to access on-line support, can contact www.Kooth.com. This is a free online counselling service with qualified counsellors which can be accessed anonymously Mon- Fri from midday until 10pm and Sat – Sun 6pm – 10pm. They also offer group sessions in schools during term time.

Who can access Reach4Wellbeing?
- Children and young people living in Worcestershire aged 5 to 19 years old.
- Referrals can be made by parents/carers and professionals.
- Young people aged 13 years and over can refer themselves.

We are unable to accept referrals:
- If the child/young person is currently engaged in face to face counselling/therapy for their anxiety with another service other than Kooth.
- Is currently under or is waiting to be seen by CAMHS.
- Is currently undergoing or awaiting assessment with the Umbrella service.
- Has a previous history of attempts to overdose or take own life
- Has a diagnosis of conduct disorder or an Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- Is currently receiving support from the Youth Offending Service.

How to make a referral (parents and children/young people)
- If your child is aged 5 to 19 years and experiencing anxiety, parents/carers can make a referral to the service by emailing the Reach4Wellbeing team: whcnhs.reach4wellbeing@nhs.net
- If you are aged 13 to 19 years and are experiencing anxiety you may refer yourself to the service by emailing the Reach4Wellbeing team: whcnhs.reach4wellbeing@nhs.net

How to make a referral (professionals and other agencies)
- Professionals can refer children/young people who are primarily suffering from mild to moderate anxiety by using the Professionals and Agencies Referral Form.
- Schools and External Agencies - Complete Professionals Referral form via Worcestershire County Council Children’s Services Portal

All referrals need to have consent from the child/young person, and/or family before submitting the referral

More information:
If you are a professional and want to discuss the Reach4Wellbeing service in more detail please contact:

Catherine Eastwell, Reach4Wellbeing Team Leader (Starting Well Service) 01905 681784 ceastwell@nhs.net
Update on Community Social Worker Role
From Sam Webster, Strategic Manager, Connecting Families

There have been recent changes to the functioning of the Community Social Worker Role. The team will now be working alongside the Family Support and Early Help agenda.

Following the launch of the Family Front Door in July last year, one of the key roles of the Community Social Worker has been to offer advice and guidance to partner agencies. Following a review the system is changing to ensure the CSW is always able to check records prior to giving advice. This will ensure any previous involvement / intervention is considered and that the advice call is recorded to ensure clarity around advice given.

Our plan is to move towards an on line booking system which professionals can access directly via the portal when they wish to speak with a CSW. This system is currently being developed and we will contact you when this is complete. In the interim if you wish to book an appointment for a telephone consultation with a CSW you will need to contact the Front Door on 01905 822666 and an Initial Screening and Contact Officer (ISCO) will book an appointment for you.

What do you know about the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) role?

The role of the Local Authority Designated Officer is often misunderstood but it’s crucial to safeguarding children, writes Adam Birchal in a recent article in Community Care Journal following his attendance at the National Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO) conference in Birmingham earlier this year.

Adam says; "The role of LADOs is too often misunderstood or forgotten. They are responsible for managing and overseeing cases where an allegation is made about a person working with children. They play a vital safeguarding role in combating abuse." The full article makes interesting reading and can be found at Community Care online.

If You Are Worried About The Behaviour Of An Adult Who Works With Children

When an employee or volunteer has behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child this must be taken seriously and dealt with sensitively and promptly. All agencies are expected to have in place their own internal procedures for the investigation of such allegations to ensure that they are compliant with the local Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures.

Local authorities also appoint a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) whose responsibilities include the management and oversight of individual cases from all partner agencies if the allegation meets the thresholds. Jon Hancock is the LADO for Worcestershire and is available for advice if you are not sure whether to make a referral. Phone: 01905 843311

Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Guidance

The latest DBS newsletter (March 2017) provides some very helpful Workforce Guidance on DBS checks for roles that are based in both the child and adult workforces where the role is eligible for an enhanced check in one workforce, but only a standard check in the other. The article provides some scenarios as examples and clarifies how to submit applications. Find the newsletter at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-news-march-2017.
Relationship and Sex Education To Become Compulsory In Schools

In March the Department for Education issued a policy statement which confirmed the Government’s ambition to support all young people to stay safe and prepare for life in modern Britain by making Relationships Education (Primary), Relationships and Sex Education (RSE - Secondary) and, subject to the outcome of a thorough consideration of the subject, Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE - both) statutory in all schools.

The government laid an amendment to the Children and Social Work Bill on 1 March 2017 which is intended to come into effect from September 2019. The document can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-rse-and-pshe.

At the end of last year, the chairs of five different Commons select committees called on the Secretary of State for Education, Justine Greening, to make SRE a statutory subject. Their demand came after a report from the Women and Equalities Committee showed that sexual bullying was endemic in schools.

The government is expected to announce a new SRE curriculum, which will be introduced to every primary and secondary in England, including academies, free schools and independent schools. The curriculum is expected to include issues such as online safety, sexting and consent. It will also tackle domestic abuse and sexual harassment.

Healthy Relationships: Preventing Child Sexual Exploitation

The inquiry by the Children’s Commissioner, (“If only someone had listened” Berelowitz et al, 2013), found that in order to prevent children from being exploited, alongside awareness raising for communities and local businesses, a whole school approach was imperative. A whole school approach is best described as cohesive, collective and collaborative action in and by a school community that has been strategically constructed to improve student learning, behaviour and wellbeing.

The Children’s Commissioner suggests that the whole school approach enables children and young people to spot danger signals should they be a target for abuse and supports them in feeling confident about telling a member of staff or another professional that they are worried.

The Commissioner’s inquiry also highlighted that a whole school approach is dependent upon school governors and the head teacher taking a strong lead on dealing with the problem – alerting students to the danger and training all staff in how to deal with it.

In September 2016 WSCB produced Healthy Relationships – a whole school approach to support schools to have access to a ‘whole school approach’ to educate young people, parents, staff and governors in what constitutes a healthy relationship and help prevent children being exploited.

The document encompasses a range of educational resources, endorsed by WSCB, which seek to help children and young people feel more confident in forging relationships, by critically equipping them and raising awareness of some of the pitfalls and tactics used by those that seek to exploit them.

The document can be located on the WSCB website.
Talking About Sexting: Free Guide From Virtual College

With the continual growth of social media and use of smartphones, tablets and desktops, more children are engaging in or being affected by sexting, with the number of reported cases increasing. Whilst we understand that it may be an awkward topic to discuss, it’s vital that all teachers and safeguarding professionals have the appropriate guidance when dealing with this issue. To make it easier there is a free guide ‘How can you safeguard children from sexting?’ which you can download from Virtual College website. Virtual College can be located at http://www.safeguardingchildrenea.co.uk/

Disrespect NoBody

The Home Office has launched a campaign to help young people understand what a healthy relationship is and re-think their views of controlling behaviour, violence, abuse, sexual abuse and consent.

For more details go to https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/

New NHS Sexual Health Website

A NEW website designed to help Worcestershire residents gain information about the sexual health services available to them, has been launched.

The website includes information and opening times of Worcestershire’s seven sexual health clinics and young people’s clinics, as well as information about relationships, sexuality, contraception and STI testing. The new website also gives visitors the opportunity to send a professional a question anonymously.

Kim Tanner, Sexual Health Clinical Nurse Specialist at the trust, said: “The new website was designed with all age groups in mind as the information on there is relevant to a variety of age groups. “The new site offers advice about safe sex, puberty, menopause, sexting and other common sexual health issues that people might face.”

The website’s address is http://www.knowyourstuff.nhs.uk/worcestershire/
Saying Goodbye & Thank You

WSCB Training Officer, John Dickinson, has retired after nine years with the Board. John joined the WSCB Business Unit after a long career in the Police Service and brought a wealth of experience to the Safeguarding Training Officer role. Anyone attending John’s courses knew that they were in safe hands, he had the knack of making very complex information accessible and brought a light and happy atmosphere into the training room.

John was sent off in good style with a farewell supper attended by many friends and colleagues. He plans to spend more time with his family during his retirement and indulging in his hobby of sailing. I am sure that all our readers will join us in wishing John all the very best for the future he will be sorely missed by his colleagues in the Business Unit and within the wider Safeguarding community.

Social Media Networks Made For Kids

It has been reported that in 2016, children aged between three and four were spending an average of eight hours and 18 minutes on the internet per week, up nearly an hour-and-a-half from 2015.

According to a report by the University of Sheffield, by the time they reach their early teens they are spending more than 20 hours a week online (The Guardian 09.04.17). With this in mind, due to the obvious dangers that face young children who use social networking channels such as online grooming and bullying, it is not surprising that we are seeing a rise in ‘child-friendly’ social networking sites.

Parents and guardians are being advised to convince their children to avoid the more mainstream platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, in favour of these new ‘safe’ sites. As well as having tightened security and being heavily monitored, these sites are focused on allowing fun and appropriate communication between friends in a safe environment.

Internetmatters.org have listed the top safe sites for children that feature fun games and contests but also give you a chance to use them as a teaching tool to get them sharing safely.