



National Safeguarding  
Delivery Unit

# Interim Progress Report & Work Programme 2009-2010

December 2009



# Ministerial Foreword

Lord Laming's report, *The Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report*, published in March 2009, confirmed the progress that has been made in recent years to improve child protection in this country. Lord Laming concluded that robust legislative, structural and policy foundations were now in place and that our Every Child Matters reforms had set the right direction and were widely supported.

But he also challenged us all to go further to deliver a "step change in the arrangements to protect children from harm" and made 58 recommendations directed at central and local government, national and local partners and the public. The Government's response published in May, *The protection of children in England: action plan – The Government's response to Lord Laming*, accepted all his recommendations and made a firm commitment to do everything possible to drive up the quality of safeguarding practice across the country.

A good deal of progress has already been made in implementing the commitments in our action plan:

- A Social Work Transformation Programme is underway, supported by £58 million of new investment for training and development opportunities such as the Newly Qualified Social Worker programme and the development of Advanced Social Work Professional status. To relieve pressure on the front line, new flexibilities have been introduced in the implementation of the Integrated Children's System with greater practitioner involvement in its future development. A major recruitment drive has also been launched, including the new Graduate Recruitment, Step Up to Social Work and Return to Social Work Schemes and a high profile recruitment campaign which has generated over 30,000 registrations for information packs on how to become a social worker.
- The Social Work Task Force, chaired by Moira Gibb, published its final report on 1 December in which it made 15 key recommendations for the reform of social work training, practice, leadership and support. The Government has accepted these recommendations and is grateful to Moira Gibb for agreeing to establish a Social Work Reform Board, reporting to Ministers, which will bring employers, educators and the profession together to oversee reform and secure collective responsibility.

- The revision of the core inter-agency guidance, *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, is well underway and we are bringing into force this year a final revision of Chapter 8 on Serious Case Reviews following public consultation over the summer.
- Proposals for revised national indicators and new statutory targets on safeguarding children have been developed and were published for consultation on 28 October.
- An Action on Health Visiting Programme is being taken forward to increase workforce capability and capacity in this area.
- The new Protective Services Framework for the police now prioritises child protection and specialist training for child abuse investigators is being updated.
- An independent review of the impact of court fees on care proceedings has now been completed and will be published shortly, whilst a new system wide target to reduce unnecessary delays in care proceedings is under development and will be announced in the New Year.

In order to drive forward the implementation of the Government's response to Lord Laming, a new cross-Government National Safeguarding Delivery Unit has been established, reporting directly to Cabinet through its Families, Children and Young People Sub-Committee. The Unit will give strong, co-ordinated national leadership across the safeguarding system and will support and challenge local authorities and their partners in driving up the quality of frontline practice.

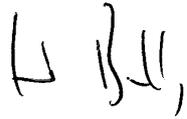
The National Safeguarding Delivery Unit became operational on 1 July 2009. Working with the new Chief Adviser on the Safety of Children, Sir Roger Singleton, the Unit will help ensure that we all maintain the necessary focus, energy and drive in implementing Lord Laming's recommendations.

This document reports on the progress made by the Unit since its establishment and sets out the Unit's priorities for the rest of 2009-2010. The Unit will continue to work with a wide range of partners, including frontline practitioners and their managers, to develop further and take forward these priorities all of which are designed to help improve safeguarding practice and outcomes for children and young people. The Unit will also engage with partners across sectors to develop a longer term work programme for the period 2010-2012 to be published in spring 2010.

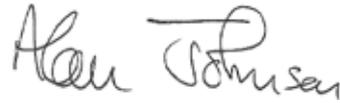
Keeping children safe is complex, demanding work requiring very high levels of commitment and skill. Many safeguarding services are facing significant capacity issues and challenges as they undertake their own programmes of continuous improvement. We are determined to work together across Government, and with partners nationally and locally, to support people at the front line to do the very best they can to improve outcomes for children. The work that is already underway to invest in workforce

capacity and skills, including those of social workers, health visitors and the police, demonstrates that commitment. The National Safeguarding Delivery Unit will play an important role in helping drive the improvements that we are all committed to delivering in outcomes for children. Its success will be judged by how effectively it supports improved practice locally.

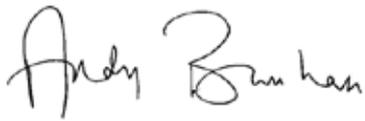
We look forward to continuing to work with you to deliver the best possible arrangements everywhere for keeping children safe. Nothing less will do.



ED BALLS



ALAN JOHNSON



ANDY BURNHAM



JACK STRAW

# The National Safeguarding Delivery Unit

The National Safeguarding Delivery Unit (NSDU) became operational on 1 July 2009. The Unit is hosted within the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and reports into the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Families, Children, and Young People through a new Ministerial sub-group comprising the Secretaries of State from DCSF, the Department of Health, the Ministry of Justice and the Home Office. This Ministerial sub-group meets quarterly with the Chief Adviser on the Safety of Children, Sir Roger Singleton, to monitor progress and tackle any barriers to joint working that might exist across safeguarding services.

The NSDU includes staff from the DCSF, the Department of Health, the Ministry of Justice and the Home Office and staff seconded from local authorities. Regional Government Office staff will work as part of the Unit which will also draw in expertise from other sectors as it takes forward its work, involving frontline practitioners across all sectors and local and regional safeguarding partners in specific projects. Following a national competition, Jacky Tiotto, formerly Director for Children and Learners in the Government Office for London, has been appointed as the Unit's Head and took up post on 7 December.

## The Unit's focus is on:

- driving improvement in safeguarding standards with better, more consistent practice across the country;
- ensuring a strong, co-ordinated cross-Government lead on safeguarding, maintaining the profile of safeguarding within Government and ensuring that this is reflected in clear and consistent strategic priorities and performance systems through local authorities, health and police;
- monitoring and reporting on progress on safeguarding children, including progress on the implementation of the Government's action plan in response to Lord Laming's report; and
- increasing public and professional confidence in arrangements for safeguarding children.

This document summarises the Unit's progress since its establishment, sets out the Unit's priorities over the next few months, and gives some early indications for areas of work beyond that. The priorities identified by the Unit for its work reflect the issues that Lord Laming himself identified following his wide ranging consultation with national and local stakeholders and discussions with frontline practitioners as well as those raised by stakeholders directly with the Unit.

In all its work the Unit will focus on practical solutions that are developed in partnership with those responsible for delivering services to children, young people, families and carers. It will seek to minimise burdens on the front line by making best use of the rich data, research and improvement capacity that already exists, presenting it in accessible, useful ways that help frontline professionals, managers and leaders. Learning and improvement will be at the heart of the Unit's work programme.

The Unit's work will be evidence based and outcome focused. It will tackle issues it identifies as holding back progress, based on what it is hearing from the front line, their managers and other stakeholders.

The Unit will work with a Partnership Network of around a hundred stakeholders and frontline professionals across a wide range of sectors, seeking their feedback on the issues that matter at the front line and their active involvement in particular work areas. The Unit will use the individual and collective experience and expertise of the Network to help shape and deliver the longer term work programme. Details of the Partnership Network membership are at Annex A.

The Unit will also support the Chief Adviser on the Safety of Children, Sir Roger Singleton, in preparing his independent annual report to Parliament on progress on safeguarding nationally. Sir Roger will work closely with the Unit, advising on priorities for its work. To assist him in his new role, Sir Roger has established a Chief Adviser's Expert Group. A full list of members is at Annex B.

Further information about the NSDU can be found at [www.dcsf.gov.uk/nsdu](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/nsdu)

## A Programme of Support and Challenge

The NSDU will take forward its work programme in close collaboration with existing improvement partners, including sector led partners such as IDeA and the Centre for Excellence in Outcomes (C4EO), as well as with in-house training and development providers within and across each profession. It will not duplicate work but rather seek to bring improved collaboration and better co-ordination across the support that is available to frontline practitioners, their managers and others. It will also identify gaps in provision and either seek to fill those by its own programme of work or encourage or commission others to take work forward.

In order to provide effective support and challenge to frontline practice in safeguarding children, the Unit will focus its work on:

- **Building capacity:** The Unit will undertake a programme of work to drive improvement in the supply and capacity of skilled professionals who are able to carry out safeguarding work. This will include strengthening the regional programme of support and challenge provided through staff in the Government Offices. The NSDU will also maintain momentum on the implementation

of those commitments in the Government's action plan that relate to improvements to the workforce and in capacity in the system overall.

- **Improving understanding:** The Unit will take forward a number of projects which focus on developing better understanding and analysis of what the existing data, research findings and improvement information tell us about effective, evidence based best practice, where there are gaps, and the implications for priority areas for future support. This will include looking at what will help embed best practice in day to day activity, including more effective learning from Serious Case Reviews.
- **Supporting practice:** This work will focus on scoping existing provision which supports improvements in practice, including understanding what gaps may exist and whether there is greater scope for improved co-ordination and dissemination of best practice. The Unit will seek to strengthen the offer that is available either through its own directly commissioned work, as resources allow, or by working closely with existing partners to encourage better co-ordination and targeting of support.

In 2009-2010, the NSDU is undertaking projects that have been identified as a priority by Lord Laming in all three of these areas as set out later in this document. Priorities for the Unit's work in 2010 -2012 will be developed in discussion with stakeholders, including members of the Partnership Network and the Chief Adviser on the Safety of Children.

## Delivering the Government's Action Plan in Response to Lord Laming

In addition to undertaking specific projects and programmes of work, the NSDU is also tasked with monitoring the overall implementation of all Lord Laming's 58 recommendations in line with the commitments set out in the Government's action plan published in May.

Regional Government Office staff, working with regional partners including Strategic Health Authorities, will be supporting the Unit's work and will have a key role in:

- working with all Children's Trusts and Local Safeguarding Children Boards to drive improvements in safeguarding arrangements, in particular in supporting improvement activity following up inspection reports, Serious Case Reviews and the findings of Child Death Overview Panels;
- supporting Children's Trusts in their development and implementation of robust Children and Young People's Plans (CYPPs) informed by strong needs analyses;

- negotiating with local areas about appropriate targets for safeguarding, to be set out in Local Area Agreements and Children and Young People's Plans;
- helping maximise the use of Local Area Agreements to improve cross agency safeguarding practice;
- identifying and supporting the spread of good and innovative practice; and
- informing and improving national policy development by providing intelligence about local implementation of policies and initiatives.

The NSDU will also work closely with the inspectorates, other regulators and improvement partners to understand the progress that is being made and how continuous improvement can best be supported.

## Progress So Far

- A Social Work Transformation Programme is underway, supported by £58 million of new investment for training and development opportunities such as the Newly Qualified Social Worker programme and the development of Advanced Social Work Professional status. A major recruitment drive has also been launched, including the new Graduate Recruitment, Step Up to Social Work, Return to Social Work Schemes and a high profile recruitment campaign which has generated over 30,000 registrations for information packs on how to become a social worker.
- To relieve pressure on the front line, new flexibilities have been introduced in the implementation of the Integrated Children's System with greater practitioner involvement in its future development.
- The Social Work Task Force, chaired by Moira Gibb, published its final report on 1 December which made 15 challenging recommendations for the reform of social work training, practice and support. The Government has accepted these recommendations and has committed to work with partners to set out an implementation plan for reform in adult and children's social work, early in 2010. As an immediate step it has asked Moira Gibb to establish a new Social Work Reform Board which will report to Ministers and bring together the profession, employers, HEIs and service user representatives to drive the reform programme. The Government has also committed to working with the profession to support it to establish an independent college of social work, as quickly as possible.
- The revision of the core inter-agency guidance, *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, is well underway and the consultation on a full revised draft will be launched on 18 December. The Government is bringing into force from

18 December a final revision of Chapter 8 on Serious Case Reviews following public consultation over the summer.

- Proposals for revised national indicators and new statutory targets on safeguarding children have been developed and were published for consultation on 28 October.
- An Action on Health Visiting Programme is being taken forward to increase workforce capability and capacity in this area. Guidance launched on 14 October defines key roles and covers growing the workforce.
- The new Protective Services Framework for the police now prioritises child protection and specialist training for child abuse investigators is being updated.
- A review of the impact of court fees on care proceedings has been completed and will be published shortly and a new system wide target to reduce delays in care proceedings will be announced in the New Year.
- The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act received Royal Assent in November 2009 and includes provisions for statutory target setting for safeguarding and child protection, the appointment of lay members to LSCBs and for LSCBs to publish an annual report. Further clauses have been introduced in the Children, Schools and Families Bill on information sharing for the purposes of LSCB functions and to ensure that Ofsted has a clear legislative basis on which to evaluate Serious Case Reviews.

## Priority Projects 2009-2010

### Building Capacity

#### Project 1: Developing a model for the recruitment and training of independent Serious Case Review (SCR) panel chairs and authors

A ready supply of appropriately skilled and high quality SCR panel chairs and report authors was identified by Lord Laming as critical to maximising the potential learning of SCRs. By the end of spring 2010, this project will have identified the key skill sets for SCR authors and chairs, commissioned a training model to drive up learning and improvement in SCRs and ensured that robust systems are in place to secure adequate numbers of panel chairs and authors now and in the future. Working with Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs), the project will involve reviewing existing systems and provision, including any actions already being taken by Government Offices and LSCBs.

#### Project 2: Setting the framework for high quality Government Office (GO) challenge and support in safeguarding that drives improved outcomes for children

This project will focus on ensuring that staff working in Government Offices on behalf of the NSDU have the right knowledge and expertise, provide effective support and challenge to local areas and maximise improvements in safeguarding practice at the front line. A new cadre of Safeguarding Advisers with specialist skills and knowledge of child protection will be recruited to replace the current cadre from April 2010. They will work on behalf of the NSDU as an integral part of the Children and Learner Teams in GOs. They will work alongside the new cadre of Children and Learner Strategic Advisers (CLSAs), wider teams in the GO from across Government who have a role and interest in children's safeguarding, and regional partners including Strategic Health Authorities.

## Improving Understanding

### Project 3: Sharing information to keep children safe

The aim of this project is to embed good practice in information sharing amongst all partners of Children's Trusts to ensure that information is shared appropriately and effectively. This is necessary to keep children safe. Building on existing arrangements and aligned with on-going work on information sharing in early intervention and preventative work, it will:

- identify the gaps in and blocks to implementing current guidance;
- help to address some of the myths and misunderstandings by disseminating and embedding more effectively to delivery partners the guidance that already exists; and
- make recommendations to address identified barriers and implement current guidance effectively.

### Project 4: Improving access to and understanding of key data to help keep children safe and improve their lives

This project will focus on collating, analysing and disseminating data across all safeguarding services. It will help drive improved practice across the system. Where possible, it will bring together and disseminate the key data sets at national and local level across Children's Services, health, police and criminal justice, in an accessible format to help decision makers and frontline practitioners in understanding the impact of their work. Once collated, this core data set will be updated and disseminated on a regular basis. Longer term, the project will consider how best to support local areas in managing performance and accessing data.

## Project 5: Referral and assessment systems where children may be suffering harm as a consequence of parental domestic violence, substance misuse or mental ill health

Lord Laming highlighted evidence that opportunities for early intervention are sometimes missed due to the poor co-ordination of services and professionals around children and families where these vulnerabilities are known. The project will:

- identify any gaps in existing guidance;
- identify current or emerging best practice;
- recommend any further action that will help professionals, and Children's Trusts, to better identify and assess the needs of children who may be suffering harm as a consequence of parental domestic violence, substance misuse or mental health problems.

## Project 6: Embedding the lessons of Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) and Child Death Overview Panels (CDOPs)

The SCR, CDOP and inspection processes have an important role to play in improving practice. This project is aimed at identifying, interpreting and addressing lessons from SCRs and CDOPs, and recurring themes from the inspection programme. By January the project will have reviewed arrangements for the capture and dissemination of learning for both practitioners, managers and policy makers and identified improvements. The second stage of the project, to be completed in spring 2010, will be a more detailed analysis of trends and common themes. This will be followed by specific work with practitioners, the inspectorates, Government Offices and other stakeholders on how best to cascade and embed lessons to address any weaknesses in policy or guidance and to establish measures for the effectiveness of the arrangements.

## Supporting Practice

### Project 7: Stocktake of improvement activity in safeguarding

This project will focus initially on a stocktake of existing improvement support, whether commissioned nationally, regionally or locally. It will identify how far current sector led improvement support matches current priorities and look to identify gaps, proposing how better to co-ordinate, target and strengthen existing activity.

### Project 8: A review of Solution Focused Brief Therapy

Solution Focused Brief Therapy, developed by Steve de Shazer and Insoo Kin Berg, in the United States, “helps people change by constructing rather than dwelling on problems”. Concerns have been expressed about whether this model is appropriate for use in the English safeguarding children system. A systematic review will be undertaken of the current evidence base to examine the effectiveness of this approach in working with families where children may be suffering or are likely to suffer harm within the English context. This systematic review will be completed in summer 2010.

### Project 9: New safeguarding indicators and targets that drive improved performance and better outcomes

This project aims to revise the current set of safeguarding performance indicators in the National Indicator Set and additionally introduce statutory targets on safeguarding and child protection for local areas.

### Project 10: Revising *Working Together to Safeguard Children*

Lord Laming’s progress report made a number of recommendations which, in its action plan, Government committed to address by

revising *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2006). The NSDU is working across Government and with all stakeholders to update the core inter-agency guidance to reflect changes in the safeguarding landscape since 2006 and to respond directly to Lord Laming's recommendations. In addition, associated work is underway to: support new legislation linked directly to Lord Laming's recommendations; develop practice guidance to better support Local Safeguarding Children Boards in light of research conducted by Loughborough University; and, further support Local Safeguarding Children Boards in reviewing child deaths and providing a co-ordinated rapid response in the event of unexpected child deaths.

## Annex A

# Partnership Network

The NSDU has established a Partnership Network to work with the Unit to pursue specific issues impacting on effective frontline safeguarding practice. Partners in the Network have been invited because they have a real understanding of, and influence in, their respective organisations' activities in relation to safeguarding.

## Purpose of the Partnership Network

The creation of a Partnership Network will help ensure that the work of the NSDU is firmly rooted in what is happening at the front line. It will act as a conduit between the Unit and individual partners to feed back on and pursue specific issues impacting on effective frontline safeguarding practice. It is not intended that the total Partnership Network consisting of nearly a hundred members would meet frequently. From time to time, however, a small group may be asked to do some bespoke work with the Unit or join a workshop to consider a specific output the Unit is developing. It is also anticipated that the NSDU will consult with them routinely on particular issues. Members of the Network will also be encouraged to involve wider interests in the work of the Unit, consult with their own stakeholder groups, and incorporate wider views on NSDU projects through their existing consultation and networking events.

Members of the Network will therefore have a key role to play in helping to reduce barriers to joint working across services. They will also be vital in ensuring that requirements on one professional group do not adversely impact on the capacity of other frontline professionals to safeguard children.

## How it can add value

The Partnership Network can add value by:

- providing a 'sounding board' for the NSDU to 'test out' early ideas before wider consultation, such as the revision of *Working Together to Safeguard Children* guidance;

- providing active support for the Unit's work by facilitating visits, sharing research, data, good practice, and, where feasible, providing temporary secondees on occasion to undertake specific pieces of work;
- helping to shape the Unit's work programme to ensure that it addresses the issues that the front line identify as the key barriers to delivery;
- giving feedback on the impact of key policies and the actions of all partners to ensure effective delivery of Lord Laming's recommendations; and
- enabling staff on the front line to influence developments through discussion.

## Partnership Network Membership

### Health

Allied Health Professions Federation  
 British Association for Community Child Health  
 College of Emergency Medicine  
 Community Practitioners and Health Visitors' Association (part of Unite)  
 Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence  
 Family Nurse Partnership  
 General Medical Council  
 Nursing and Midwifery Council  
 NHS Alliance  
 NHS Confederation  
 North West Social Partnership Forum  
 Royal College of GPs  
 Royal College of Nurses  
 Royal College of Midwives  
 Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health  
 Royal College of Psychiatrists  
 Welsh NHS Employers Unit

### Children's services

Association of Directors of Children's Services  
 Local Government Association  
 Association of Directors of Adult Social Services  
 Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass)  
 Independent Safeguarding Authority

## Police

Association of Chief Police Officers  
National Policing Improvement Agency

## Justice

Association of Lawyers for Children  
Children Law UK  
Family Justice Council  
Family Law Bar Association  
Her Majesty's Court Service  
Justices' Clerks Society  
The Law Society  
Magistrates' Association  
National Association of Probation Officers  
President of the Family Law Division  
Solicitors in Local Government  
The Official Solicitor

## Inspectorates, regulators and agencies

Care Quality Commission  
General Social Care Council  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Court Administration  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation  
National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services  
Ofsted, Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills  
The Training and Development Agency for Schools  
United Kingdom Border Agency (UKBA)

## Voluntary sector

AFRUCA (Africans Unite Against Child Abuse)  
Barnardo's  
British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF)  
Catch 22 (Rainer Crime Concern)  
Children England  
Children's Society  
Community Matters  
Council for Disabled Children  
ECPAT UK  
Family and Parenting Institute  
The Fostering Network  
Independent Schools Association  
Lucy Faithfull Foundation  
Mencap  
National Association for Voluntary and Community Action  
National Children's Bureau  
National Council for Voluntary Youth Services

NSPCC  
The Safe Network  
Pre-school Learning Alliance  
Samaritans  
The Coram Family  
Third Sector National Learning Alliance  
Victoria Climbié Foundation

### Young People

Children's Rights Director  
11 MILLION

### Trade Unions

Aspect  
British Association of Social Workers

### The front line

Frontline practitioners or first line managers across the country including a:

- Social Worker
- Health Visitor
- Designated GP
- Designated Nurse
- LSCB Independent Chair
- LSCB Business Manager
- Local Authority Designated Officer
- Paediatrician
- Teacher

### Research/education/practice improvement organisations

Centre for Excellence in Outcomes (C4EO)  
Children's Workforce Development Council  
IDeA  
Loughborough University  
National Institute for Clinical Excellence  
University of Bristol  
University of East Anglia  
Social Care Institute for Excellence(SCIE)  
Thomas Coram Research Institute  
The University of York (Social Policy Research Unit)

## Annex B

# Chief Adviser's Expert Group

1. To assist him in his new role, Sir Roger Singleton has established a Chief Adviser's Expert Group. The Group performs an advisory role, contributing ideas, information and advice as well as providing guidance on emerging ideas and initiatives in the field.
2. The Group operates largely virtually. It has met formally once in October 2009 and plans to meet again in March 2010. Membership of the Group is as follows:
  - Colin Green, Association of Directors of Children's Services
  - Moira Gibb, Chair Social Work Task Force and Chief Executive of the London Borough of Camden Council
  - Christine Davies, Chief Executive, Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO)
  - Jim Gamble, Association of Chief Police Officers and Chief Executive of the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)
  - Jo Webber, Deputy Policy Director, NHS Confederation
  - John Goldup, Social Care Director, Ofsted
  - Andrew Flanagan, Chief Executive, NSPCC
  - Anthony Douglas, Chief Executive, Cafcass
  - Cllr Shireen Ritchie, Chairman of the LGA Children and Young People Board.
  - A District Judge will be invited to meetings based on the area of expertise required.