

**BRACKNELL FOREST LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD
PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT**

THIS AGREEMENT IS MADE THE DAY OF 2006

BETWEEN:

The Chief Executive, Bracknell Forest Borough Council
and

The Director of Education, Children's Services and Libraries for
Bracknell Forest Borough Council

and

The Local Police Area Commander, Bracknell Forest

and

The Chief Executive of The Strategic Health Authority

and

The Chief Executive of The Primary Care Trust

and

The Chief Executive of Connexions Berkshire

and

The Manager of Bracknell Forest Youth Offending Team

and

The Thames Valley Probation Service

and

CAFCASS Berkshire

(Referred to in this agreement as "The Partner Agencies")

1. INTRODUCTION

This agreement is entered into by the Bracknell Forest Local Safeguarding Children Board Partner Agencies to support the statutory requirements imposed by The Children Act 2004.

2. AGENCY COMMITMENT

All partner agencies will have a nominated senior person as a member of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), in accordance with the duties set out in Sections 13-15 of the Children Act 2004. He/she will champion the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, be committed to regular attendance at LSCB meetings and also to membership of LSCB sub-groups, either by attending directly or via making it possible for staff from his/her organisation to participate. The senior person representing each partner agency will ensure that their organisation observes the requirements listed below.

3. FUNDING

The senior person representing each partner agency will be able to commit resources to the work of the LSCB, and will ensure that their agency contributes to the LSCB budgets in accordance with any agreements reached between the Board partners. The LSCB budget will be developed with the aim of ensuring that, as prescribed by 'Working Together', the LSCB is able to:

- drive forward the LSCB's day to day business in achieving its objectives, including its co-ordination and monitoring / evaluating work;
- take forward any training and staff development work carried out by the LSCB, in the context of the local workforce strategy;
- provide administrative and organisational support for the Board and its sub-committees, and those involved in policy and training.'

The Board partners will be committed to enabling the LSCB to successfully undertake the tasks set out above.

4. STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMPETENCIES

All partner agencies employing staff with access to children will develop human resources management procedures that take account of their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and in contributing to improvements in outcomes for them. A clear statement and explanation of the agency's safeguarding responsibilities toward children and young people will in due course be made available to all prospective employees.

5. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

5.1 All partner agencies will have robust recruitment and selection procedures for all relevant staff and volunteers, the purpose of which is to prevent unsuitable people working with children and young people, some of whom may be especially vulnerable. Thorough checks and enquiries will be made in relation to prospective staff and references obtained and verified. Those involved in the recruitment and selection of staff must have received appropriate training. Checks will be routinely updated and staff will be made aware of the need to make known without delay any external investigation to which they are subject that may raise doubts about their suitability in terms of current employment.

5.2 Any government issued guidance in relation to recruitment and selection of staff will be taken into account.

6. STAFF INDUCTION, TRAINING AND APPRAISAL

6.1 The partner agencies will ensure that single agency and multi-agency training on safeguarding and promoting welfare is provided in order to meet

local needs. This covers both the training provided by single agencies to their own staff, and multi-agency training where staff from different agencies train together. The partner agencies will support the LSCB in evaluating the quality of this training, ensuring that it is provided within individual organisations, and checking that training is reaching the relevant staff. Training will be organised and delivered in accordance with the requirements of 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'. The training will be informed by the Berkshire multi-agency Child Protection Procedures and prospectus of the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge of the Children's Workforce of which safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is one of the six key areas. Learning and development for staff will also incorporate the Common Assessment Framework, and successor guidance such as 'Safeguarding Children in Education' (DfES 2003) and 'What To Do If you're Worried A Child is Abused' (DfES 2003).

6.2 Staff will be encouraged to understand and appreciate how they are contributing to improved outcomes for children and young people and this will be reflected in the content of staff supervision and appraisals.

6.3 All partner agencies will have procedures and processes in place to ensure that staff with access to children have the necessary knowledge, support and training to establish and maintain safe working relationships with children.

7. ACCOUNTABILITY

As part of their statutory duty to comply with the Children Act 2004, Section 11, in all partner agencies it will be clear who has overall accountability for the agency's contribution to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. Agency structures, systems and processes whereby all staff understand the role of their agency and how they receive support and guidance in relation to their work will be explicit. The lines of individual and organisational accountability within and across agencies will be clearly understood. In all partner agencies there will be procedures for staff to report any concerns about the welfare of a child or young person.

8. EQUALITY, OPPORTUNITY AND DIVERSITY

All partner agencies will have equal opportunities and valuing diversity policies in relation to staff recruitment, selection and development and also in relation to service delivery. All partners will maintain a clear commitment to ensuring that services will be delivered so as to have no adverse impact on service users as a result of their disability, gender, age, race, or religion. Staff will understand the implications of the policies in contributing to improved outcomes for children and young people. There will be an agreed understanding across the partner agencies that some children and young people may be disadvantaged in their access to opportunities and some will be vulnerable as a consequence of previous adverse experiences. They may require particular attention, for example with regard to their health or education, if their welfare is to be optimised.

9. CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING

Sharing of information amongst practitioners working with children and their families is essential. In many cases it is only when information from a range of sources is put together that a child can be seen to be in need or at risk of harm.

Where there is concern about the safety and protection of a child or young person those working for the partner agencies will share information, in accordance with agreed systems, standards and protocols. Where possible they will observe the principle that the consent of a child/young person and/or his/her family should be obtained before sharing information.

However, the partner agencies agree that they will share information without consent if that is consistent with their overriding duty to act in the child's best interest.

Government guidance for all children's services practitioners on information sharing covering health, education, social care and youth offending will be observed when available.

Partners note that the '*What To Do If You're Worried A Child is Being Abused*' (DOH/DfES etc 2003) guidance contains a very helpful appendix detailing practice guidance for practitioners and their managers in relation to information sharing. A local protocol and practice guidance document is being developed and will be presented for endorsement by the LSCB Partner Agencies when it is complete.

Partners will also routinely share information in accordance with the requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act.

10. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

Partners will actively contribute to the development of the integrated performance management arrangements that will be established within the LSCB. They will undertake to provide performance in accordance with these and to support the work of the Quality Standards and Case Review Group.

11. ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF

All partner agencies will act in accordance with the Berkshire Area Child Protection Procedures, and will also ensure that they have single agency procedures which are regularly updated in accordance with national guidance and are available to managers.

Partner agencies will put clear written procedures in place for the investigation of allegations against members of staff which are available for scrutiny by

service users, and which are supported by the training and supervision of staff.

The requirements of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006, and any additional protocols approved by the Bracknell Forest LSCB, or previously agreed by the Bracknell Forest ACPC, will also be met.

12. MONITORING

Agencies' responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people will be monitored through the LSCB. The partner agencies will work closely and effectively with the LSCB through agreed mechanisms to monitor their performance against the standards set out within this agreement. This will feed into the Joint Area Reviews conducted by the relevant inspectorates (Children Act 2004, Section 20), as appropriate.

13. REVIEW

This agreement will be reviewed annually

Signed by.....

The Chief Executive, Bracknell Forest Borough Council

Signed by

Director of Education, Children's Services and Libraries

Signed by.....

The Local Police Area Commander, Bracknell Forest

Signed by.....

The Chief Executive of the Strategic Health Authority

Signed by.....

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The Chief Executive of Connexions Berkshire

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The Manager of Bracknell Forest Youth Offending Team

Signed by.....

For the Thames Valley Probation Service

Signed by.....

For CAFCASS Berkshire

AGREEMENT

MADE BETWEEN

THE BRACKNELL FOREST

LOCAL SAFEGUARDING

CHILDREN BOARD PARTNER AGENCIES

TO SUPPORT THE STATUTORY

REQUIREMENTS IMPOSED BY

THE CHILDREN ACT 2004

DATED:

2006