

Eastern Safeguarding Project: Project Update April 2010



The Eastern Safeguarding Project (ESP) is coordinating and providing dedicated expert capacity for ongoing work across the region on Safeguarding Children, in response to Staying Safe gradings and the Laming Report. This paper provides a quick update on progress to date.

The local authorities have invested a great deal of energy and time in ensuring that the ESP is successful. The ESP Operational and Strategic Leads are responsible for the overall functioning of the project. The Operational Leads have met regularly since November 2009 and they have been responsible for the implementation of activities. This forum is one of the key highlights of ESP, it enables everyone to sit around the same table, to share their experiences and to learn from each other in a non-competitive environment.

Activity includes:

- Peer review training and activities have been successfully implemented in coordination and collaboration with the IDeA. All 11 local authorities have taken part in an intensive training event held in April 2010. The outcome of this initiative will enable all authorities to hold Safeguarding Peer Review activities in their areas. Southend Borough Council has held a Safeguarding Peer Review Activity. Norfolk County Council participated as an Offsite Analyst. This activity is not an inspection and is not conducted as one – rather, it is a supportive but challenging approach by peers to assist councils and their partners who have requested a review in celebrating their strengths and identifying their own areas for improvement.
- The Eastern Safeguarding Website is about to “go live”. It will enable all local authorities to view regional and national indicators on Safeguarding as well as access publications, best-practice and evidence-based approaches in working with children, young people and families. This interactive tool will allow individuals to discuss and share their experiences as well as to enable practitioners and managers to enhance their knowledge and skills in Safeguarding. The ESP Website will also enable us to have consistent communication and interactions and host a calendar of events.
- The ESP project was given recognition and an important role at the “Partnerships in Safeguarding Conference” held in March 2010. The invitation posters highlighted our role of promoting a regional consistent approach in Safeguarding. A workshop with over 50 delegates was provided by ESP and given high praise.
- The Baseline Questionnaire was completed by 10 of 11 local authorities. The information gathered will be collated and analysed in the next months. A document will be produced in

order to highlight the Best Practices that currently take place in the region. Every Local Authority will be able to use this tool as a point of reference when planning and organising Safeguarding activities in their localities.

- The Chief Executives and Lead Members Training Seminar will be held on 23rd June in collaboration with the IDeA. This activity will enable us to provide to the Chief Executives and Lead Members with key Safeguarding information and practical tools.
- A Workforce Panel was held on 10th February. This activity enabled various agencies and local authority HR representatives to present their findings or initiatives on this matter to the Operational Leads. This activity led to a Workforce work plan for the next year. This plan is based on the collaborative approach ESP will take with CWDC and other partners.
- The Workforce goals of the ESP project are going to be aligned with other initiatives taking place in the Eastern Region. ESP has been discussing joint work with CWDC and with The Commissioning Support Programme as well as other agencies in order to pursue the data collection and analysis of our current workforce issues and trends in the region. The collaborative work will enable us to produce clear directions on recruitment and retention strategies, on practices around agency staff as well as looking at benchmarking areas.
- The Stakeholder's Action Group has successfully enabled different partner agencies and other groups to sit around the same table and come to some agreement on ways of disseminating the Safeguarding information, research material and literature, training and professional development activities etc. This group will meet twice a year and will ensure a cohesive approach in addressing Safeguarding questions for the East of England. The ESP team will coordinate and ensure that the information is inputted in the Website as well as disseminate to all local authorities.
- There is a joint Local Authority initiative that will look at our ICS / IT systems in the region analyse trends and make recommendations for improvements. Our goal is to have a consistent approach with this area, to ensure that we break the barriers between our localities, that we have one system that is compatible for all of our practitioners and managers.

Local authorities are now undertaking activity themselves on safeguarding issues. This includes:

- making use of a peripatetic manager to ensure safeguarding teams have specialist support and training to help them in their work
- considering options for a triage response team
- conducting external audits of initial response team
- developing processes to drive performance and effective quality assurance
- taking forward recommendations from the social work taskforce

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