

Actions for LSCBs to consider:

- ◆ Establishing a safeguarding disabled children's sub-committee with a designated chair, who has the capacity, knowledge and expertise to safeguard and promote the welfare of disabled children (and their families). The chair should have sufficient authority to represent the sub-committee's views to the main LSCB. In addition, each partner agency should identify a member of staff with sufficient experience to represent their organisation on such a sub-committee. An alternative approach is to have a member of the LSCB undertake the lead role for safeguarding disabled children. This can be a professional from any of the partner agencies, but they should have knowledge and experience of the needs of disabled children.
- ◆ Developing a robust, inclusive multi-agency framework, which includes protocols in line with *Working Together* that specifically addresses the particular needs of disabled children.
- ◆ Holding regular multi-agency forums to include representatives from all agencies, i.e. children's services, community and hospital based health teams, the police, the Crown Prosecution Service, mainstream and special schools, teaching support services, voluntary organisations, the secure estate, private service providers, disabled young people and parent representatives, where experiences, expectations and knowledge can be shared, leading to the development of best practice.

One LSCB is holding regular inter-agency Practice Forum Events focusing on safeguarding disabled children. The events aim to promote an understanding of the principles/guidance regarding safeguarding disabled children between agencies providing services to all children. In particular they provide a forum for staff that do not regularly work with disabled children, giving them the opportunity to acquaint themselves with the issues of working in this area.

- ◆ Positively promoting consultation with disabled children to gain an insight into their needs and experiences.
- ◆ Positively promoting consultation with parents/carers who are particularly aware of situations of potential and actual bullying.
- ◆ Awareness raising activities directed towards families, carers and the wider community about the vulnerability of disabled children, signs and symptoms of abuse or neglect and their potential role in safeguarding disabled children.

Features of an effective system for safeguarding disabled children

The relevant LSCB objective as set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children* is "To co-ordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of the authority and to ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each person or body for that purpose." (paragraph 3.7)

Actions for LSCBs to consider:

- ◆ Ensuring agencies are kept informed of the outcome of a referral where there are concerns about a disabled child's safety or welfare. This includes sharing information as to who will be dealing with the initial referral, the involvement of any specialist professionals, the outcome of section 47 enquiries and any subsequent actions as a result.
- ◆ Reinforcing the importance of collecting information from all potential sources.
- ◆ Ensuring there is a clear point of contact within local children's social care for advice and information concerning any safeguarding concerns that may arise about a disabled child's safety or welfare.
- ◆ Ensuring each agency identifies who can be approached within their own organisation, for specialist safeguarding disabled children advice.

Appropriate training concerning the safeguarding of disabled children

The relevant LSCB function as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children is *"The LSCB is responsible for developing policies for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of the authority in relation to the training of persons working with children or in services affecting the safety and welfare of children."* (paragraph 4.8)

2.12 *Working Together* makes clear that LSCBs should manage the identification of training needs and use this information to inform the planning and commissioning of training. In some areas it may be agreed that the LSCB will deliver training itself. The need for basic and specialist training concerning issues faced by disabled children should to be seen as a priority. The safeguarding of disabled children is everybody's responsibility. Therefore training is required for all practitioners working with disabled children including those working in universal services, and managers from all disciplines, who often have less knowledge and contact with disabled children, than specialist staff. Such training would also ensure that adequate supervision and line management of staff is enhanced.