

Merton Safeguarding Children Board

Communications Strategy Agreed January 2015 at MSCB Meeting

PROJECT	Merton Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB)	
MSCB Communications Task & Finish Group	Lisa Deer (Policy Officer, Merton Council – Young Merton) Sheena Maclean (MSCB administrator) Melanie Monaghan (Merton Carers Support) – Melanie will lead this T&F Group in future Bronwen Pickering (Merton Council Communications) Carla Thomas (MSCB training officer) Malcolm Ward (interim manager of MSCB)	
Spokesperson/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairman of the Merton Safeguarding Children Board • Director of Children, Schools and Families 	
Responsibilities	Communications Strategy and Plan	The board is responsible for signing off the MSCB Communications Strategy and for agreeing the action plan for the next 18 months.
	MSCB Annual Report and Child Death Review Panel Report – LSCBs are required to ‘publish’ these reports	When endorsed by the Board these reports will be uploaded to the MSCB website
	Annual Business Plan	The Board will publish its agreed rolling Business Plan once per year when it has been revised and then in the Annual report will review progress of the Actions.
	News releases and editorial	Drafted by the Board Manager of the MSCB (with advice from Merton Communications Officer as necessary) and signed off by the chairman of the board.
	Website content and content maintenance	The Board Manager will be responsible for the content of the website with assistance from the MSCB Training Officer who will take the lead for the practice pages for Professionals; An MSCB administrator uploads the content. The content should be informative and kept up-to-date. Need to work on ease of access to the website and its familiarity to all local professionals.
	Media relations	All communication with the media is agreed by the Board. Only the Chairman and the Director of Children, Schools and Families have the authority to speak to the media on behalf of the Merton Safeguarding Children Board.
	Freedom of Information Requests	The Dept of Education has previously indicated that LSCBs are exempt in their own right from FOI requests.
	Reactive Media Responses	For any critical incidents the MSCB will co-ordinate the planning of pro-active and re-active Media responses and will liaise with the Communications Sections of other Partner Agencies as required
	Serious Case Reviews	The board is responsible for publishing serious case reviews and placing them on the website.
	MSCB Branding The aim should be to have a single and recognisable branding to market awareness of the Board and its activities	The chairman of the board is responsible for the decision on whether or not the board should go ahead and refresh its branding. With any branding refresh, the communications representative on the board will work up branding for the chairman to sign off with the agreement of the rest of the board. Branding to cover MSCB logo, publications, letter heads, power points, email strap-lines, etc The MSCB logo should not be used by any Partner or other agency without explicit written approval of the MSCB
Audiences	<p>MSCB Members and SubGroup Members The Strategy should enable effective and confidential communication to the MSCB members for the conduct of the Board's business as set out by statute and guidance – this is currently hosted through the Merton Partnership website</p> <p>Multi-Agency Staff & Volunteers of local agencies working with children and their families, or adults who have contact with children, in Merton It is important to ensure effective communication by the MSCB to and from frontline staff and managers so that everyone is aware of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agreed national and local safeguarding protocols & what their personal responsibilities for safeguarding children are; • the findings from local audits and national and local case reviews/research into the quality of multi-agency safeguarding work and its operation and what 	

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	<p>changes, if any, are needed to ensure continuous improvement;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what multi-agency training is on offer; and • the role of the LSCB and the work it does and how practitioners may communicate with the Board and influence its work. <p>External Communicating with the public is vital in the board's work on promoting the responsibility the whole of society has towards ensuring children are safe and secure and informing people about what they can do if they have concerns about a child. The board's work also contributes to building public confidence that the relevant agencies are looking out for children's welfare.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people • Residents • Faith and Community Groups
Background	<p>Regulation 5 of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards' Regulations 2006 sets out that one of the things that the LSCB does is:</p> <p><i>Communicating to persons and bodies in the area of the authority the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, raising their awareness of how this can best be done and encouraging them to do so...</i></p> <p>The LSCB is an independent board which includes all agencies involved in protecting the welfare of children and taking action when a child or young person is at risk of abuse or neglect. The purpose of the board is to bring together professionals from a range of specialisms and expertise to ensure that all agencies know each other's actions and that there is a coordinated approach to securing the welfare of children in the borough. In addition, the board comes together to review processes and share best practice in its work to continually improve.</p> <p>The LSCB also provides quality training to practitioners involved in safeguarding children who work in the organisations represented on the board. Some of the courses are very popular and there is no problem with getting people interested in them. Others are more difficult to fill but are nevertheless important for people working in safeguarding.</p>
Strategy	<p>Ensure co-ordinated and accurate communications with all relevant parties by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • defining objectives • using the most appropriate communications channels tailored to the different audiences • identifying events where the board can be represented • identifying partners' publications which could be used to publicise the board's work • developing a resource of agreed key messages which can be included in MSCB initiatives and which can be available for Partner Agencies to use and promote • developing a programme of work and implementation plan • agreeing for each initiative adopted by the MSCB what the Communication issues are that will follow – adapt the Frontsheet for reports to the Board to address this
Timeline	January 2015 – March 2016
Branding	The MSCB will seek to make its branding better-known as a symbol of safeguarding children.
Communications channels	<p>Different Audiences will require different approaches - Messages should mirror the MSCB agreed priorities</p> <p>Public</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSCB internet pages: these are currently hosted on the council's website. • My Merton – quarterly borough magazine which is distributed to every household in the borough (80,000 households) – aim at least once p year for MSCB item • Exhibition space in council reception • Local media • Through Partner Agency initiatives where the MSCB may be promoted

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting good news stories and achievements <p>Young People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the MSCB Young People’s Participation Strategy (and possibly through schools & partner agencies’ communication strategies for young people). as this develops consider how social media may be used, if appropriate <p>Professional (To work within current media channels rather than rely on email or developing a specific MSCB communication newsletter – for electronic communications provide easy e-links back to relevant sections of the website)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face-to-face, MSCB events and training • Publications, Protocols, • Merton Voluntary Service Council newsletter • Young Merton Together e-briefings • CCG regular mailings to GPs • Council mailing to schools • Council’s Staff Bulletin • Other agency communications processes – to be mapped – including Agency Intranet systems • Professional Press
Communications Aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To inform the public about what to do if they are concerned about the welfare of a child • To inform young people about abuse and how they can seek help to prevent or stop it • To raise awareness across the multi-agency workforce of what members of staff should do if they are concerned about the welfare of a child • To raise awareness of the Merton Safeguarding Children Board among practitioners and their managers • To promote learning and improvement, including through the quality training and briefings provided by the LSCB to practitioners
Key Messages	<p>Child-focused messages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone has the responsibility to ensure children are kept safe and well • Every child has a right to grow up in a safe and loving environment • No child or young person should be neglected or abused – abuse can take several forms, including witnessing abuse and online abuse <p>MSCB-focused messages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The safety of children is at the heart of the decisions and actions taken by the MSCB • The MSCB will work to ensure that the voice of the child is included in its activities including making decisions • The MSCB is committed to working with professionals in children’s welfare to promote the safety and wellbeing of young people in Merton • The MSCB knows the value of the flow of accurate, timely and targeted communications in its work to provide young people at risk with a safe environment • The MSCB invites constructive appraisal in its endeavour to continuously improve
Assessing effectiveness of communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual questionnaire to a sample of practitioners about how well informed they feel about the board’s activities (Survey Monkey?) • Regular agenda item at the Board’s meetings on communications effectiveness and the action plan progress • Merton Safeguarding Children’s Board to review communications strategy and action plan, as part of its annual rolling Business Plan review
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balanced, factual press coverage • Increased awareness of what the MSCB is and the work it does and recognition of the branding

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully informed staff on key local safeguarding issues and developments • One safeguarding editorial piece in each issue of the borough magazine • 2/3 proactive news stories per year on safeguarding issues
Timetable	2015 - 2016
	<p>This is a working document and therefore includes meetings which could be necessary for the Board to be aware of throughout the year. Partner Agencies are asked to provide information on their It is possible that in 2015 – 16 the MSCB will need to respond</p>
January 2015	
February	<p>2 Feb: copy deadline for the spring issue of My Merton (comes out 19 March) 4 Feb: Council 5 Feb: Adoption UK conference 2015: theme this year us teenage mental health: http://www.adoptionuk.org/teenmentalhealth 6 Feb: press briefing 10 February: <u>Safer Internet Day</u> 16 Feb: cabinet 25 Feb: press briefing Develop questionnaire for practitioners to assess the level of understanding of the Board's work and their view of how communications could be improved.</p>
March	<p>Review and refresh LSCB website pages Review and refresh the Board's promotional material 5 March: MSCB / CSF Annual Conference for Practitioners and Managers 'Working the Frontline' Improving communication with children and young people 11 March: copy deadline for Young Merton Together 19 March: Spring issue of My Merton comes out (copy deadline for this issue is 2 February) 23 March: Young Merton Together 26 March: pre election period – will impact on the type of messages which can be promoted in April</p>
April	<p>Review and refresh LSCB website pages Review and refresh the Board's promotional material</p>
May	<p>3 May: copy deadline for My Merton 6 May: copy deadline for Young Merton Together 7 May: General election w/c 18 May: Young Merton Together</p>
June	<p>Consider promoting safeguarding messages in literature aimed at parents for children's summer activities programmes 1-7 June: <u>National Child Safety Week</u> 8-14 June: <u>Carers' Week</u> June: Mitcham Carnival 27 June: Wimbledon Village Fair</p>

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	29 June: Summer issue of My Merton comes out (copy deadline for this issue is 3 May)
July	1 July: copy deadline for Young Merton Together w/c 13 July: Young Merton Together 23 July: copy deadline for autumn issue of My Merton
August	Holidays
September	11 September: Autumn issue of My Merton comes out (copy deadline for this issue is 23 July) 16 September: copy deadline for Young Merton Together 28 September: Young Merton Together
October	
November	16 Days against Domestic Violence – White Ribbon Day 2-27 November: National Anti-bullying Month: http://www.actionwork.com/workshops.html 11 November: Copy deadline for Young Merton Together 19 November: Winter issue of My Merton comes out (copy deadline for this issue is 1 October) w/c 23 November: Young Merton together
December	Borough Christmas lights switch-on (stalls are available)

Jan 2015