

Brighton & Hove Community & Voluntary Sector



# **Safeguarding issues for the community and voluntary sector in Brighton and Hove**

**by Terri Fletcher - Safety Net**

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Commissioned by the Brighton & Hove Community & Voluntary Sector Forum (CVSF)  
Funded by the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC)

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## I. Executive Summary

In 2008 Safety Net, a local registered charity, was commissioned by the Community and Voluntary Sector Forum (CVSF) to undertake a survey of Safeguarding training, policies and procedures of Third Sector organisations working with children and young people in Brighton & Hove, to inform training needs. This work was funded by the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC), as part of its Workforce Strategy Partners Programme.

Around the same time the local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) was tasked with undertaking an audit of safer recruitment practices, and the impact of integration which this survey could potentially contribute to. It was also envisaged that this piece of work could assist in building up a more meaningful and comprehensive picture of what was happening in the third sector in relation to managing safeguarding issues. This in turn could inform the LSCB of some of the priorities and challenges for the sector.

This report was also informed by government legislation, documents and reports relevant to Safeguarding, including; 'Every Child Matters and The Children Act 2004, 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2006), 'Keeping Children Safe, The government's response to the Victoria Climbié enquiry' and 'Safe from Harm: a code of practice for safeguarding the welfare of children in voluntary organisations in England and Wales'. (1993) (see Appendix 1). The Report also makes reference to a number of recent local enquiries within the Third sector, including 'Taking Account; an economic and social audit of the Third Sector in Brighton and Hove' (2008) an audit of children and young people's safety in Brighton and Hove (2004) and a Training Needs Analysis of the community and voluntary sector (2007). (See Appendix 2).

A safeguarding survey was designed, piloted and distributed via the community and voluntary sector networks, together with a series of follow up telephone enquiries. A total of 39 questionnaires were returned, representing 34 organisations. Of the 34 organisations who responded, nearly half were made of groups run principally by volunteers, with 2 or less paid staff.

The overwhelming response to this survey was a clear sense of awareness from organisations about their duty to safeguard the children and young people in their care. Larger organisations had robust safeguarding policies and procedures in place, including those for safer recruitment. Smaller community groups were also very concerned to be doing the right thing, but for many this required a great deal of tenacity and fact finding because they were not part of some of the wider professional networks that larger organisations can tap in to for information and support. To address this many smaller organisations have allied themselves to national umbrella organisations such as Sport England, the Football Association and the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service. However, a number of groups were also keen to have more localised information and support available.

The issue of safer recruitment was a difficult one for freelance and independent workers and for community groups where this necessitated making reference enquiries about volunteers within their community.

The biggest single issue raised by this survey was the difficulties experienced by organisations when they tried to seek help and support with safeguarding issues from local area social work teams and from the police. Whilst a number of groups did report positive relations and

experience of contacting these professionals, a much larger number gave examples where they had been left confused, frustrated and without the support and information that they felt they needed to keep children and young people safe.

A series of recommendations follows, which result from the findings of the survey and from telephone interviews.

## **Summary of Recommendations**

### **SAFEGUARDING TRAINING**

#### **Recommendation 1**

- That information about safeguarding training is marketed in one single format, making clear the distinctions between different courses and their suitability to different groups.
- Particular attention should be given to marketing courses where there is a lack of awareness about the provision of these courses e.g. courses for designated child protection officers and where certain sectors of the third sector may not be accessing them e.g. trustees, committee members and community development workers.

#### **Recommendation 2**

- Consideration should be given to running interagency and basic level training on an area basis to facilitate better communication and partnership working.
- There is an identified training need for safer recruitment practices particularly for smaller groups.

#### **Recommendation 3**

- Processes need to be put in place to track the take up of the voluntary and community sector on LSCB safeguarding training and on training provided through the voluntary sector. (This links to the annual safeguarding training audit conducted by the LSCB).

#### **Recommendation 4**

- Safeguarding courses provided locally need to take into account the expertise and knowledge of the community and voluntary sector, in particular organisations with specialist knowledge in relation to groups whose safeguarding needs may not be adequately addressed within current training provision, for example LGBTU (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans-gendered, Undecided) and BME (Black Minority Ethnic) children and young people.

### **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

#### **Recommendation 5**

- Produce a local information pack/templates and resources to assist groups in knowing what policies and procedures they need, give examples of good practice and where to find information and support (see good practice section). These could be held on the CVSF, 'Support for Groups and/or Safety Net web-sites.

### **Recommendation 6**

- Explore funding sources for a support worker to help smaller groups to manage and develop their safeguarding responsibilities.

## **SAFER RECRUITMENT**

### **Recommendation 7**

- Groups need to be made aware of where they can access Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks and the cost to groups for this service. The local CRB Umbrella organisation, Impact Initiatives, to be asked to consider monitoring the level of take up of CRB checks from community and voluntary sector groups in the area (links to recommendation 4).
- To give consideration to establishing a register of self-employed individuals who have been police checked and undertaken Child Protection training. (This may be addressed by the new Independent Safeguarding Authority arrangements).

## **SUPPORT AND INFORMATION**

### **Recommendation 8**

- More publicity needs to be made available to the community and voluntary sector about the information and advice that they can access via local area social work teams and the police (for example the Thursday telephone advice line). Consideration should be given to having named persons in each locality as a contact point for community and voluntary sector groups. (Also links to recommendation 6).

### **Recommendation 9**

- Clear guidelines for making a referral to social work teams needs to be provided to organisations together with an agreed follow up protocol so that groups know what they can expect.

### **Recommendation 10**

- The CVSF to organise a focussed meeting or event around safeguarding, as part of their 'Your Space' or Children and Young People's Network events. (This could also link to the idea of a safeguarding conference being planned by the LSCB Staying Safe sub-group.



# **Safeguarding issues for the community & voluntary sector in Brighton and Hove**

## **2. Introduction**

In 2008 Safety Net was commissioned by the Brighton & Hove Community and Voluntary Sector to undertake an audit of Safeguarding training, policies and procedures of Third Sector organisations working with children and young people to inform training needs. This work was funded by the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC), as part of its Workforce Strategy Partners Programme, to support participation by the local Third Sector in influencing the design and implementation of the Brighton and Hove Children and Young People's Trust's Children's Workforce Development Strategy which aims to achieve a more integrated and better trained children's workforce.

Around the same time the local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) was tasked with undertaking an audit of safer recruitment practices, and the impact of integration which this audit could potentially contribute to. It was also envisaged that this piece of work could assist in building up a more meaningful and comprehensive picture of what was happening in the third sector in relation to managing safeguarding issues. This in turn could inform the LSCB of some of the priorities and challenges for the sector.

### **What do we already know?**

The recent 'Taking Account' survey found that the community and voluntary sector in Brighton and Hove consists of between 1,600 – 3,000 organisations of which one third provides services aimed at children, young people and families. The voluntary and community sector children's workforce has 1,500 paid staff 60 % of whom are part-time and 6,000 regular volunteers (average 12 per organisation), equivalent to 850 full-time staff.

In 2004 an audit of Children and Young People's Safety was undertaken by the Child Safety Development Officer for Brighton and Hove. This included looking at child protection in the community. In February 2004 a survey of over 300 youth groups and clubs that work with children was undertaken to ascertain whether they had child protection policies in place and whether they operated safe recruitment practices with regards to employing staff and volunteers. Additionally they were asked whether they maintained a First Aid Certificate, Public Liability insurance and Health and Safety procedures. Of the 75 groups who replied, 88% of respondents said they had child protection policies in place, 83% undertook CRB checks on potential employees but only 47% undertook enhanced checks.

However, for smaller groups the picture was somewhat different; "smaller informal groups do not have knowledge of the CRB requirements for vetting staff nor do they have access to a local CRB umbrella body who will assist them to undertake and process the countersigning of standard and enhanced disclosures." As a result of the audit, Brighton and Hove undertook to create a local umbrella body to process checks for the voluntary and community sector. This has subsequently passed to Impact Initiatives, a local Third sector organisation. Other recommendations arising from the audit included:

- Commissioning a city-wide organisation that would oversee the development of child safe policies across Brighton and Hove.

- Consideration of establishing a kite marking scheme as a way of endorsing groups which comply with good practice.
- Basic child protection training being made available to all groups across the city that work directly with children and young people.

An audit of Training Needs of the community and voluntary sector children's workforce in Brighton and Hove was undertaken in 2007 and provided a wealth of information about the priorities for training for the sector and some of the key challenges and issues. 42 local organisations took part in the needs analysis and the training needs prioritised were mostly linked to the 'Common Core' of skills and knowledge for the children's workforce as identified in "Every Child Matters". This included as a high priority, child protection policies and procedures.

Most of these courses are now being offered via the CYPT Common Core Training Programme and LSCB Training Programme, which have 3 allocated places for the sector on each of its courses. In addition, local voluntary sector providers such as Safety Net provide a rolling programme of child protection training to the community and voluntary sector. They are also commissioned to deliver safeguarding training via the City Early Years Partnership which is accessed by voluntary sector groups who are Ofsted registered.



### 3. The National Context and Legislation

- Every Child Matters provides the “golden thread of safeguarding in all activity relating to children and young people (Andrew Ireland Group Director Children’s Services London Borough of Havering)
- The Children Act 2004 Section 11 outlines the duty on all agencies coming into contact with children to have regard to safeguarding in carrying out their duties
- Section 13 identifies the duty to establish statutory Local Safeguarding Children’s Boards (LSCB’S) which are accountable for the co-ordination and effectiveness of arrangements to safeguard the children of the locality
- Working Together 2006 – Statutory National Guidance includes a section on the Role of the Voluntary and Private Sector which states that: voluntary organisations and private sector providers play an important role in:
  - Identifying priorities and making arrangements to safeguard children
  - Working effectively with Local Safeguarding Children’s Boards
  - Delivering services for children and young people
  - Delivering preventative work to reach the most vulnerable children and young people
  - Providing information and resources to the wider public about the needs of children.

#### **Other relevant documents relating to the community/voluntary sector**

**‘Keeping Children Safe – the government’s response to the Victoria Climbié enquiry’** makes a number of conclusions that are relevant to the community and voluntary sector as well as the statutory sector and to the findings of this audit.

*“Many staff are not adequately trained in safeguarding children. This is a particular problem for staffs that come into contact with children and families on a regular basis, but are not considered to be ‘child protection specialists.’”*

*“Many staff do not know when to share information about a child and family, and what information can and should be shared under what circumstances.”*

**The report outlines the elements of an effective system to safeguard children which should include:**

- Systems for allowing practitioners to respond quickly and effectively to concerns about a child;
- People from different organisations and professional backgrounds working together effectively, supported by a full commitment to safeguarding children from each of their organisations;
- A range of services, provided by different organisations and community groups to meet the assessed needs of children and families;
- Adequate training for all staff working with children and families, including through continuous professional development; and good supervision of staff working with children and families.

**‘Safe from Harm’** – In 1993 the Home Office produced ‘Safe from Harm: A code of practice for safeguarding the welfare of children in voluntary organisations in England and Wales’, which continues to be the only Home Office guidance that is available to voluntary agencies in England and Wales . The report states that “ *It is to be hoped that all the children and young people who come into contact with voluntary organisations also receive care and attention and the organisations protect them from coming to any harm whilst they are working with them.* “

The Report made 13 key recommendations which are still relevant today, to form a code of practice which sets out “ principles and guidelines which will help voluntary organisations to safeguard the welfare of the children and young people under 16 years of age with whom they work” (see Appendix I).

**‘Safeguarding Children’** The third joint chief inspectors’ report, (which is mainly geared to the statutory sector,) on arrangements to safeguard children shows that improving safeguarding arrangements is not just a task for the voluntary and community sector. They concluded that:

*“Many (statutory) services working with children are doing better at keeping them safe. Staff understand more what it means to keep children safe. Most staff are working together to identify concerns, share important information and help keep children safe. The previous review expressed concern that some people working with children had not been properly checked to make sure they were suitable. This has improved a lot. However, the report says that there is still room for improvement. Not all agencies employing staff to work with children are making sure that they are properly checked. While agencies are good at checking new staff, many are poor at checking people already working with children.”*



## 4. The Process of undertaking the audit

1. A tendering process was put forward via CVSF to identify providers who might undertake the work. Safety Net was subsequently commissioned to undertake this survey.
2. A safeguarding questionnaire was developed in consultation with the Children and Young People's Network lead at the CVSF and, in conjunction with Liz Rugg, Assistant Director Social Care, and Sally Booth, Policy and Development Officer from the Children and Young People's Trust, to ensure that it would ask the questions that could inform some of the wider processes and enquiries.
3. The survey was trialled with some groups, and revisions made accordingly.
4. The surveys were circulated via the CVSF Children and Young People Network meetings and the e-mail circulation list. Further lists of organisations were obtained from the CVSF to ensure that some of the smaller organisations were also contacted.
5. There was a delay of some months in getting the audit underway because of other audits taking place at the same time within the sector.
6. Follow-up telephone surveys were also completed in addition to the written responses.
7. The work was tracked via the Staying Safe sub group of the LSCB.

### The findings from the Audit

- 39 completed questionnaires were returned, representing 34 Organisations
- 10 telephone follow up interviews were completed.

These organisations are providing a range of services including:

- after school clubs
- sports sessions
- family support and counselling
- music workshops
- pre-school and toddler group
- domestic violence support
- services for LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender)
- activities for families and children.

The number of paid workers in organisations responding was 429 (200 of these paid staff were from 1 organisation)

Number of volunteers was 479

14 of the organisations who responded were run principally by volunteers with only 1 or 2 paid members of staff.

### Training accessed

This section looked at where groups currently access their safeguarding training, whether it suits their needs, any issues around training and any other training needs.

Training in safeguarding/child protection was accessed from a range of organisations.

- Own sector training was accessed by (6) respondents who were affiliated to larger organisations. (this included Girl Guiding UK, National Society for the Prevention of

Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) West Sussex Council for Voluntary Youth Services (WSCVYS) and the Football Association (FA)

- Training provided internally (5) usually through members of the Board of Trustees with experience in child protection or through volunteers in other relevant jobs
- CEYC I
- Training was accessed via providers in the Voluntary sector by 18 respondents, Safety Net (17) Working Together Project (1)
- Brighton and Hove City Council was mentioned by 2 respondents
- No training was accessed by 2 respondents.

Satisfaction with training was high with all but 1 respondent indicating that the training that they accessed had suited their needs. However, nearly half of the respondents indicated that they were sometimes confused by the number of courses offered and were unsure what the difference was for example between courses offered within the third sector and by the CYPT. This led to confusion about which they should access. For some e-learning had further compounded their confusion:

*"I have heard plans to change the way that child protection and safeguarding training is delivered. I have concerns about the training becoming solely e-learning based. This would make the course impractical for some members of staff with acute dyslexia/literacy difficulties. I also think it under values the importance of sharing ideas, knowledge and experiences with other professionals and the importance of the opportunity to discuss the training, put it into context and ensure sufficient comprehension."*

#### **Other Comments included**

*"The training suits our needs because it is provided by our own sector."*

*"We would like to set up our own training but cost holds us back."*

*"It suits our current needs, but safeguarding training would be better delivered in-house by trained staff on a regular rolling basis."*

*"Training on this subject (safeguarding) is difficult, because the answer always seems to be that here are no set answers."*

#### **Additional needs for small groups were also identified**

*"Yes it meets the needs of our organisation but it doesn't always meet the needs of the small community groups that we work with and support. The main challenges for the groups we work with are cost and that they are mostly only able to attend training in the evening and training is not always available at this time. Also trainees require training at different times and there are not always sufficient people available at the same time to make running a tailor made course financially viable. Individuals also struggle with obtaining child care whilst they attend training."*

*"the training did meet our needs but we found it quite scary being the only volunteers at the training with everyone else being a paid professional and seeming more knowledgeable than us. I also think the course was aimed at individual paid workers and not at volunteers in small community groups."*

*"It would be good on training if there was also a focus on your feelings as a worker and an acknowledgement that it's ok to be upset if you've had to deal with abuse or difficult behaviour. The trainers should remember that not everyone is dealing with this stuff every day."*

*“For a lot of our volunteers, training needs to take place in the early evening or on Saturdays as they have other commitments, time and cost are always issues for us.”*

*“I work as an independent providing circus skills for groups and found it really difficult to find out about training that I could access.”*

Issues around cost and timing of training were mentioned by 1/3 of respondents. This applied even when training was offered at a much reduced rate of £25 – 35 per person.

*“Cost is an ongoing issue for all projects in the voluntary sector. Training is often one of the first budgets to be cut during financial difficulties or often is not very well funded initially.”*

One small volunteer run group made the following suggestion:

*A “week’s course on how to set up a small group covering this is how you set up a group, this is CRB checks, this is how you fundraise, deal with forms etc. All the training is too spread out and takes up too much time when you’re a small group.”*

*“I think it would be a good idea if all funders requested child protection polices. They should also make it essential that all applicants undertake child protection training. In my group there are members who wouldn’t do training unless it was expected that we wouldn’t get funding without it.”*

### **Additional training needs identified**

*“I think more training could be provided to support more senior level staff who may be expected to take on the role of the nominated safeguarding officer. This training could look at issues such as consent, how to explain to parents, children and young people at initial membership their projects roles and responsibilities in terms of protecting children, the processes of referring to SSD [Social Services Department] and the CAF.” [Common Assessment Framework]*

Other additional training needs identified included:

- paediatric first aid
- updating policies
- domestic violence and substance misuse
- young people and safeguarding
- consent
- information sharing and record keeping
- CRB checking processes.

One organisation also felt strongly that; *“we would like to see LGBT young people seen to be at risk in this category and therefore training about their experiences needs to be added to this list.”*

Another organisation commented that: *“there is no cultural awareness feeding into safeguarding.”*

### **Multi-agency training**

Several organisations expressed a preference for more locality based training to facilitate relationship building and communication between agencies.

*“Ideally it would be great to have more area-based training so that staff in the voluntary sector could meet the CYPT social care teams and school staff to establish and build working relationships and open channels of communication.”*

*“More interagency training events on how to discuss difficult topics with parents and carers.”*

However other groups felt that:

*“I am not convinced that multi-agency training for the voluntary sector is right yet, it still feels like we are an add-on. It would be interesting to know whether the 3 allocated places are being taken up.”*

## **Policies and Procedures**

This section aimed to find out if groups had safeguarding policies and procedures in place, how groups set up their policies and procedures and whether there was a named person responsible for updating them.

All of the organisations who responded indicated that they did have a child protection/safeguarding policy in place. In telephone interviews respondents showed a high level of awareness of the need to have these in place.

How do groups develop Child Protection policies/procedures?

- Using another organisation’s as a template (12)
- From an umbrella body e.g. FA, CCPAS, Sport England (7)
- Developed it ourselves (8)
- HR Department is responsible (4)
- From Pan Sussex procedures (2)
- In the process of writing them (1).

*“I used my schools policy, but changed certain aspects to suit the work that we do.”*

*“It is generic from Sport England, our national governing body.”*

*“We used another organisations as a template because if they have a good policy why re-invent the wheel.”*

One group commented; *“We found this really difficult (to develop policies) as we had no guidelines to work towards or nobody to advise us as to whether we had done it correctly.”*

All organisations indicated that they had a structure in place for reviewing policies. In the majority of cases this was the responsibility of a senior manager or worker. Community groups were more likely to identify their Welfare Officer/Safety Officer/Child Protection Co-ordinator as these are required roles for groups registered with some Umbrella bodies such as the FA, CCPAS. Groups also mentioned their committee, community development worker and Trustees as having a role in updating and reviewing policies.

These policies and procedures were generally made available to staff and to parents, but not routinely to children and young people. Some organisations had gone further in their efforts to make safeguarding policies and procedures relevant and accessible to parents and children:

*“It is recognised that the whole document may be overwhelming for many parents and inappropriate for children and young people. Therefore other resources are all used to explain to children and young people their rights and how to seek help, to explain to parents and carers the project’s role in protection and safeguarding children and what they can expect”*

## **Additional Policies**

Organisations were asked if they had other policies and procedures in place including: Health and Safety, Behaviour Policy, Bullying Policy, Complaints, Managing Staff and Risk Assessments

All policies (24)

Those that didn’t have all policies (10) tended not to have staff management, code of conduct or complaints policies.

## **Safe Recruitment**

This section was to ascertain whether groups had procedures in place for safe recruitment, CRB checks for staff and volunteers and to highlight any issues arising in relation to safe recruitment.

Do you have a procedure in place for safe recruitment? (CRB references, interview) (28)  
Indicated yes)

- Yes in part (1) *“if you go too far down that line then you would end up doing no work”*
- Mainly done by word of mouth (1) *“if someone volunteers they would never be left alone until their CRB check comes through;” “It can be difficult to ask for references if it’s a volunteer that lives in your area, sort of like you are accusing them of something”*
- No policy or procedure in place (2) *“nobody works on their own with children”*. This tended to be said by groups working with parents and children
- Working towards a policy (1).

## **Criminal Records Bureau checks**

There was a high level of awareness of the need to undertake CRB checks on staff and volunteers. Only one group indicated that they didn’t undertake CRB checks on staff and volunteers because *“nobody works on their own with children”*. Among the other groups a variety of umbrella organisations were cited in relation to processing CRB checks:

- Church Child Protection Advisory Service (1)
- Impact Initiatives (9)
- FA (1)
- Diocese of Chichester (1)
- Salvation Army (1)
- Girl Guiding UK (1)
- Local friendly youth club (1)
- Fair play for Children (1)
- Ofsted (2)
- Woodingdean Youth Centre (1)
- Brighton and Hove Council (3) note: the council no longer does CRB checks

- Children’s Heart Foundation (1)
- Unknown (9)
- None done (2). Reasons given “don’t know where to access them.”

Issues with CRB checks were all centred around the amount of time they can take and in some cases; “people getting annoyed at the number of CRB checks they are asked to do.”

*“I’m not sure if this is correct but my understanding is that Brighton and Hove don’t do CRB checks for individual volunteers anymore... this is going to be a huge problem for us as we are not part of a big organisation who we could use as an umbrella to getting ours done.”*

*“They used to be free, it now costs money which we don’t have, I have had to change working practices to address the cost of CBR checks.”*

*“CRB checks are very difficult to get when you are an independent worker, because we aren’t linked to any organisation, CRB’s are very difficult to organise for small organisations.”*

## **Dealing with concerns about children and young people**

This section looked at who deals with concerns, where groups would go for support and advice, if they had passed on concerns to area social work teams how they found the process and anything that would help.

### **Who deals with concerns in your organisation?**

- Manager / supervisor (13)
- Child protection Co-ordinator / Welfare Officer / (8)
- Director (4)
- All staff deal with (4)
- Regional rep (1)
- Trustees (2)
- Not specified (1)
- Lead role (1).

*“We didn’t feel it was appropriate to have one person as we are all volunteers and live in the same area as the families who attend the outings. All of our names are on the child protection policy.”*

### **Where would you go for advice and support?**

- 6 organisations out of the 34 indicated that they would seek advice from social services or other statutory agencies
- 3 indicated that they would speak to a regional advisor from their organisation or an umbrella organisation
- 17 indicated that they would speak to a more senior worker within their organisation
- 2 organisations would seek advice from a trustee with relevant experience and knowledge
- 1 group indicated that they would ask their community development worker
- 3 groups did not know where they would go for advice
- 2 people said they would “Talk to myself, but if there is an issue with me, there is a difficult situation which would need another organisation.”

## **If you have passed on a concern to a social work team how did that go?**

- Never had to (14)
- Have referred to social services (15) went well (9) mixed (4) not well (2)
- Wouldn't know how to (2)
- No response (2)
- Would just observe (1).

## **Comments included**

A number of the groups made very specific comments about their experience of making referrals to social work teams, especially where they felt things could have been handled differently and what would have helped.

## **Building relationships**

*"We never come across social workers in our area so I don't know who I would speak to."*

*"We have a good relationship; we talk to them more often and have built up a relationship."*

*"As the project deals with teams across the city we do not have a local team that we work with specifically. Our experience is that on the whole we have good working relationships with the teams and we often have good communication. However a lot is reliant on the individual social worker and their knowledge and skills in working with these issues."*

*"It would be nice to see more of the local police and have more people around that we could sound things out with and help us to deal with issues that come up."*

*"A named person in social care in the local area who could be contacted to discuss any concerns would really help"* was a sentiment expressed by a number of respondents.

*"A liaison person that you knew you could just contact for a chat and who understood the sector. It could be someone within the sector."*

*"Face-to-face chat about concerns to investigate the severity of the concern and have the chance to put it into context re the family circumstances in order to help you to take it further or wait and observe."*

## **Making Referrals – to refer or not?**

The decision on whether to refer a concern or not was one which a number of groups found difficult, largely because they were unsure at what point to refer and confused about whether they could ring social services simply for advice and guidance.

*"There is still a barrier between social services and us, a feeling of not wanting to bother them with something that might not be important enough so we may end up not passing it on."*

*"Smaller problems need to be addressed and it would be good to have someone to talk this through with where it's not serious enough necessarily to take forward. I worry that people may not report these lower level concerns."*

*"I would like more information on reporting concerns."*

*“We would like clarification for our team on why many referrals are not acted on.”*

*“Members are very upset when referrals are made to educational welfare or social services without their knowledge thereby breaking down relationships and trust and alienating the family from further help.”*

*“I think the main concern would be identifying neglect and project processes for recording and reporting this. Discussions have taken place with social workers where it was suggested that we record any concerns and then wait until these concerns become significant enough to warrant a referral. On the other hand, other professionals have suggested that any concerns should be referred immediately because the family might be known. It is a difficult area as we don't want families to feel that they are constantly being watched and judged and therefore feel alienated from the service. Nor do we want to ignore potential problems or not raise them soon enough.”*

*“working in an area of high deprivation where many children are in need it is difficult not to become desensitised and instead remain alert to potential indicators of abuse and neglect. This is sometimes heightened by the knowledge that the thresholds for statutory intervention are extremely high.”*

### **Getting Feedback**

Almost half of the respondents mentioned a lack of feedback following a referral as a cause of frustration and a barrier to good practice.

*“It would help to get some feedback. We had a woman where a referral was made with her knowledge. The woman got very upset and didn't come back to the service for a while. But later she came in and said that social services had really helped her. It would have been useful to have known that because we might never have seen her again.”*

*“Systems in our project and with social care teams do seem to be improving, in the past; the project has experienced difficulties such as being asked for information at very short notice for court hearings or not knowing what has happened once a referral has been made or finding social care teams unapproachable.”*

*“Advice and information about what would happen next and the consequences of the disclosure were not explained. The information passed on was accepted and not explored in any way, in order to help weigh up whether it was a legitimate concern or just a difficult feeling.”*

*“The main issue is lack of feedback or response e.g. that the referral has been received and is being taken forward. A general lack of follow up makes it difficult to continue working with those young people as there could be a lack of consistency between what we are saying and what social services might be saying.”*

*“In the procedures SSD are supposed to do a formal response to a referral which never happens in our experience.”*

*“Staff can be left frustrated with the response they get, particularly if we are following guidelines and have concerns. There seems to be particular difficulties about getting support for 16-17 year olds.”*



## **5. Responses to particular cases – some case studies**

A number of organisations gave examples during telephone interviews of cases where they were left feeling that the support and advice they needed had not been forthcoming. It should be noted that other groups did mention that they had also had good experiences but these were not specifically mentioned in detail.

These examples are included here because they illustrate some of the 'typical' concerns that community groups in particular may be dealing with and the difficulties that they have experienced in seeking help and support.

### **CHILD PROTECTION EXAMPLE SCENARIOS**

#### **Case study 1**

One of the children in the club's grandfather started to bring him in. We knew that he was a convicted paedophile and so did the other parents whose children were attending the club. He would hang around after he had dropped his grandson off and watch the other kids. It was also very difficult because when we play away we don't know who is coming along and have no control over that. The club welfare officer asked him not to come up to the club and we talked with our local Police officers who said that they had no authority to ask him to move. We knew the family and the whole family came up then to the club and then the child left the club afterwards. We didn't really feel very supported in dealing with this we wanted someone from the police to come up to the club to talk to him but they didn't.

Sometimes when we've rung the police or social services you sit there wondering if your were right to pass on the information in the first place and working in an area like this we get lots of issues to deal with.

#### **Case study 2**

We had a club session on a Friday evening and it was very dark, two young girls aged about 10 approached the welfare officer at the club because they were being followed by a car. We took the number plate and let everyone know that they needed to pick their children up but not all of the parents did pick their kids up. We rang the dad of one of the girls but he wouldn't come and get her even though she was hysterical. We rang and gave the details to the police but they didn't get back to us and the car continued to drive up and down for a few weeks afterwards.

#### **Case study 3**

We made a referral to one of the family support teams about a young person we were concerned about, we left a message and asked them to phone us back. When they did phone back a few days later we were made to feel very uncomfortable and told that we hadn't made the referral promptly enough even though we left the phone message on the same day. We were told that we should have phoned the DAT team and not the local team. We felt we were being accused of our staff not being adequately trained in child protection. We thought that we had followed what the Sussex procedures say you should do.

There seems to be a lot of confusion about what goes to DAT and what to speak to local area teams about. Sometimes teams don't want to speak to you unless you've spoken to the parents and it isn't always possible without putting yourself or your staff at risk even though we know its good practice. We have had parents come and camp outside the office shouting abuse. We feel that we should be able to approach local teams for advice and support. If we don't make the process of reporting a helpful and supportive one rather than accusatory it may stop other people from making referrals and feedback to groups could be framed more positively to encourage people. There should be more advice and support on how to refer and where to, smaller groups wouldn't ever bother reporting again if they received the response that we did.

#### **Case study 4**

We had a girl attending the club and we were concerned that when her father picked her up he always smelled strongly of alcohol. The staff were not sure how best to approach him about it because we didn't want to jeopardise the girl coming to the club. We reported it to social services and I'm not sure what happened but now the father doesn't pick his daughter up anymore and she walks home alone.

#### **Safeguarding Awareness**

All of the groups that were contacted during the course of this audit expressed a high degree of awareness about their responsibilities to children and young people in their care and were keen to 'get it right'. There was some confusion from groups providing activities or events for parents and children about how much safeguarding they should do given that 'we are never alone with the children'. Smaller groups expressed a concern about their ability to keep up with all that is required to operate within safeguarding policies and practice:

*"Because of our backgrounds we're ok about child protection and not phased. But we are not a childcare organisation, we started as a little voluntary group then there is so much stuff to deal with that we'd end up doing no work. We're jus a bunch of parents trying to help other parents and it can be overwhelming."*

Other organisations felt that they were constantly dealing with the effects of abuse:

*"We recently completed an audit of children and young people that we work with across departments to look at the numbers who had been victims of childhood abuse. Of all service approximately 70% had experienced abuse. We remain very concerned about the effect of abuse issues on a young person's development, in terms of learning, anger management and substance misuse."*

#### **Organisations were asked about their awareness of key safeguarding processes and documents.**

The LSCB (22 out of 34 indicated that they were aware of this)

The Children Act (26)

Working Together to Safeguard children (20)

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (24)

## **How do you keep up to date with safeguarding issues and legislation?**

Organisations employed a variety of methods to keep up with current legislation and safeguarding information. Some groups receive updates from umbrella organisations such as CCPAS, the FA, Sport England, others via the CVSF e-mail updates, others through e-mail bulletins such as the NSPCC and teacher net. For other groups they indicated that they relied on contact with other organisations through meetings and networking to keep up to date. Several organisations commented that they felt that this was *“a fairly hit and miss affair and we could easily miss something.”*

## **What would help?**

While some people felt that they were already on information overload,  $\frac{3}{4}$  of those who responded felt that information that was more locally specific and better organised could be helpful:

*“Information updates, more training and a training programme specific to the voluntary sector that was free.”*

*“It would be good to have information in one place, there is so much of it that it feels inaccessible. Specific updates would be useful, e.g. 6 monthly.”*

*“Numbers of people to ring locally printed up.”*

*“I would like to have a meeting to discuss safeguarding children.”*

*“Having an information pack which includes things like common worries where to go for help, local helpline numbers, social services contacts etc.”*

*“To have a local organisation acting as a support and overseeing body for small organisations and self employed people, to provide CRB’s child protection and relevant support, updates and training, to be easy to find by web search and by reference from the council, to be accessible in the local area.”*



## 6. Examples of Good Practice

An internet search of Local Safeguarding Children's Boards around the country produced several examples of good practice in relation to supporting the community and voluntary sector with safeguarding development and issues.

**Bradford LSCB** has appointed a Safeguarding Children's Development Worker. An audit of groups in the Bradford area produced similar results to this audit in that: *"while some organisations are well advanced in their development of safeguarding measures, others are struggling to develop basic safeguarding systems. For many groups there is a lack of accessible information that sets out baseline standards."*

In response to this and to promote consistency across the sector, they have developed a self-audit tool, as well as model child protection policies and procedures which can be accessed via the BSCB website: [www.bradford-scb.org.uk/vcs](http://www.bradford-scb.org.uk/vcs)

**The London LSCB** organised a conference day on 'Safe Working with children for London's voluntary organisations' which included workshops on: the role of the LSCB, Assessing the suitability of people who work with children, Safer Recruitment, Managing Allegations, Safeguarding Vulnerable groups Act 2006 and Safe Practice. [www.londoncpc.gov.uk](http://www.londoncpc.gov.uk)

**The National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS)** has developed the Sound Systems kite marking scheme to help judge the quality of a youth organisations' safeguarding policies and practice. Sound Systems is the Council's accreditation scheme which quality assures safeguarding practice in the voluntary and community sector. It is a standard already endorsed by the National Youth Agency, NSPCC, Association of Principle Youth and Community Officers and recommended by the DCSF.

NCVYS has also produced 'Keeping Safe' a young person-centred approach to safety and child protection called, 'The youth sector's essential toolkit for developing safeguarding policy and practice'. [www.ncvys.org.uk](http://www.ncvys.org.uk)

**The NSPCC** has a huge range of information and resources on its web-site and offers a weekly e-mail update service. It has also been commissioned to establish a National Safeguarding Unit for the Third Sector in England, which was one the government's commitments in the Staying safe: action plan (DCSF, 2008). The NSPCC and Children England (formerly NCVCCO) have been commissioned to set up and jointly manage this Unit. They will do this by working closely with and through a number of delivery partners, umbrella groups and existing national, regional and local networks and infrastructures. [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

The NCVCCO (National Council for Voluntary Childcare Organisations) now called **Children England** has produced a number of useful resources including 'Positively Safe: a guide to developing safeguarding practices'. Children England also produces a weekly e-mail bulletin giving updates and news. [www.childrenengland.org.uk](http://www.childrenengland.org.uk)

**4 Children** has a number of useful resources including 'Getting it Right: Model document Resource Pack' 'This document will help you to develop a comprehensive set of policies and procedures as the basis for running your club and meeting both your legal requirements and the complex needs of the children and families in your local community'. [www.4children.org.uk](http://www.4children.org.uk)

**The Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS)** is an independent Christian charity providing professional advice, support, training and resources in all areas of safeguarding children and for those affected by abuse. CCPAS is a registered Umbrella body. [www.ccpas.co.uk](http://www.ccpas.co.uk)

**Fair Play for Children** provides a range of training, information and support for organisations providing play, child-care and recreation services and is a register Umbrella body with the CRB. [www.fairplayforchildren.org.uk](http://www.fairplayforchildren.org.uk)

**Child Protection in Sport Service** helps sporting organisations to put safeguards in place to keep children and young people safe. It provides advice, consultancy and training on the development and implementation of child protection policies and procedures. [www.childprotectioninsport.org.uk](http://www.childprotectioninsport.org.uk) [www.thecpsu.org.uk](http://www.thecpsu.org.uk)

**Football Association** provides information on best practice, safe recruitment, and advice and support for groups who are members. [www.thefa.com](http://www.thefa.com)



## **7. Recommendations**

### **SAFEGUARDING TRAINING**

Despite safeguarding training being available via the LSCB training programme and from Safety Net as well as other external providers, there is evidence that some of the voluntary/community sector groups, particularly smaller groups are:

- Confused about which course they should undertake
- Intimidated by multi-agency training
- Still unable to access courses if they are not provided free of charge
- Not able to attend training where consideration is not given to flexible provision, e.g. weekends and evenings.

In addition the majority of organisations that were contacted for this survey indicated that they would prefer training that was provided from within the community and voluntary sector, because of their additional knowledge about the needs of the sector.

#### **Recommendation 1**

- That information about safeguarding training is marketed in one single format, making clear the distinctions between different courses and their suitability to different groups.
- Particular attention should be given to marketing courses where there is a lack of awareness about the provision of these courses e.g. courses for designated child protection officers and where certain sectors of the CVSF may not be accessing them e.g. trustees, committee members and community development workers.

#### **Recommendation 2**

- Consideration should be given to running interagency and basic level training on an area basis to facilitate better communication and partnership working.
- There is an identified training need for safer recruitment practices particularly for smaller groups.

#### **Recommendation 3**

- Processes need to be put in place to track the take up of the voluntary and community sector on LSCB safeguarding training and on training provided through the voluntary sector. (This links to the annual safeguarding training audit conducted by the LSCB).

#### **Recommendation 4**

- Safeguarding courses provided locally need to take into account the expertise and knowledge of the community and voluntary sector, in particular organisations with specialist knowledge in relation to groups whose safeguarding needs may not be adequately addressed within current training provision, for example LGBTU and BME children and young people.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

There is evidence from this audit that most groups, in particular the larger voluntary sector groups have safeguarding policies and procedures in place. What is not clear from some groups is the quality of those policies and procedures. There is also an identified need for support for some groups to help them to develop and update their policies and procedures and to provide accessible information about how to go about this.

### **Recommendation 5**

- Produce a local information pack/templates and resources to assist groups in knowing what policies and procedures they need, give examples of good practice and where to find information and support (see good practice section). These could be held on the CVSF and or Safety Net web-sites.

### **Recommendation 6**

- Explore funding sources for a support worker to help smaller groups to manage and develop their safeguarding responsibilities.

## **SAFER RECRUITMENT**

This audit shows that the majority of groups are aware of the need to have safe recruitment processes in place. It was not clear in some cases how robust these processes are and for smaller groups the suspicion was that groups were relying on CRB checks as the main focus for safe recruitment. Checks were accessed from a variety of sources and not all small groups knew where to go.

### **Recommendation 7**

- Groups need to be made aware of where they can access CRB checks and the cost to groups for this service. The local CRB Umbrella organisation, Impact Initiatives to be asked to consider monitoring the level of take up of CRB checks from community and voluntary sector groups in the area (links to recommendation 4).
- To give consideration to establishing a register of self-employed individuals who have been police checked and undertaken Child Protection training. (This may be addressed by the new Independent Safeguarding Authority arrangements).

## **SUPPORT AND INFORMATION**

A large number of respondents to this audit indicated that they would like more support, clarity and information around discussing concerns, making referrals and receiving feedback from referrals.

It should also be noted that the author of this report is aware that currently the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) system in Brighton and Hove does not currently cover the community and voluntary sector and it is recommended that this be addressed.

### **Recommendation 8**

- More publicity needs to be made available to the community and voluntary sector about the information and advice that they can access via local area social work teams and the police (for example the Thursday telephone advice line). Consideration should be given to having named persons in each locality as a contact point for community and voluntary sector groups. (Also links to recommendation 6).

### **Recommendation 9**

- Clear guidelines for making a referral to social work teams needs to be provided to organisations together with an agreed follow up protocol so that groups know what they can expect.

### **Recommendation 10**

- The CVSF to be invited to organise a focussed meeting or event around safeguarding, as part of their 'Your Space' or Children and Young People's Network events. (This could also link to the idea of a safeguarding conference being planned by the LSCB Staying Safe sub-group).

## 8. Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### References: Government and National

1. 'Safe from Harm – a code of practice for safeguarding the welfare of children in voluntary organisations in England and Wales'. Home Office (1993).
2. 'Keeping Children Safe: The governments response to the Victoria Climbié Inquiry Report and Joint Chief Inspectors Report Safeguarding Children' (2003) [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk).
3. 'Safeguarding Children: The third joint chief inspectors report on arrangements to safeguard children' (2008) [www.safeguardingchildren.org.uk](http://www.safeguardingchildren.org.uk).

### Appendix 2

#### References Local

1. 'Taking Account: 'An Economic & Social Audit of the Third Sector in Brighton & Hove,' Sep 2008.
2. 'Children and Young People's Safety Audit (2004): A Report compiled for the area child protection committee and the responsible authorities partnership by representatives of the partnership community safety team and children, families and schools directorate.'
3. 'Training Audit of the community and voluntary sector (2007)' Duncan Blinkhorn CVSF.

### Appendix 3

#### Summary of Recommendations from 'Safe from Harm'

In order to safeguard the welfare of the children and young people in their charge, voluntary organisations should consider the issues raised by each of the following statements of principle and then, if they wish to do so, take any action which they deem to be appropriate in the light of their circumstances and structures and the nature of their activities.

1. Adopt a policy statement on safeguarding the welfare of children
2. Plan the work of the organisation so as to minimise situations where the abuse of children may occur
3. Introduce a system whereby children may talk with an independent person
4. Apply agreed procedures for protecting children to all paid staff and volunteers
5. Give all paid staff and volunteers' clear roles
6. Use supervision as a means of protecting children
7. Treat all would be paid staff and volunteers as job applicants for any position involving contact with children.

8. Gain at least one reference from a person who has experience of the applicant's paid work or volunteering with children
9. Explore all applicants' experience of working or contact with children in an interview before appointment
10. Find out whether an applicant has any conviction for criminal offences against children
11. Make paid and voluntary appointments conditional on the successful completion of a probationary period
12. Issue guidelines on how to deal with the disclosure or discovery of abuse
13. Train paid staff and volunteers, their line managers or supervisors, and policy makers in the prevention of child abuse.