

Buckinghamshire



**Safeguarding
Children Board**

Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board

Communication and Participation Strategy

V1.1 August 2015

Version Control			
Version number	Date	Author	Comments and nature of update
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1 Introduction

The Children Act 2004 requires all local authority areas to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). LSCBs are multi-agency partnerships which are responsible for coordinating local arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and ensuring that these arrangements are effective.

In terms of communication, regulation 5 of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006 sets out the following function for LSCBs:

“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.”

This strategy sets out how the BSCB will communicate and engage with different audience groups to help everyone understand how they can contribute to keeping children and young people safe in Buckinghamshire.

2 Key Principles

The following principles underpin this strategy.

Communication and participation are...

...accessible and inclusive:

- We will make an effort to engage diverse communities
- We will look for gaps in our communication and participation in terms of groups of people, localities and issues, and make plans to fill these
- We will plan all activity with accessibility in mind, including thinking about method of communication and the location and timing of events
- The content and images of information will be appropriate for the age and cultural, or other, needs of the audience
- We are committed to listening to the voice of children and their families, and will involve them wherever possible in planning our priorities and where we are seeking to develop and improve our practice
- All published information will be made available via the BSCB website
- Written content will be in plain English. Arial size 12 will be used as the standard font for written information
- Reasonable attempts will be made to meet requests for larger print or alternative formats

...relevant and coordinated:

- We will be clear and transparent about the purpose of communication and participation activity
- We will feed back the findings of consultation and engagement activities in a timely and accessible manner
- We will seek to avoid duplication and consultation fatigue by identifying opportunities for communication and participation that meet a range of needs and by working together with our partners
- Where necessary we will coordinate or summarise information to suit the needs of different audience groups

...timely and well planned:

- We will inform, consult and engage in good time to give people sufficient time to respond and to ensure views are built into developments from the earliest stages
- Resource requirements for communication, consultation and engagement will be identified and built into budget plans
- An annual communications plan will be utilised to forward plan communications and engagement work

...appropriate:

- We will use a range of communication, consultation and engagement methods which are appropriate to the purpose and the audience
- We will look to other Boards and organisations for best practice learning
- We will evaluate the effectiveness of our activities and use the learning from this to ensure continued improvement

...professional and ethical:

- We will make sure people and information are kept safe by adhering to data protection requirements, as set out in the Data Protection Act

3 Audience Groups and Key Messages

The table below outlines the different audience groups for the BSCB, the key messages that we wish to communicate to each of these groups and the broad outcomes we hope to achieve by undertaking this communication.

A more detailed communications forward plan will be maintained, with activity focused around BSCB priorities. More specific messages and outcomes will be developed for individual communications campaigns, including for targeted audience groups where necessary. Individual campaigns will set out how outcomes will be measured.

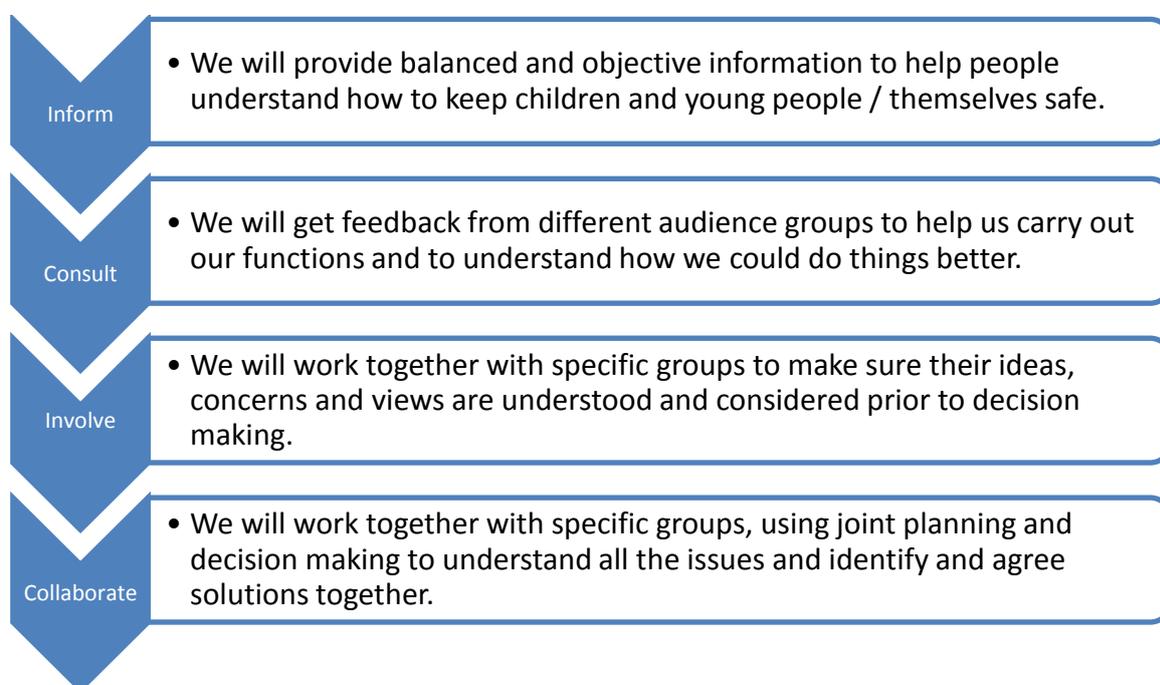
Audience Group	Message	Desired outcome
Everyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is safeguarding? • Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. • How to report a concern about a child. • Basic understanding of role of BSCB and the activity it undertakes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on safeguarding is easily accessible in a range of formats across all audience groups. • All audience groups and the wider community are encouraged to be mindful of safeguarding and to raise concerns. • Awareness of the BSCB
Children & Young People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to keep safe. • What to do if you / someone you know is being harmed / harming themselves. • For those that are involved in it, a basic understanding of the child protection system. • Opportunities to get involved in the work of the BSCB. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people have easy access to clear and up to date information on relevant safeguarding issues, especially how to get help. • Children and young people are encouraged to get involved in the work of the BSCB.
Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Organisations working with children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What support / help the Board can provide. • What good safeguarding practice is and how it can be improved. • How to access BSCB multi-agency safeguarding training and events. • How to access BSCB multi-agency safeguarding policies and procedures including Thresholds document. • How to recruit staff and volunteers safely and deal with allegations against them. • Promotion of Buckinghamshire Family Information Services (BFIS) as part of our Early Help Offer and as a resource to use when working with families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VCS organisations working with children and young people have easy access to clear and up to date information on relevant safeguarding issues. • VCS organisations working with children and young people feel supported in improving their safeguarding practice. • Allegations against staff and volunteers are reported. • BFIS is being widely used across different audience groups.
Parents & Carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to protect your children and others you are responsible for. • Information on safeguarding topics. • For those that are involved in it, a basic understanding of the child protection system. • How to access child protection procedures. • Promotion of Buckinghamshire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents and Carers have easy access to clear and up to date information on relevant safeguarding issues. • BFIS is being widely used across different audience groups.

	Family Information Services (BFIS) as a source of information.	
Board partners & statutory agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More detailed information on the role of the BSCB. • How to contact the BSCB. • What good safeguarding practice is and how it can be improved. • How to access BSCB multi-agency safeguarding training and events. • How to access BSCB multi-agency safeguarding policies and procedures including the Thresholds document. • How to recruit staff and volunteers safely and deal with allegations against them. • Learning from Serious Case Reviews, partnership reviews and audits. • Promotion of Buckinghamshire Family Information Services (BFIS) as part of our Early Help Offer and as a resource to use when working with families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agencies have easy access to clear and up to date information on relevant safeguarding issues. • Partnership working is strengthened and supported. • There is a shared understanding of safeguarding priorities and how these are being addressed. • Agencies feel supported in improving their safeguarding practice. • Allegations against staff and volunteers are reported. • Partners are accessing BSCB learning and development opportunities. • BFIS is being widely used across different audience groups
Other Partnerships	<p>There is a Joint Protocol setting out the relationship between the BSCB and the following strategic groups: Health and Wellbeing Board, Safeguarding Adult Board, Safer and Stronger Bucks Partnership Board, Adult Joint Executive Team, Children’s Joint Executive Team and Corporate Parenting Panel.</p> <p>Where there is benefit in including other partnerships in communication activity this will be written into communication plans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where relevant, statutory and other partnership are aware of and involved BSCB activity.
Local communities	<p>Specific information may be targeted at the wider community, or particular sections of the community given the important role they can play in recognising vulnerable children and building resilience and safety for children.</p> <p>Local media may be used and most proactive contact with the media will</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public awareness around key safeguarding issues is increased. • The BSCB and its partner agencies are represented in the press in a fair and balanced way. • In the case of negative events, people understand that the BSCB remains focused on

	<p>be around specific communications campaigns.</p> <p>Media strategies will also be prepared around serious case reviews and other significant safeguarding incidents. See media section below.</p>	<p>understanding and disseminating lessons learned to improve outcomes for children and young people.</p>
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4 Model of Communication and Participation

We want to establish a dialogue with our stakeholders that helps them to understand the role they can play in keeping children and young people safe, but also to be involved in shaping the priorities and work of the BSCB. For this reason we have adopted the following model of communication and participation.



5 Methods of Communication and Participation

The key communication and participation methods for the BSCB are outlined below. Specific campaigns will consider which channels will be most effective dependent upon the target audience and the information being communicated.

BSCB website: www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/

For: all audience groups

- ✓ **Inform:** The website contains separate sections to provide information for different audience groups. All BSCB published information will be provided on the website. It is

the key method for accessing BSCB multi-agency safeguarding policies and procedures and our multi-agency training programme.

- ✓ **Consult:** Online consultations may be run via the website.

BSCB Information Bulletin

For: Board partners and statutory agencies and the VCS

- ✓ **Inform:** From July 2015 an information bulletin will be published within 2 weeks of every full Board meeting. This will provide an overview of Board business, learning and development opportunities and any other key safeguarding news. This is designed to keep frontline professionals up to date with local safeguarding activity. Information bulletins will be published on the BSCB website and the link emailed directly to the following groups:

- BSCB Board members
- BSCB Sub Group Members
- BSCB Communications Network

It is expected that these groups should cascade the information bulletin further within their own organisations / sector.

- ✓ **Consult and involve:** Consultations and opportunities for participation will be promoted via the information bulletin.

Email

For: Board partners and Sub Groups

- ✓ **Inform:** Email will be used to communicate information relating to meetings to BSCB and Sub Group members. The BSCB team will aim to:
 - Send out papers a week in advance and circulate minutes within two weeks of a meeting.
 - Coordinate information where possible to avoid large numbers of emails being sent out.
 - Be clear about the purpose of any communication, including any action required and the timescale for this.

BSCB Multi-agency Training

For: Board partners and statutory agencies, the VCS, other local organisations whose staff work with children and young people

- ✓ **Inform:** A substantial programme of multi-agency training is run by the BSCB. Training will be regularly updated to reflect changing legislation and local practice, and to incorporate local priorities and new learning, for example from local serious case

reviews. The current training programme can be accessed via the BSCB website. Additional promotion will be undertaken according to need.

- ✓ **Consult:** Delegate evaluations will be used to improve training.

Board Events for professionals

For: Board partners and statutory agencies, the VCS, other local organisations whose staff work with children and young people

- ✓ **Inform:** The BSCB will run or work in partnership to support a variety of other events focused around BSCB priorities, for example full / half-day conferences or shorter 'pop-up sessions'. These will aim to raise awareness and improve practice around specific issues. All events will be advertised in the BSCB information bulletin and on the BSCB website. Additional promotion will be undertaken according to need.
- ✓ **Consult:** Events will always provide delegates with an opportunity to feedback their thoughts either through evaluation of the event or other methods.
- ✓ **Involve and collaborate:** Some events will provide a forum for more detailed involvement and collaboration to plan future approaches in partnership, for example BSCB Challenge Sessions.

Publications

For: All audience groups dependent upon publication

- ✓ **Inform:** The BSCB publishes a range of material aimed at different audience groups. For example policies, procedures and guidance aimed at professionals working with children and young people, information for parents and carers, learning from serious case reviews, the BSCB Annual Report. All such information will be published on the BSCB website. Additional promotion will be undertaken according to need.

Media statements

For: Members of the public

- ✓ **Inform:** Where there is potential for media interest in the work of the BSCB a media strategy will be prepared and where necessary a media statement will be prepared. This will include all serious case reviews and any serious safeguarding incident which has caused or may lead to media interest. Unless agreed otherwise, the BSCB Business Manager will work with the communications leads of relevant agencies and the BSCB Chair to prepare the media strategy. All relevant organisations will be informed about how they should respond in the case of press interest. A more detailed procedure for Serious Case Review Communications can be found in the Serious Case Review process document.

Planned BSCB media releases may also be issued to support specific safeguarding campaigns, for example to raise awareness around a particular topic. The BSCB will work with partners to ensure that such activity is coordinated – for example to help partners align key communication activity.

The Buckinghamshire County Council Communications Team will advise the BSCB on all media issues. The BSCB Independent Chair and Business Manager must be involved in all planned media activity relating to the BSCB. The Chair of the Board will be approached in the first instance for interviews or statements on safeguarding issues, with the Chair calling upon appropriate representatives to assist where necessary.

Consultation and participation activity

- ✓ **Consult, involve and collaborate:** The BSCB is committed to listening to the views of all audience groups, and in using the outcomes from consultation and participation activity to inform our future work. The voice of the child is a key priority for the BSCB. We want to ensure that children and young people in particular are able to contribute to the work of the BSCB, and that this informs the way in which services are delivered locally.

Alongside the opportunities for consultation and involvement presented above, the BSCB will run and support specific activity designed to ensure that different audience groups can input into our work.

- The **Youth Voice Steering Group** has been set up by Buckinghamshire County Council to act as the main conduit for children and young people's participation in Buckinghamshire. The BSCB will work closely with this group to facilitate the involvement of children and young people in our work.
- All **audits** conducted by the BSCB will incorporate the voice of the child where this is appropriate.
- All **Serious Case Reviews** will seek to involve the family of the child or young person involved. Where possible the views of the child or young person involved will also be sought.
- **Specific events** will be held to facilitate consultation and involvement linked to Board priorities.
- We will actively seek opportunities for **partnership working and co-production** with children and young people and with other audience groups where possible.

6 Roles and Responsibilities

There is currently no specific post or dedicated capacity within the BSCB responsible for communication and participation. Rather the responsibility for this is distributed across all

Board and Sub Group members and shared with the BSCB Independent Chair and Business Manager.

The BSCB Business Manager is responsible for:

- Ensuring the Communication and Participation Strategy and Procedures are updated on an annual basis
- Producing the BSCB information bulletins and cascading these across partners
- Coordinating the Communications Forward Plan with input from each of the Sub Groups and sharing this across the partnership communications network
- Coordinating the partnership communications network

The BSCB Administration Team is responsible for:

- Ensuring information on the BSCB website is up to date and easily accessible.
- Supporting effective communication and circulation of papers to Board and Sub Group members.

The BSCB Training Manager is responsible for:

- Ensuring BSCB multi-agency training communicates up to date information which reflects local policies and procedures and learning from serious case reviews or other reviews.

A virtual **partnership communications network** has been set up to help ensure that our partner agencies are kept informed about the activity of the BSCB and our communications activity. This consists of communications officers from across our key partners. The communications forward plan will be shared across the network to facilitate better alignment and partnership working around key campaigns. The network will meet on an 'as needs' basis to discuss the forward communications plan and evaluate the effectiveness of joint working.

Individual members of the partnership communications network are responsible for:

- Sharing the communications forward plan within their own agency in order to identify opportunities for aligning communications activity, or for partnership working
- Where possible supporting BSCB communication activity by helping to distribute information through their own communication channels (for example staff newsletters, community groups etc.)
- Sharing relevant safeguarding information from their organisation back through the network
- Contributing to media strategies as appropriate

Within the member compact, **BSCB members** have a specific responsibility to:

- Ensure that relevant departments within their agency are informed of the work and agreements of the BSCB and contribute to the safeguarding work of the BSCB
- Communicate key messages about safeguarding within their own agency

They are also responsible for ensuring that relevant safeguarding issues are communicated back to the BSCB.

The BSCB will facilitate this role by providing the BSCB Information Update and by specifying whether individual Board papers can be shared or should remain confidential.

Where BSCB members are representing a wider sector (e.g. schools and VCS representatives) or are representing a local community view (lay members), the BSCB Business Manager will work with these representatives to discuss how they can best support communication across these wider sectors and how the BSCB can facilitate this.

Within their role descriptions, **BSCB Sub Group members** have a specific responsibility to:

- Play a part in raising awareness of safeguarding within the own organisation and the wider community in Buckinghamshire

Each Sub Group should:

- Complete a communications forward plan to support their work plan and share this with the BSCB Business Manager
- Utilise the contacts and communications channels available through the organisations of their members and through the partnership communications network to support the delivery of this plan

The BSCB will facilitate this role by providing the BSCB information bulletin.

7 Arrangements for Review

This Strategy will be formally agreed by the BSCB and reviewed on a bi-annual basis. Next review due July 2017.