

Information update

August 2011

Government responds to the Munro Report

The government has set out its response to Professor Eileen Munro's recommendations to reform the child protection system.

The response outlines the government's intention to work with professionals to build a system focused on the needs, views and experiences of vulnerable children. The government aims to reduce central regulation and prescription and place greater trust and responsibility in skilled professionals and local leaders to bring about long-term reform.

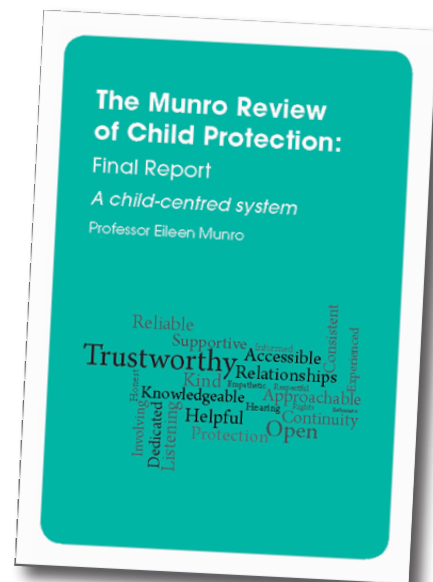
The government says that its ambition is for a child protection system that truly values and acts on the feedback of children, young people and their families. Ministers agree with Professor Munro that the current system is overly focused on complying with procedures and targets as a measure of success. The new approach is based on developing professional expertise and providing a range of help and services to children and families that meet all their needs.

Children's Minister Tim Loughton said:

"Today's response is the first stage of a journey which will fundamentally change the child protection system – we're not just tinkering at the edges and fixing short term problems. We are freeing hardworking social workers and other professionals from structures, procedures and rulebooks so they can do their best for vulnerable children and their families.

"This is a new mindset and a new relationship between central government and local services. I am determined that we build on the excellent work of Professor Munro and I trust the workforce to deliver the reforms without working to prescription.

"We have worked openly and collaboratively with professionals and children's leaders to create reforms that are sustainable in the long term. The government is not in the business of telling local services how to implement the reforms – as has



happened in the past – because this has been shown by Professor Munro to result in unintended consequences.

"The changes will take time to fully implement. We have outlined some key milestones so that we keep up momentum and ensure that the process is advanced by next year. I am confident that working together we will give more of our children a safe and happy childhood."

Professor Munro will continue to advise the government and will undertake an interim assessment of progress next year.

Professor Munro commented:

"This is the start of a reform process to move the focus of help and protection firmly onto children and young people and away from compliance with excessive bureaucratic demands. It is time to give professionals more freedom and responsibility for improving their skills in helping children and young people. The presence and influence of professionals working with the government is crucial in delivering the reforms in the longer term."

An Implementation Working Group, drawing on expertise from local authority children's services, social workers, education, police and the health service, advised the government on its response to Professor Munro's report.

More on the next page...

The response includes the following actions by the government:

- A radical reduction in the amount of central regulation and locally designed rules and procedures.
- Slimmed down statutory guidance in the interim by December 2011, including removing timescales for assessments and removing the distinction between initial and core assessment.
- A Chief Social Worker to provide a permanent professional presence for social work in Government, to cover children and adults, in place by the end of 2012.
- The Department for Education to establish a joint programme of work with the Department of Health by September 2011 to make sure children's safeguarding is a central consideration of the health reforms.
- Undertake further work with the sector to consider the evidence and opportunities for using systems review methodology for Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) to help all local services properly learn the lessons from SCRs.

Actions for local services to implement include:

- Local authorities to appoint a practising senior social worker as a Principal Child and Family Social Worker.
- Local services to increase the range and number of preventative services and to provide families with an 'early help offer'.

- Local authorities to assess and redesign child and family social services, based on feedback from children and families.

There are several actions in the plan to improve inspection, including:

- All local services – health, education, police, probation and the justice system – to be inspected on how well they protect children.
- The experiences of children and families to be at the heart of Ofsted's inspection system, looking at how effective the help has been rather than whether certain processes have been met.

Ministers have agreed to extend ongoing trials to give social workers greater autonomy so they can better exercise their professional judgment. Current trials in Westminster, Knowsley, Cumbria and Hackney have seen social workers completing assessments within timescales that they think would meet children's needs better.

The current trials will now run to December 2011, and be extended to five Community Budget areas – Hull, Kensington & Chelsea, Hammersmith & Fulham, Wandsworth and Swindon. Evidence will be used to inform changes to the statutory guidance on assessment.

For more information on the report and the government's response, go to the [DfE website](#).

Police engagement with children and young people

As part of its programme of community engagement Richmond Police held a very successful open day at Twickenham Police Station on 10 July. Over 1200 local people visited and took part in a variety of activities. The Youth Offending Team's stall was one of the most popular attractions. PS Turner and her colleagues took over 450 photos of young people, which were attached to a 'Wanted by Twickenham Police' poster, for them to take home, as a memento of the day.

The event was an opportunity for the community to meet with their local police. It was also a chance for the Met to promote its Volunteer Police Cadet programme to young people. The Volunteer Police Cadets is an uniformed organisation open to 14-19 year olds.

For more information, contact Inspector Mark Davies, mark.davies3@met.pnn.police.uk

For more information on the Police Cadet programme, go to: www.met.police.uk/cadets



Annual Safeguarding Children Conference

The Annual Safeguarding Children Conference was held on 8 June at Twickenham Stadium. The theme was protecting children from the hidden harm of drug and alcohol misuse.

The conference featured presentations from speakers with wide-ranging expertise and experience in the field of child protection and adult alcohol and drug misuse, showcasing good practice and sharing resources.

It was attended by 250 professionals from the local authority, the police, health services and voluntary sector, and was rated as good or excellent by the vast majority of those who attended.

Speakers included:

- **Judge Nicholas Crighton** – Sits on the Family Drug and Alcohol Court, a pioneering court in central London that aims to break the cycle of parental drug and alcohol abuse resulting in children being taken into care. Member of the Munro Review Group which looked at child protection systems.
- **Dr Mike Shaw** – From the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust. Expert on the impact on child mental health of drug and alcohol abuse within families.
- **Judith Harwin** – Professor of Social Work at Brunel University and directs the Brunel Interdisciplinary Child and Youth Focused Research Centre. Member of a European Union 17-country study of children whose parents misuse alcohol.
- **Mary Ryan** – Independent consultant on children's services. Research fellow for the evaluation of the Family Drug and Alcohol Court.
- **Richard Green** – Retired Metropolitan Police Detective Sergeant. Served on Scotland Yard's Child Protection Command, and worked on the Child Abuse Investigation Team in Richmond upon Thames and Hounslow.
- **Shelagh Willis** – Former Named Nurse for Safeguarding Children in Kensington & Chelsea, Westminster and Richmond upon Thames. Now delivering safeguarding training, based on her extensive experience of child protection issues in the borough.

The conference, sponsored by Mondale Events, also featured a performance by Potential Youth Theatre.

You can download conference presentations from the [LSCB website](#).



Judge Nicholas Crighton speaking at the conference

Training update

Child Abuse Investigation Team training

This course is designed to give you an understanding of the role and responsibilities of the Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT).

The training will provide you with knowledge of how partner agencies work together and share information.

By the end of this course you will:

- have learnt how and why child protection teams were formed in the Police;
- have gained a detailed understanding of the role of members in the CAIT, the structure of the team and the terms of reference applied by the team;
- have developed your knowledge of the responsibilities and situations addressed by the CAIT;
- be provided with the skills necessary to improve relationships between partner agencies; and
- have discussed scenarios and cases to increase your awareness of issues.

Targeted training to professionals who work in a social work or similar capacity where there is regular contact with children, young people and their families and who may be in a position to identify concerns about maltreatment.

Date	18 October or 22 November
Time	9.30am to 12.30pm
Facilitator/trainer	Richard Green
Venue	Curriculum and Training Centre, Clifden Road, Twickenham, TW1 4LT
Charge	Please refer to the CPD terms and conditions online

Please complete an [online booking form](#) if you wish to attend.

Please note that this does not guarantee you a place on this training. Confirmation of place will be emailed to you to confirm your place.

This training is currently tailored to social workers in Richmond upon Thames. If you are interested in attending a multi-professional version, email Anita Bhangoo, anita.bhangoo@richmond.gov.uk

Understanding the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference level 2 training

There are still a number of places available on the next MARAC level 2 course, Thursday 8 September (9.30am to 4.30pm).

This course is ideal for anyone who is leading for their own organisation on Domestic Abuse, or who represents their organisation at the MARAC. It is also suitable for all staff who work with adults or children who may be the victims of domestic abuse.

For more details, please contact Mick Allen, Domestic Abuse and Hate Crime Coordinator, 020 8831 6198, michael.allen@richmond.gov.uk

Training needs table

There is a updated training needs table available for schools, managers and practitioners in Richmond upon Thames to assess and identify staff training needs.

You can view this and all available courses for training in safeguarding and child protection at:

www.richmond.gov.uk/safeguarding_and_child_protection

For more details on training, contact the Workforce Development Team on 020 8487 5345.

Letting Children be Children – the Bailey Report

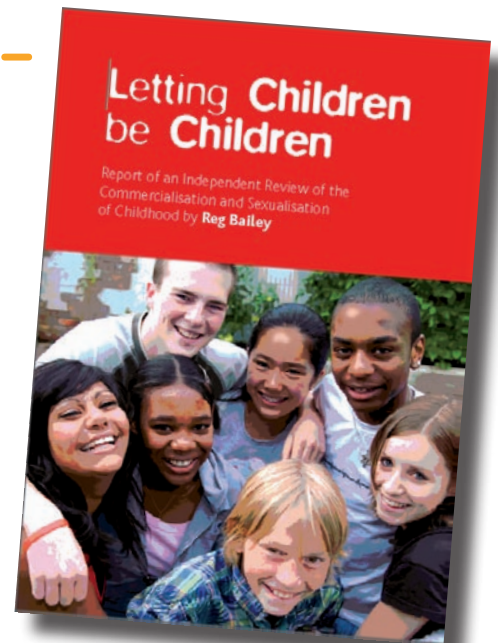
The government commissioned an independent review into the commercialisation and sexualisation of childhood. Reg Bailey, Chief Executive of Mothers' Union, led the review, and his report was published in June 2011.

It calls on businesses and media to play their part in ending what it sees as the drift towards an increasingly sexualised 'wallpaper' that surrounds children.

The recommendations include:

- Providing parents with one single website to make it easier to complain about any programme, advert, product or service.
- Putting age restrictions on music videos to prevent children buying sexually explicit videos and guide broadcasters over when to show them.
- Covering up sexualised images on the front pages of magazines and newspapers so they are not in easy sight of children.
- Making it easier for parents to block adult and age-restricted material from the internet.
- The retail industry should sign up to new guidelines on the design, buying, display and marketing of clothes, products and services for children.
- Restricting outdoor adverts containing sexualised imagery where large numbers of children are likely to see them, for example near schools, nurseries and playgrounds.
- Giving greater weight to the views of parents in the regulation of pre-watershed TV.
- Banning the employment of children under 16 as brand ambassadors and in peer-to-peer marketing, and improving parents' awareness of advertising and marketing techniques aimed at children.

You can download the report from the [DfE website](#).



“ Reg Bailey:

Society has become increasingly full of sexualised imagery. This has created a wallpaper to children's lives. Parents feel there is no escape and no clear space where children can be children.

I want to put the power back in parents' hands so they can better manage the pressures on their children and make it easier for them to bring up their children the way they want.

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Family Justice Review: interim report

The Family Justice Review's interim report, published in March, set out proposals to tackle problems faced by the family justice system.

The report says that the welfare of the child should remain paramount in law, as at present, and courts should focus on the core issues that are most important to the welfare of children.

Among the recommendations are unifying the family justice service under a specialist board, with strong links to local safeguarding children boards, to supervise agencies and give support to families; and a unified family court system. Specialist judges would hear cases from start to finish, and court social services would become part of the streamlined family justice system.

The full report and an executive summary can be downloaded from the [Ministry of Justice website](#).

NSPCC launches texting service

The NSPCC Helpline has launched a mobile phone texting service which will allow members of the public to contact the Helpline by texting 88858. Members of the public can use the text service to seek advice and assistance and also to report concerns that may need follow-up action or investigation. The service will be run on a pilot basis in the first instance until the end of 2011.



The public can send a text anonymously if they wish at no cost to themselves. On receipt of the text, the Helpline will send an immediate automated confirmation response and then a specific response to their enquiry from a Helpline practitioner within three hours.

The NSPCC hopes that the new service will improve accessibility to the Helpline and enable people to act immediately.

Other options include:

- phone – 0808 800 5000,
- email – help@nspcc.org.uk, and
- reporting online at www.nspcc.org.uk/helpline.

All these services are available free to users and on a 24-hour basis.

As part of the pilot, the NSPCC will be evaluating the service. If you have any comments or questions, please contact John Cameron, Head of the NSPCC Helpline, jcameron@nspcc.org.uk.

National eCAF announcement

The Department for Education (DfE) has announced that it is minded to withdraw its support for National eCAF and that it proposes to decommission the system. This is not a final decision to scrap the system and there is currently a period of consultation taking place. The responses from the consultation will help inform their final decision.

The DfE decision is based around a recommendation from the final Munro Report that the government should not endorse nationally prescribed approaches to IT systems. The Munro Report, however, was explicitly clear on the importance of early intervention, and within Richmond upon Thames the CAF process is a key enabler of this.

This announcement should have no effect on the way you are currently working. There is still complete commitment to the CAF process and there are no plans to change the way we are successfully using the CAF to improve outcomes for children and young people within the borough.

If you have any questions on this, please contact Tom Chapman, ICT Project Manager, t.chapman@richmond.gov.uk or 020 8891 7995.

If you have any queries about any of the items in this newsletter contact Karen Neill, Head of Safeguarding Quality and Performance: k.neill@richmond.gov.uk

New Named Nurse

Hounslow and Richmond Community Healthcare NHS Trust would like to welcome Andrea Knock as its new Named Nurse for Safeguarding Children.

Andrea started on 1 August and will be managing the safeguarding team within the Trust and will lead on behalf of the organisation on LSCB sub-committees and safeguarding audits.

Contact details

Phone: 020 8630 3279

Email: andrea.knock@hrch.nhs.uk

Address: Sovereign Court, 15-21 Staines Road, Hounslow, TW3 3HR