

Barking & Dagenham Safeguarding Children Board

Faith and Culture Committee



Welcome to the first newsletter from the Faith and Culture Committee. My name is Rahat Ismail and I have been the chair of the committee since July 2014. I also work for Barking and Dagenham as a locality manager in Early Intervention, Children's Services where I hold the portfolio for equalities and diversity. I am a firm believer in dignity and the equal rights of people and so I am privileged to include my work for the Human Rights Commission in my journey.

To strengthen my learning, I am completing a degree in Global Politics and International Relations at Birkbeck, University of London.

Having been born and raised in Barking and Dagenham, I have seen an immense change in the borough. It has evolved to become a place of diversity and multiculturalism. The richness of different religions, values and traditions also bring a responsibility to us as professionals to understand how this affects the safeguarding of children. This newsletter will show how the Faith and Culture Committee realise these aspects and work towards helping us all to care for our children and young people.

In line with the revisions to Working Together 2013, the Safeguarding Children Board restructured its Committees and so the Faith and Culture Committee was set up in early 2014.

Over the past 12 months the Committee has established a committed multi agency membership, which continues to grow in order to meet its objectives:

- Promote and develop a culturally competent workforce in relation to safeguarding children across Faith, Culture and Community, using a range of approaches engaging communities;
- Collate and analyse data, sharing good practice examples across the partnership; and

- Link with National networks and Local Faith forums to share information.

Promote a culturally competent workforce:

The Committee has hosted numerous briefing sessions for Practitioners on harmful practices, which were all well attended. These training sessions include topics such as:

- Spirit Possession and the accusation of Witchcraft;
- Female Genital Mutilation;
- Honour based violence;
- Forced Marriage; and
- Alternative Child rearing practices: Private Fostering, Physical Chastisement

Each briefing session was attended by 60-80 practitioners across the multi agency network, each regarded as informative and engaging. Future training sessions are currently being arranged, with the next briefing on Trafficking and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) scheduled to coincide with the CSE week in March 2015.

After each briefing session, Committee members create a factsheet for Practitioners to use as a prompt when back at work, providing a brief overview of the topic discussed along with key contact details. Past factsheets can also be obtained from the website - <http://www.bardag-lscb.co.uk/Pages/CultureandFaithCommittee.aspx>

There is also a suite of E-Learning training available for all practitioners to access across the agencies. This includes the recently released Home Office E-learning module on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Forced Marriage and Child Sexual Exploitation which are all free to access. These modules take around 45 minutes to complete and allows for practitioners to raise their awareness on the subject, whilst in their own working environment.

Details of all training events, including E-learning, and access to previous training presentations are available on the LSCB website: <http://www.bardag-lscb.co.uk/events/Pages/Home.aspx>

Analysis of data and sharing good practice

The number of referrals received by MASH in respect of faith based issues is being analysed by the Committee regularly now. The numbers are currently low, however this could be a recording issue as the referrals may not associate directly with Honour Based Violence, for example, but would be the presenting issue of assault potentially.

The number of Child Deaths where a black ethnicity was recorded was highlighted within the CDOP Annual Report. The information and data from this report is being reviewed by the Committee to understand if there is any additional support or work that can be undertaken with this particular faith sector to raise awareness.

The Police Powers of Protection report showed that there were a high number of Black British families that had their children removed due to physical punishment and injuries to children. The Alternative Child Rearing Practice briefing focuses on physical chastisement to address this issue.

Link with Local and National networks

The Committee has established links with a wide range of practitioners and forums, ensuring that the membership is multi agency and diverse. Member agencies consist of LBBDD, Health, Police, Adult Services, Education, as well as representation from the Faith Forum, Adanna Woman's group, and the Somali Woman's group from the Voluntary Sector in Barking & Dagenham. A full Terms of Reference can be found on the LSCB website at <http://www.bardag-lscb.co.uk/Pages/CultureandFaithCommittee.aspx>

In summer 2014, Shaukat Warraich from Faith Associates, presented to the Committee, on the Quality Assurance framework standards that they have developed. This framework involved Faith Associates working with Mosques and Madrassahs in the borough, delivering training and guidance on policy and process in order to raise the quality of teaching, and level of safeguarding. The Mosques and Madrassahs are then issued a quality standards certificate. Faith Associates currently offer UK Imams and Madrassahs teacher's assistance into obtaining a Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). The Faith Associates also supported the Committee in presenting to the Safeguarding Children Board in September 2014. More information can be obtained from the Faith Associates website <http://www.faithassociates.co.uk/>

A Private Fostering Team has been set up in the borough and the Lead Social Worker, Nilza Saide presented to the group on her role and the remit of the team. Nilza has also been a willing participant in the training events that the Committee has delivered. Private Fostering occurs when:

- A child under 16 (or under 18 if disabled) is cared for and provided with accommodation,
- By an adult who is not a close relative, for 28 days or more by private arrangement between the parent and carer. Close relatives are defined as step parents by marriage, grandparents, uncles or aunts.

If you require more information, or require advice and guidance on matters pertaining to Private Fostering, please contact Nilza on nilza.saide@lbbd.gov.uk or call 020 8227 5853.

The committee has secured the membership of Kathleen Ward, from the Traveller Community. Kathleen recently presented at the Alternative Child rearing practices briefing, updating practitioners on the culture of the Traveller Community, and dispelling myths. This was a really interactive session with several questions posed and answered. Following the presentation Kathleen provided additional information on the Traveller Movement. Information can be accessed from www.travellermovement.org.uk

LBBB has recently employed an African Families Community Outreach Officer, Francisca Apau. Francisca's role is to engage with the wider Faith communities, providing advice and information in relation to safeguarding, but also mapping current resources in borough. Francisca is also a member of the Faith and Culture Committee where the links she develops with the community will be useful in conveying the safeguarding messages. As part of this role, Francisca has been asked to follow-up on the safeguarding protocols for a local church after training had been provided by the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS). This is a good example of support given by the LSCB. If you require further information on Francisca's role, or would like some advice or guidance please contact her on francisca.apau@lbbd.gov.uk, or call 020 8227 3864.

The **Safe Network** (www.safenetwork.org.uk) is a great safeguarding resource, who have presented to the Committee in 2014. The Safe Network has now launched their online Multi Faith Safeguarding hub. This is an online platform bringing together a range of perspectives and resources from people of faith. It has been designed to assist practitioners who are safeguarding children and young people in faith settings. This is a multi faith hub, covering six main faiths as extracted from the latest census information, and provides information, film clips, and good practice examples for all to review. The site is **free** for all to use, although a short registration page will need to be completed first. The hub can be accessed from here - <http://www.safenetwork.org.uk/resources/mfsh/Pages/mfs-hub.aspx>

The Committee recently heard from Sonia Drozd, Substance Misuse Strategy Team in relation to the drug Khat and its new criminal status. Khat is a plant, the leaves of which are chewed to create a 'high'. This is most prominently used within East African Communities, most commonly amongst Somalian males, although this is not exclusive to them. From 24 June 2014 Khat is controlled as a Class C drug, and carries a 2 years prison sentence, and unlimited fine, or both. A factsheet on Khat is currently being revised and will be uploaded to the LSCB website shortly.

Going forward 2015-16

The Committee representatives are undertaking revisions to the FGM policy, in partnership with Havering, Redbridge, NELFT, and BHRUT in order to develop a Tri-Borough FGM Policy including pathways.

The Committee have also planned a rolling programme of briefing events for the coming year, focusing on Trafficking, Female Genital Mutilation, Forced Marriage to name a few. All details once agreed will be advertised on the LSCB website.

If you require more information on the Faith and Culture Committee please refer to the LSCB website or call Rahat Ismail on 0208 724 1147.