

Free training opportunity to help protect children

A SERIES of unique free child safeguarding training days for clubs and organisations is launched this week.

The training initiative is the brainchild of the independent Hampshire Children and Young People's Alliance and aims to better equip people working with youngsters.

The alliance hopes to attract workers from voluntary, private and commercial organisations, including sports clubs, youth clubs, cubs/scouts movements, church-based youth groups and toddler groups - all of which fall outside the normal statutory training provision.

Explained its chairman Cedric Riley: "Courses are often hard to find, harder to reach and costly. In these times of frequent legislative change it is important that people in these organisations are kept up to date."

Funding from the Children's Workforce Development Council has enabled the alliance to join forces with Hampshire's Early Education and Childcare Unit to hold the five free training days across the county in February and March.

The courses will cover Child Protection, the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and the all important safer recruitment, an area that has undergone considerable change since the murder of two 10 year olds by school caretaker Ian Huntley in 2002.

Experts will take the sessions - which have been specifically designed to fit the voluntary and private organisations they are aimed at - and participants can select two subjects to follow during the day.

The safer recruitment workshop will give participants an overview of Hampshire's own process and help them to apply it to their own group's procedures for recruiting staff and volunteers.

While raising awareness of safeguarding issues, the child protection workshop will also help highlight each group's role in ensuring children stay safe, one of the key outcomes under the Government's Every Child Matters agenda.

From April the Common Assessment Framework will be used nationally to record information about the needs and strengths of a child or young person and their family and, if appropriate, whether to share that information. The private and voluntary sectors play a key role in this and the CAF workshop will give people an understanding of the process and how it relates to their organisation.

Said Mr Riley: "We want people to really enjoy the experience so that they will come back for more training. These are serious issues, but we plan to present them in a way that will still make the whole training experience unique and enjoyable.

"Our skilled speakers will put volunteer workers or paid staff fully in the picture, so that the children they are working with get the best possible level of care they can give them.

“All the courses are completely free and we hope the bursaries we will be able to offer in some cases for travel and other expenses will really make sure everyone who wants to can attend,”he added.

Refreshments and lunch will be available and all the courses will be fully certificated by the Early Education and Children’s Unit.

Venues have been booked in Winchester (Kings School, 27/02), Totton (Testwood Sports College, 25/03), Liphook, (Millennium Hall 18/03), Basingstoke (Popley Fields, 11/03) and Gosport (Brune Park School 19/03).

Anyone interested in attending can find more information by logging on to www.hants-alliance.org.uk. by emailing winchester@hcff.org.uk or if they do not have access to a computer by telephoning (01962) 857379.

Picture caption:

ON THE BALL: Sports clubs are one of the groups that could benefit from this training

NOTE TO EDITORS: The children pictured are Winchester Football Club’s Under 12s with their manager. Permission was gained from the club and all parents for these pictures (taken on 12/01/08) to accompany this press release for publication.

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