

**PRESS RELEASE**

22nd March 2016

**– VCF /Unity in Vision (UinV) seek to address the challenge of austerity on BME Children Safeguarding Services within Dorset**

A Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) with UinV signed today in the presence of statutory authority representatives at the BME Children Services Safeguarding Forum encompasses an approach to address the growing challenge shrinking statutory services face in trying to engage with BME families and communities to help prevent any escalation of neglect and harm to children.

The key objective of VCF's community engagement models to be introduced into Dorset through UinV is for early intervention and prevention coupled with minimising the cost to the public purse when safeguarding interventions are required.

In view of the growing demand for children's services and advocacy particularly within the BME community where many families are at risk of multiple disadvantages. VCF has reached a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) regarding cooperation in the supervision and oversight by VCF of their family and community engagement models within Dorset with UinV.

The VCF family and community engagement models offer a framework of family/community consultation, engagement and collaboration to achieve family engagement and community partnership objectives. This was outlined at the BME Children Services Forum held today.

These VCF models play a key role in supporting BME families as well as advocating for greater family engagement by professionals. They do not seek to replace or replicate the work of professional staff within the local authorities, but rather, to complement their work by carrying out the VCF family and community engagement models to work alongside local authority professionals and services.



**ENDS**

## NOTES TO EDITORS

- **The Victoria Climbié Foundation (VCF)** The Victoria Climbié Foundation was established by Mr and Mrs Climbié (Victoria's parents) to campaign for improvements in child protection policies and practices and to ensure effective links & coordination between statutory agencies, care services and communities. [www.vcf-uk.org](http://www.vcf-uk.org)
- VCF contributed to the Victims' Taskforce led by Sir Keir Starmer QC and Baroness Lawrence during 2014 which published its taskforce report and recommendations for improvements to the criminal justice system to cater for the rights, protection and support for victims (February 2015).
- VCF currently leads and chairs the National Working Group on Child Abuse linked to Faith or Belief; supporting victims and witnesses is one of four key strands for the group, which comprises representatives from statutory, voluntary, community and faith sectors, and individuals with specialist knowledge and expertise <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/action-plan-to-stop-child-abuse-in-the-name-of-faith-or-belief>
- Voices from the front line: supporting our social workers in the delivery of quality services to children – a research paper by the Victoria Climbié Foundation and HCL Social Care to explore the current social work system and its ability to achieve the expectations of the Children and Families Act 2014. <http://vcf-uk.org/vcf-calls-for-urgent-action-in-new-research-voices-from-the-front-line/>
- 'Engaging children and families; the role of advocacy within child protection – a pilot study' (September 2015) offers an evaluation of VCF advocacy casework <http://vcf-uk.org/vcf-offers-a-genuine-approach-to-engaging-with-children-and-families/>.
- 'My Languages Matter; the multilingual outlook for children in care – A White Paper. The Victoria Climbié Foundation UK and Mothertongue explore the impact of linguistic and cultural heritage through child protection work. Are we effectively considering the relevance of these themes when we are making decision in the best interest of the child <http://vcf-uk.org/my-languages-matter-the-multilingual-outlook-for-children-in-care/>
- **Unity in Vision (UinV)** Unity in Vision is a multicultural, interfaith voluntary group working on uniting the people/families of Pan Dorset (Poole, Bournemouth and Dorset) through social/educational/consultation projects working in partnership with a range of service providers. Members are from the local/national BME and wider community circles, from 23 Ethnic backgrounds.

### **Dorset Statutory Authorities, Services & Communities represented at today's BME Children Services Forum meeting:**

Children Services, Borough of Poole (Chair)

Children Services, Bournemouth Borough Council

Dorset Police

NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group

Dorset Healthcare University NHS Foundation Trust

Dorset Race Equality Council

Communities: Chair of Dorset Bengali Association, Chair of Bournemouth and Poole Holocaust Memorial Day Committee, Secretary of Dorset Iranian and Farsi Association, Committee Member of The Gambian Association Dorset, Bournemouth Islamic Centre and Central Mosque (BICCM) Representatives, Polish Community Representatives, Kenyan Community Representative, Bournemouth Chinese School Representative

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