What is This?

OnlineFirst Version of Record - Jun 20, 2011

>> Version of Record - Jul 26, 2011
The role of school psychologists in child protection and safeguarding

Kevin Woods
University of Manchester, Manchester, UK

Caroline Bond
University of Manchester, Manchester, UK

Kath Tyldesley
University of Manchester, Manchester, UK

Peter Farrell
University of Manchester, Manchester, UK

Neil Humphrey
University of Manchester, Manchester, UK

Abstract
Child protection and safeguarding are important aspects of work for all professionals working with children. The current article outlines the international context of school psychologists' work in relation to child protection and safeguarding and describes the United Kingdom context in more detail. Given the relatively recent broadening of the UK legislative focus, to include safeguarding in addition to child protection, a review of current practice is needed. A UK survey was commissioned and undertaken in order to identify the current and potential contributions of school psychologists in relation to child protection and safeguarding. This mixed methods survey included an initial focus group with school psychologists, a questionnaire survey of all school psychology services in the UK, and site visits to four selected school psychology services. The research found that school psychologists undertake a wide range of child protection and safeguarding work at universal, targeted and specialized levels. This work includes partnership with a wide variety of other professionals. Future development of school
psychology’s role in child protection and safeguarding in the UK is discussed, and implications for school psychologists in other countries are considered.

**Keywords**
child protection, professional partnership, safeguarding, school psychology

The World Health Organisation estimates that 40 million children under 14 years of age are victims of abuse or neglect annually; however, others argue that the figure is much higher (Svevo-Cianci, Hart, & Rubinson, 2010). Child protection is therefore a vitally important international issue. In 1989 the Convention on the Rights of the Child was unanimously adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and has had almost universal ratification (cf. Mulinge, 2010). The Convention on the Rights of the Child represents a major international commitment to protecting children from harm and has led to legal reforms in many countries. However, Mulinge (2010) concludes that there is still much work to be done to protect children from maltreatment and ensure their rights are protected.

Svevo-Cianci et al. (2010) surveyed national experts in 42 countries, and identified only 33% of countries in their sample as having at least a basic child protection system. Professionals identified countries with a child protection infrastructure, information-based interventions and a multi-agency response as more successful. Training of professionals was important but needed to be supported by reporting systems and public awareness campaigns to be effective. However, even among those countries with high levels of established child protection there was a lack of outcome data on which to measure effectiveness.

Countries also vary in the extent to which child protection systems have a preventative focus. Katz and Hetherington (2006) studied welfare systems in 12 European nations. They identified dualistic welfare systems, such as in the UK, which focus on preventing child abuse and offer family support as a separate strand. In contrast, holistic systems, which are found in many Nordic countries, have more of a family support focus and emphasize early intervention and preventative work. Katz and Hetherington (2006) asked professionals to discuss case vignettes and found that systems per se did not predict effectiveness, but good resourcing, effective communication between agencies, and strong community were more associated with effective practice. They concluded that where the underlying focus of the system is upon risk it may be more difficult to create a culture which values professional judgement and communication. However, a lack of outcome data makes objective comparison of systems difficult.

In many countries school psychologists (SPs) work closely with other professionals to promote the welfare of children (Jimerson, Oakland, & Farrell, 2007). SPs have a key role to play in making other professionals aware of the impact of children’s experiences upon their development. Some examples include Phasa’s (2008) work in South Africa with teachers in relation to sexual abuse,

In many countries preventative work is also seen as a key contribution of SPs. Guzzo, Martinez, and Campos (2007) discuss the work of Brazilian SPs in relation to preventing drug abuse and violence. Preventative work with vulnerable young people and their families has also included activities such as parenting support (Germain, Brassard, & Hart, 1985) and promoting students’ rights (Veiga, Garcia, Neto, & Almeida, 2009), and recent technological changes have led to work on combating cyberbullying (Cassidy, Jackson, & Brown, 2009). Most psychology services also have a key role in relation to critical incident response; Dunkel (2007) describes how the Erfurt school shooting incident in 2002 was a catalyst for Germany developing a multi-agency network of specialists in this area.

The UK context

The work of SPs is very varied across countries and will be influenced by external factors such as a country’s culture, economy and national/local priorities and internal factors specific to the profession of school psychology in each country (Jimerson et al., 2007). However, child protection and preventative work are core areas of work for SPs internationally.

In the UK, SPs, alongside all other professionals who work with children, have a responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of children (HM Government, 2004). HM Government (2006) defines child protection as, the ‘process of protecting individual children identified as either suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect’ (p. 27). Safeguarding is defined more broadly as

the process of protecting children from abuse or neglect, preventing impairment of their health and development, and ensuring they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care that enables children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully. (p. 27)

In the 1970s and 1980s social workers had a specific brief to work with the most vulnerable families (Parton, 2006) where there was risk of child abuse. However, there has been a gradual legislative shift towards promoting child development and welfare through professional collaboration and shared responsibility. In ‘Working together to safeguard children’, HM Government (1999) provides a more child-centred and multi-agency assessment of the child within their family and community. The ‘Every Child Matters’ agenda (HM Government, 2004) outlines a continuum of universal, targeted and specialist services to safeguard children.2 The creation of Directors of Children’s Services to lead both Social Services and Education Departments, was also seen as way of increasing collaboration. Although this shift has been generally well received, the sometimes conflicting
philosophies of child protection and family support can cause tension (Forrester, McCambridge, Waissbein, & Rollnick, 2008) and multi-agency working can present challenges (Frost & Robinson, 2007).

The shift towards shared responsibility for children’s welfare has also increased the role of schools in relation to child protection and safeguarding. This wider role has led to a range of school-based initiatives such as drug awareness, violence prevention and anti-bullying, sometimes in collaboration with SPs.

In relation to SP work specifically, a review of SP practice in relation to child protection was undertaken by German, Wolfendale, and McLoughlin (2000). They undertook a questionnaire survey of principal school psychologists (PSPs) and interviewed SPs with posts of responsibility for child protection, welfare officers and senior social workers. Responses from PSPs showed an increased number of SPs with specific child protection responsibilities. SPs were also involved in a wide range of work from joint casework and child protection training, extending into areas of ‘safeguarding’ such as family work and bullying. There was some work around institutional abuse but surprisingly, despite the focus on work with children with disabilities and special educational needs at that time, there was little mention of work with disabled children who had been abused. Other professionals who were interviewed perceived SPs as having skills to offer in relation to therapeutic work, consultation and multi-disciplinary liaison.

Since 2000 SP work in the UK has continued to broaden to encompass the wider safeguarding agenda. Safeguarding interventions cover a range of areas such as anti-bullying initiatives (Smith, Smith, Osborn, & Samara, 2008), parenting work (Farrell et al., 2006) and work with victims of domestic abuse (Dodd, 2009). In the wake of racially oriented civil disturbances in the UK, Hayes (2002) identified a positive role for SPs in developing community cohesion.

In the UK government’s review of SPs’ contributions to the ‘Every Child Matters’ agenda (Farrell et al., 2006), data from parents and professionals identified SPs as making a significant and distinctive contribution to ‘keeping children safe’, which included providing child protection training for other professionals, and a role in an Area Child Protection Committee. Farrell et al. (2006) point to the fact that SPs’ work often constitutes a response to perceived gaps in provision for certain groups or individuals; as such, a single piece of SP work may contribute to improvements in several ‘Every Child Matters’ outcomes simultaneously, including that of ‘keeping safe’. This may mean that the SP role in relation to child protection and safeguarding is, in fact, relatively ‘embedded’.

Since the German et al. review in 2000, there has been increased emphasis in the UK upon multi-agency working and safeguarding in addition to child protection, which provides a clear rationale for surveying current practice. The study to be described was commissioned by the Association of Educational Psychologists (AEP) in order to provide an overview of current and potential SP practice in relation to child protection and safeguarding nationally. Highlighting how the SP role has evolved in response to internal and external pressures specific to the
UK may also inform discussion regarding the wider contribution of SPs in this area.

**Methodology**

The commissioning brief for the research required an investigative report into current SP practice across all UK local authorities regarding child protection and safeguarding. The requirement for examples of good practice and comments on potential development of SPs in child protection and safeguarding work in the future led to the design of a multi-level study employing a mixed methodology (Plano Clark, & Cresswell, 2008) with three distinct stages.

The design incorporated a literature review with data base searches of Psychinfo and ERIC, using search terms ‘safeguarding’, ‘child protection’, and ‘psychologist’. Factors taken into account included the role of social agencies and the role of SPs in child protection and safeguarding. Manual searches of the principal professional journals, thesis abstracts and dissertations and literature based evidence from other developed countries were supplemental.

**The empirical study**

**Focus group with school psychologists (Stage 1)**

The focus group comprised five PSPs or their delegates, one strategic-level local authority Children’s Services officer and three AEP Safeguarding Project Steering Group members. The process was facilitated by two research team members and five focus group stimuli were used (available from the authors on request). The focus group was audio-recorded and transcribed, and the data were subjected to content analysis (Mayring, 2004). Content summaries were used to structure and inform the planning of the questionnaire.

**Questionnaire survey of School Psychology Services (Stage 2)**

Following prior announcement to the majority of SPs in the UK via a notice in the AEP ‘Your Association News’ the questionnaire was posted and sent by email to all PSPs, with a two-week specified return period. The content of the questionnaire aimed to establish the types, range, content, and potential development of SP work regarding child protection and safeguarding across the UK public sector services.

The questionnaire contained open and closed items, invited supplementary supporting evidence and requested the opportunity for a research team site visit. The questionnaire was piloted with five PSPs and steering group members and adjusted to have a 25-minute completion time. Terminology used included government definitions of child protection and safeguarding and terminology used in current government guidance on delivery of services; universal (available to all children); targeted (more focused interventions, often group work) and specialized.
(individually tailored intervention). Qualitative data were analysed thematically (Braun & Clarke, 2006), while the quantitative data were treated descriptively through Microsoft Excel software. The project team used the data to inform findings and to derive a shortlist for potential site visits.

**Site visit (Stage 3)**

Four local authority school psychological services (SPSs) were selected from the shortlist for site visits on the basis of responses to the questionnaire and subsequent availability for participation in a site visit. The shortlist was drawn up to provide evidence of good practice in relation to child protection and safeguarding. The aim of this stage of the research process was to gather extensive data on the factors explored by the questionnaire and to find out how work arises and the projected strategic direction of SP future input.

Site visit data from the four local authorities was gained from a protocol based on a thematic structure derived from the literature review, the focus group and the questionnaire. Methods of data gathering included documentary analysis, observations, interviews with SPSs, role partners, work commissioners and some stakeholders. Observations of direct work did not take place for ethical reasons. Each site visit was reported as a single case study, using a range of data sources to facilitate triangulation of evidence. The draft report was checked for accuracy by the relevant SPS.

**Ethical considerations**

Full consideration was given to all relevant clauses of the British Psychological Society (2006) Code of Ethics and Conduct. PSPs had the right to veto information prior to publication of the research report.

**Findings**

**The questionnaire survey**

The questionnaire survey findings are based on responses received in May 2009 from SPSs across 56 local authorities in the UK. The results present a picture of the work conducted at the universal, targeted, and specialized levels of service provision.

The range of work undertaken by UK SPSs in relation to child protection and safeguarding encompasses the core professional functions of assessment, intervention, consultation, management, training and, to a lesser extent, research. The questionnaire survey indicated that approximately a quarter of SPSs identified a senior school psychologist (SSP) with service level responsibility for child protection and safeguarding.

The range of activities identified by the project team included SP contribution to: abuse identification; procedural and strategic maintenance and development, including Serious Case Reviews\(^4\) evaluation of processes and outcomes for children.
at risk/in need; management of concerns, disclosures and referrals of abuse and domestic violence; direct work and training, particularly, therapeutic work, parenting courses and training on attachment and resilience; work on behalf of vulnerable groups, such as those with disabilities, communication difficulties, those who may self-harm, be victims of bullying or children in public care or who have been adopted.

The potential for the expansion of the role of the SP in safeguarding and child protection was recognized in this study and identified as: cross-agency supervision, training and intervention; monitoring and evaluation of safeguarding and child protection procedures; interventions with sexually harmful young people; training and therapeutic work within residential children’s homes.

The survey identified facilitators to both the current and potential SP role in child protection and safeguarding. These included: integrated service delivery and clarity of SP role in child protection within the departmental and service structure; PSP prioritization of child protection training within the local authority’s schools and recognition of the SP’s potential to take a lead on this provision; additional relevant training undertaken by SPs; time allocation to the child protection SSP role and involvement of all service members in linking the SPS to child protection and safeguarding operations and strategy across the local authority; understanding of the wider safeguarding agenda; improved initial professional training for SPs which strengthens their preparedness to deliver services related to child protection and safeguarding; an SPS strategy which effectively focuses the limited resources of SPs across Universal and Specialized levels of Children’s Services’ provision; an active role by SP professional associations in promoting understanding of the contribution of the profession to child protection and safeguarding at local authority level.

The survey identified challenges or barriers to both current and potential SP child protection and safeguarding work. This includes: absence of a strategic child protection and safeguarding lead within the SPS; SPs’ need to prioritize child protection, safeguarding within their continuing professional development planning; lead managers’ perceptions of SP role as not being primarily concerned with child protection/safeguarding.

The present study shows evidence of a wide range of involvement by SPs in child protection and safeguarding work. Such work is seen as a high priority within the SPS portfolio, showing responsiveness to current national and local authority Children’s Services’ priorities. The range of SP child protection and safeguarding work is seen to span universal, targeted, and specialized levels of service delivery, to include both preventative and reactive strands and to be focused at individual, group, and organizational levels.

Case study of a school psychology services’s child protection and safeguarding work: East Dunbartonshire

East Dunbartonshire is a socially mixed local authority in the West of Scotland region. The SPS team is made up of eight full-time equivalent SPs. One of the SSPs
has a specific leadership remit for child protection and safeguarding and leads a Child Protection Forum within the service which aims to audit, develop, and share SPs’ knowledge and skills in the area of child protection. The specialist child protection and safeguarding SP has over 20 years experience in the area of child protection, which has included work at national level on a British Psychological Society Child Protection Portfolio resource and a lead role as Child Protection Development Officer (Education) across 12 local authorities of the West of Scotland region. As well as significant professional interest and commitment, the child protection and safeguarding SP’s development of expertise has been supported by specific secondments to develop child protection procedures, guidance, and training in other organizations.

Working with police, health, education, social care, and children’s reporters (guardians), the child protection and safeguarding SP led the development of detailed child protection policy and guidelines, and a comprehensive programme of multi-agency training, for all of the 12 authorities in the West of Scotland. East Dunbartonshire’s current Child Protection Guidelines have been adapted by the child protection and safeguarding SP from the previously developed West of Scotland regional guidelines. The child protection and safeguarding SP has also developed a comprehensive child protection policy, guidelines and resources specifically for the other psychologists in the SPS.

Alongside other psychologist colleagues and social workers, the child protection and safeguarding SP leads regular child protection training to all education personnel at levels ranging from one hour sessions to whole day training in education establishments/services. Participant feedback suggests that this is very well tailored to particular school staff and student groups. At the individual school level, psychologists undertake training with schools which has a focus upon child safety and well-being, covering a variety of psychological foci such as attachment, resilience, and restorative practices.

Through school-based consultations, interventions and training, SPs and school staff recognized a variety of SP functions relating to child protection, which include: advice and consultation to schools where there are significant child protection concerns, or conversely where related concerns have not been clearly identified; supporting understanding of all categories of abuse, especially emotional abuse; contributing to protection procedures for special school outings; identifying measures to ensure protection from child to child abuse; advice and consultation to parents and families in collaboration with education and partner agencies; support in the management of the emotional needs of children, professionals, and parents during child protection procedures, after a disclosure or removal of a child from home.

Other professionals highlighted that psychologists have specific expertise in how child protection concerns might be understood within the context of a specific child’s development over time, knowledge of the particular family, the particular school staff involved, and an inter-agency perspective. This level of understanding was seen as particularly important where there are children with significant
disabilities or learning/ communication difficulties, such as autistic spectrum disorders. The SPs’ contributions were seen as complementing the social work approach, which is viewed as necessarily being ‘more forensic’ and less widely relevant within school consultations on essentially preventive, child protection and safeguarding concerns. SPs’ contributions to school-based consultation relating to child protection were described as being ‘analytic and proportional, knowing how to manage a situation’. Evidence was given through detailed case examples that headteachers value greatly the facility to ‘check out’ through consultation with SPs any child protection concerns and their own chosen courses of action, in particular in supporting the child and family.

Social workers valued most highly SPs’ work with individual children to provide a more comprehensive child assessment, a service which is more accessible than that of health-based psychologists. SPs attend some meetings for children on the Child Protection Register, and joint informal meetings with the Children with Disabilities Social Work Team and SPs were considered to facilitate continued inter-disciplinary communication where personnel changes might otherwise erode them.5

Relevant to child protection and safeguarding, the SPS’s Research Assistant conducts evaluations of child protection training, parenting programmes, the high school counselling service, primary school ‘nurture groups’, and high school emotional literacy projects.

Directions for future development of the SPS’s contribution to safeguarding and child protection work are seen as: contributions to updating of the local authority Child Protection Guidelines to reflect current context and re-balance towards more preventive and safeguarding aspects; SPS research assistant role in assisting the Child Protection Lead Officer in effective evaluation of child protection data, e.g. how to interpret a reduction in Child Protection Register cases;6 the child protection and safeguarding SP is developing materials, for use by school managers on a rotational or menu basis, which are designed to support effective annual staff child protection training; the child protection and safeguarding SP will also develop a school-based module on children’s personal safety.

A general future aim is to continue to broaden the base of child protection expertise within the SPS to support the sustainability of child protection and safeguarding service delivery.

Discussion

Evidence from the literature indicates that child protection and preventative work are core areas of work for SPs internationally. The present nationally-commissioned study offered an opportunity to review a decade’s development in UK SPs’ work relating to child protection, and to extend consideration to SP work relating to the prevailing ‘safeguarding’ agenda in the UK.
School psychologists’ roles in child protection and safeguarding in the UK

Findings of the present study show a wide range of involvement by UK SPs in child protection and safeguarding work, which is seen as a high priority within the SPS portfolio in response to local and national priorities within Children’s Services (cf. Fallon, Woods, & Rooney, 2010). The range of SPs’ child protection and safeguarding work is seen to span universal, targeted and specialized levels of service delivery, to include both preventive and reactive strands, and to be focused at individual, group and organizational levels, including school, departmental (education), and whole authority levels. About a quarter of SPSs identify a specialist SP with specific responsibility across the team for child protection and safeguarding, which surprisingly does not confirm the predicted growth in such posts in the previous review by German et al. (2000).

SP child protection and safeguarding work is seen to engage the SP’s core professional functions of assessment, intervention, consultation, management, training, and less frequently, research. The range of reported SP child protection and safeguarding work entails partnerships with a wide variety of other professional workers from social care, education, police, and health; as such, it is predominantly multi-disciplinary/multi-agency in nature. The SP’s assessment and consultation roles in relation to child protection and safeguarding are seen as distinctive and complementary to that of social workers, and at the same time more accessible than comparable services from health professionals. Such observations on SPs’ contextualized and accessible contributions are congruent with observations about the SP’s role as ‘bridge’ between disciplines such as social work and education, or health and education (Farrell et al., 2006; Squires et al., 2007).

SPs’ child protection and safeguarding roles are ‘multi-level’: from intervention and consultation with/on behalf of individual children/young people, through organizational work with schools, to partner or leadership roles in policy and strategy work across the local authority. SPs have a distinctive role in relation to child protection as part of their regular school-based casework, on account of their combination of knowledge of child abuse issues, of individual children and their families, of the school context, and of local child protection processes and resources. Also, SPs make a distinctive contribution through their school development role which commonly includes training to staff in the psychologically-based approaches of attachment, resilience, and restorative practices, each of which can be seen as relevant to preventive work in safeguarding and protecting children.

Developing school psychology’s child protection and safeguarding contribution

The potential for expansion of SPs’ roles within the identified child protection and safeguarding activities was recognized. As well as further development of SPs’ traditional school based child protection and safeguarding work, a shift towards more multi-agency and community focused activity was also evident. A number of
facilitators to both current and potential SP child protection and safeguarding work were identified. These particularly related to training and prioritizing this work at service and local authority levels.

Some of the issues arising in the present study were identified in the previous review of SP child protection work by German et al. (2000), notably: the need for effective identification, and appropriate resourcing, of SPs’ child protection and safeguarding training needs; the need for the specialist child protection and safeguarding to be in a position to develop the expertise and involvement of all SPs within the SPS; the view of social work colleagues that SPs could usefully extend their involvement in assessment, consultation and intervention for children identified as being at risk of significant harm.

Conversely, differences from the German et al. (2000) review include: a clearer emphasis on SPs’ child protection work focusing upon children with disabilities; a reduction in reporting of child protection policies specific to the SPS and additional to those operated by the local authority, which may be a result of improved service integration under children’s services structures.

On the basis of these findings, the researchers proposed possible operational and strategic developments for SPSs within the UK. At an operational level, UK SPSs could develop and promote SPs’ school level contributions with staff and parents, particularly in the provision of training in child protection procedures and issues, and approaches to safeguarding including attachment, resilience, restorative practices, and domestic violence. Furthermore, there is scope to develop and promote SPs’ child protection and safeguarding contributions with individual child/young persons, including consultations with teachers about child protection concerns; post disclosure/allegation support and planning; post-abuse therapeutic intervention. In addition, SPSs could develop and promote SPs’ distinctive contribution in the areas emotional abuse and in child protection and safeguarding for children/young people with disabilities and/or communication difficulties, and other vulnerable groups, such as sexually harmful young people.

At a strategic level, SPSs could identify, support, and promote at least one SP within the local authority with a specialist child protection and safeguarding role; this role would involve identification and planning for child protection and safeguarding professional development needs across the SPS. Notably, Fallon et al. (2010) have considered the possible benefits to school psychology of developing a nationwide professional structure of specialisms, similar to that of clinical psychology in the UK in which all practitioners work within four distinct specialist branches. Additionally, SPS managers could review their strategic planning for an authority-wide role in child protection and safeguarding alongside partners from other disciplines, including consideration of the potential of SPs’ research and evaluation function. Fallon et al. (2010) highlight the distinctive sets of skills that may be required to work effectively within multi-disciplinary children’s services and the present authors consider that strategic planning skills within this context may be distinct from general operational management skills and from the interpersonal skills required in the psychologist’s practitioner role (cf.
Argyris, 1999; Weick, 2001; Farrell et al., 2006). An additional consideration in this respect is the organizational structure of the local authority, since SPS managers in different local authorities are often positioned differently within the general management structure, and in particular in relation to the Local Safeguarding Children Board. A further challenge in the current UK context is that locally based services such as SPSs are increasingly delivered through responsive, short-term ‘commissioning’, which potentially steers SPS functions towards product development within existing operational spheres and away from long term strategy and innovation, however well-related these may be to national priorities across children’s services. In light of these indications for, and challenges to, strategic developments of SPS child protection and safeguarding work it may be helpful to more actively and widely promote the potential contribution of SPs to child protection and safeguarding for children/young people by relevant national professional associations (e.g. Children’s Workforce Development Council, 2010).

The findings and recommendations of the current study confirm a general trend towards a broadening of the SP role in the UK which goes beyond traditional school focused work. Some of the activities identified in the current study, such as training staff in residential homes or work with sexually harmful young people might be traditionally regarded as the remit of clinical psychologists, however the current study indicates that SPs are also developing the skills and experience of working in these broader areas. This will provide many opportunities for SPs, but will also challenge the distinction between clinical and school psychology in the UK. This has implications for the continuation of distinct professional groups of child psychologists, the training of SPs and the delivery of services to children in the future.

One prescient recommendation of the UK government review of the SP role (Farrell et al., 2006) was that the British Psychological Society, or other current professional regulatory body, should proactively consider the possible benefits of establishing a single practitioner qualification in ‘Child and Adolescent Psychology’ in lieu of the separate routes of practitioner SP and practitioner clinical psychologist. Whether distinctive or generic child psychology professions continue, it will be important for initial professional training programmes to ensure that trainees develop relevant skills in effective multi-agency working and therapeutic skills.

It is important to bear in mind, however, that a range of political, economic, and social factors might influence the relevance of such recommendations on child protection and safeguarding to SP work in other countries (Cook, Jimerson, & Begeny, 2010; Fallon et al., 2010). For example, Jimerson, Annan, Skokut, and Renshaw (2009) found that SPs in New Zealand spent most of their time in school-based consultations with students, teachers and families, rather than engaging in work at strategic level, or with a clear child protection focus. Similarly, Magi and Kikas (2009) found that school principals in Estonia did not expect SPs to engage in work at a systemic or organizational level, which might restrict opportunities for the development of SPs’ contribution to child protection and safeguarding work.
across schools and local authorities or districts. However, the present authors contend that in light of the very low SP:child ratios in many countries of the world (Jimerson, Stewart, Skokut, Cardenas, & Malone, 2009), and the fundamental importance to each society of the protection and safeguarding of its children (HM Government, 2004; Mulinge, 2010; Svevo-Cianci et al., 2010), school psychology’s strategic role in the development of child protection provision across a country’s education and care systems, may be a legitimate international priority.

Notes
1. Those professionals who regularly provide psychological services in schools, or other settings involved with the education and/or care of children and young people, use different titles from one country to the next. As an aid to international communication on common issues and concerns, the term ‘school psychologist’ is often universally adopted and is adopted in this article (Cook et al., 2010). In the UK, however, which is the site of the research reported here, only the term ‘educational psychologist’ is legally approved for school psychology practitioners.
2. Universal, targeted, and specialized levels of intervention in the UK correspond to core, supplemental, and individual levels of intervention in the USA.
3. In the UK, local authorities are required to have an Area Child Protection Committee, which is a multi-agency group responsible for co-ordinating child protection and safeguarding locally.
4. In the UK, Serious Case Reviews are undertaken locally when a child dies or has been seriously hurt and where abuse or neglect is suspected.
5. The Child Protection Register is a confidential list of children believed to be in need of protection from harm.
6. The Child Protection Lead Officer represents education services on the Area Child Protection Committee and assists in the development of child protection and safeguarding procedures in the local authority.
7. Since 2004, Local Safeguarding Children Boards have gradually replaced Area Child Protection Committees and have a wider remit.

References


Kevin Woods is Director of Initial Professional Training in Educational and Child Psychology at the University of Manchester, England. He is also a practising school psychologist. His research interests and publications record focus upon the role of the school/educational psychologist, student assessment needs and dyslexia. Address: Room A5.16 Ellen Wilkinson Building, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL, UK. Email: kevin.a.woods@manchester.ac.uk

Caroline Bond is Assistant Director of Initial Professional Training in Educational and Child Psychology at the University of Manchester, England. She is also a practising school psychologist. Her research interests and publication record focus upon the role of the school/educational psychologist, developmental co-ordination disorder and autism. Address: Room Room A5.5b, Ellen Wilkinson Building, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL, UK. Email: caroline.bond@manchester.ac.uk

Kath Tyldesley is an Academic Tutor to the Initial Professional Training Programme in Educational and Child Psychology at the University of Manchester, England. She is also a practising school psychologist. Her research interests focus upon child neuropsychology and psychometric measurement.
Peter Farrell is Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Manchester, England. His research interests and recent publications record focus upon special educational needs and inclusion, the role of teaching assistants in classrooms, and emotional and behavioural difficulties. Address: Room A5.9, Ellen Wilkinson Building, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL, UK. Email: peter.farrell@manchester.ac.uk

Neil Humphrey is Professor of the Psychology of Learning at the University of Manchester, England. His research interests and publications record focus upon autism, self esteem, and children’s social and emotional learning. Address: Room A6.12, Ellen Wilkinson Building, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL, UK. Email: neil.humphrey@manchester.ac.uk