
**SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE – THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL
SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD (LSCB)**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To update the Children and Young People's Scrutiny committee regarding the role of the Darlington Safeguarding Children Board.

Summary

2. The Darlington Safeguarding Children Board is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Darlington, and for ensuring that this is done effectively in line with the guidance set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children (DCSF, 2010). The functions of a LSCB are set out in primary legislation (sections 14 and 14A of the Children Act 2004) and regulations (LSCB regulations 2006).
3. The scope of the LSCB includes safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in three broad areas of activity:-
 - (a) Activity that affects all children and aims to identify and prevent maltreatment, or impairment of health or development, and ensure children are growing up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care.
 - (b) Proactive work that aims to target particularly vulnerable groups. For example: developing/evaluating thresholds and procedures for work with children and families where a child has been identified as 'in need' under the Children Act 1989, but where the child is not suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.
 - (c) Responsive work to protect children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer significant harm, including: children abused and neglected within families, children abused outside families by adults known to them or by strangers; children abused and neglected by professional carers, within institutional settings, or when being cared for away from home; children abused by other young people; young perpetrators of abuse; children abused through sexual exploitation; and young victims of crime.

Recommendation

4. It is recommended that the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee note the contents of this report.

Murray Rose, Director of People

Background Papers

LSCB Business Plan April 2012 – March 2013

R Stephenson : Extension 2888

S17 Crime and Disorder	The business plan attached provides a section from the Youth Offending Service which summarises work in this area over the last year. The Board supports crime and disorder reduction with increased safeguarding of all children and young people.
Health and Well Being	The business plan provides commentary regarding the contribution of health services to the safeguarding agenda.
Carbon Impact	There are no issues for carbon impact arising from this report.
Diversity	No specific issues arising from this report. The Board aims to consider the needs of all children and young people. Needs of any specific groups will be recognised and supported.
Wards Affected	All wards in the Borough will be affected.
Groups Affected	All children and young people and their parents and carers.
Budget and Policy Framework	The Board manages its own budget, with contributions from Board members. Consideration needs to be given to budget development to include partners who have not contributed previously. Policies are developed in line with local needs and national statutory requirements.
Key Decision	No key decisions arising from this report.
Urgent Decision	No urgent decisions arising from this report.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	This report is consistent with the Safer Darlington theme.
Efficiency	There are no efficiencies identified in this report.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

5. The LSCB is responsible for:

(a) Policies and Procedures

The LSCB informs and influences the development of policies and procedures relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and ensures there is clarity about thresholds for intervention where there are concerns about a child's safety. This includes concerns under both Section 17 and Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 in respect of both children in need and regarding children in need of protection. The LSCB leads the development of protocols for the sharing of information and formulates clear procedures to ensure the safety of children who move between Local Authority areas.

There are continued positive links between Darlington LSCB and other LSCBs regionally, which has led to good collaborative working and in some areas joint procedures. In Darlington the local guidance for practitioners, for example the Multi Agency Chronology and Core Group procedures were both reviewed and re-launched in 2012.

(b) Training and Workforce

The LSCB leads the development of a comprehensive training strategy to:

- (i) Ensure that inter-agency training on safeguarding is provided to meet local needs, to enable individual agencies to identify and meet their own training needs and keep abreast of national practice developments.

Darlington LSCB provides multi-agency training and briefings for practitioners across Darlington which are easily accessible to staff working with children, young people and families. Training is well attended, for example:-

- (ii) Between 1 November 2011 and 31 December 2012 there were 1956 places taken at LSCB training courses and briefings. Forty courses were delivered on a multi agency basis by the LSCB. These include Safeguarding Level 1 and 2, ISA – Vetting and barring, Neglect, MARAC, Domestic Abuse, Hidden Harm, Child Sexual Exploitation, Hidden sentence, Disabled Children, Parental Mental Health and E safety and 'The Child's journey.'

The LSCB also ensures effective and safe recruitment and supervision of people who work with children and young people and investigating allegations concerning people who work with children and young people. The Local Authority Designated Officer has oversight and management of this process.

(c) Communication and Raising Awareness

The LSCB publicises its work in the local area through, for example, websites, leaflets and events to raise public awareness about the need for every citizen

to have responsibility for the safety and welfare of children in their area. The LSCB listens to and consults children and young people and ensures their views are taken into account in planning and delivering safeguarding services.

(d) Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring and evaluating of the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding work, through self-evaluation, peer review and audits is one of the responsibilities of the LSCB as well as collecting relevant statistics to enable monitoring of effectiveness of interventions and to identify emerging trends. The LSCB ensures that those key people and organisations that have a duty under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 or section 175 or 157 of the Education Act 2002 are fulfilling their statutory obligations about safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. An annual report on the effectiveness of safeguarding in the local area is produced.

(e) Planning and Commissioning

Participating in the local planning and commissioning of children's services to ensure that they give priority to safeguarding and promoting children's welfare is part of the role of the LSCB, as is contributing to the Children and Young People's Plan. The LSCB Receives notifications of all new licence applications and variations under the Licensing Act 2003 where it is agreed locally that the LSCB is the responsible authority for the protection of children from harm under the Licensing Act 2003.

(f) Child Deaths

The LSCB collects and analyses information about deaths of all children in the area to ascertain any matters of concern affecting the safety and welfare of children and public health or safety concerns in the area and to identify any case requiring a Serious Case Review. Ensuring procedures are in place for a coordinated response to the unexpected death of a child is part of the role of the LSCB.

(g) Serious Case Reviews

The LSCB is responsible for undertaking reviews of cases where a child has died or has been seriously harmed where abuse or neglect is known or suspected and there is cause for concern about the way in which agencies have worked together to safeguard the children.

In 2010 Darlington Safeguarding Children Board submitted its first Serious Case Review. This was evaluated by Ofsted and the overall evaluation was 'good'. During 2011 and 2012 training sessions have been made available to all staff to embed the learning.

A Significant Incident Review is currently taking place on a case that did not meet the criteria for a Serious Case Review in order to focus on learning and change. Following this review a series of briefings will be held to staff to disseminate the learning.

Accountability for Operational Work

6. Whilst the LSCB has a role in co-ordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of local individuals' and organisations' work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, it is not accountable for their operational work. Each Board partner retains their existing lines of accountability for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children by their individual services. The LSCB does not have the power to direct other organisations.

Lay Members

7. The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 provided for the appointment of two representatives of the local community to each LSCB. The role of the lay members should relate to:
 - (a) Supporting stronger or public engagement in local child safety issues and contributing to an improved understanding of the LSCB's child protection work in the wider community, challenging the LSCB on the accessibility by the public and children and young people of its plans and procedures; and helping to make links between the LSCB and the community.

Relationship between the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Children's Collective

8. The LSCB should not be subordinate to nor be subsumed within the Children's Collective Board structures, in a way that might compromise its independent voice.
9. The LSCB must send a copy of the annual report to the Children's Collective Board to provide robust challenges to the work of the Children's Collective in ensuring improvements are made to the safeguarding arrangements.

Relationship between the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Police and Crime Commissioner

10. Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 links the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner to protecting and promoting the welfare of Children and young people. The Police and Crime Commissioner has a legal responsibility to hold their chief officer to account for their duties in terms of protecting children. Specifically, section 1(8) (h) of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 states that: 'The police and crime commissioner must, in particular, hold the chief constable to account for the exercise of duties in relation to the safeguarding of children and the promotion of child welfare that are imposed on the chief constable by sections 10 and 11 of the Children Act 2004.'
11. The final report of Professor Eileen Munro: 'The Munro Review of Child Protection' was presented to Parliament in May 2011. One of the recommendations relating to '*Clarifying accountabilities and improving learning*' was Recommendation 5: '*The existing statutory requirements for each Local Safeguarding Children Board to produce and publish an annual report for the Children's Trust Board should be amended to require its submission instead to the Chief Executive and Leader of the*

Council, and, subject to the passage of legislation, to the local Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chair of the health and wellbeing board'.

12. The LSCB will ensure that the annual report is submitted to the above people and that they are able to meet with the chair of the board and business manager annually if requested.

Relationship between the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Health and Wellbeing board

13. Health and Wellbeing Boards will have strategic responsibility for assessing local health and wellbeing needs and agreeing strategies relating to this for each local authority area from 1 April 2013. The responsibilities of the LSCB will complement those of the Health and Wellbeing Board. The LSCB is not subordinate to and will not be subsumed within local structures that could compromise the board's independence, at this time; work is underway to define the formal relationship.

Role of the Lead Member

14. The Lead Member for Children has delegated responsibility from the Council for children, local young people and families and is politically accountable for ensuring that the Local Authority fulfils its legal responsibilities for Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of Children and young people. The Lead Member provides political leadership for the effective coordination of work with other relevant agencies with safeguarding responsibilities. The Lead Member also must be satisfied that effective quality assurance systems for safeguarding are in place and functioning effectively.
15. The Lead Member is a 'participating observer' of the LSCB. In practice this means attending meetings as an observer and receiving all of its written reports. The Lead Member may engage in discussions, ask questions and seek clarity, but not be part of the decision making process. This enables the Lead Member to challenge, when necessary, from a well informed position.
16. In order to support the complementary roles of the LSCB and the Children's Collective and ensure appropriate challenge, the two bodies are chaired by different people. DSCB has an independent chair and the Children's Collective is chaired by the Lead Member.

LSCB Priorities

17. Each year the Board agrees priorities. For 2012/13 the priorities are Neglect, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Exploitation. The detailed work programmes for achieving these objectives are published in the Business Plan and annual report 2012-2013 which is attached.
18. The suggested LSCB Priorities for 2013-2014 are awaiting sign off by the LSCB in March 2013 and are as follows:-
 - (a) Exploring and agreeing ways that children and young people can participate in the Local Safeguarding Children Board and wider child protection systems.

- (b) Keeping children and young people safe from the risk of sexual exploitation.
- (c) Working with partner agencies to seek ways to reduce the impact of neglect, domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental health problems on children and young people
- (d) Assessing the impact of current early help services on Safeguarding

Sub Groups

19. Darlington Safeguarding Children Board's business is driven by a number of sub-groups with agreed action plans and terms of reference to carry out specific tasks, for example, maintaining and updating procedures and protocols, reviewing serious cases and identifying inter-agency training needs. The sub groups are:
- (a) Policy and procedures
 - (b) Performance management
 - (c) Communications and Training
 - (d) Domestic Abuse
 - (e) Missing Children and Sexual Exploitation monitoring group
 - (f) Neglect
 - (g) Case Review Sub Committee
 - (h) Child Death Overview Panel

Challenges for 2013

20. Over the coming year there are a number of challenges relating to the budget and resources, welfare reforms, collaboration and the NHS Changes.
21. In addition, a number of multi-agency bodies exist in Darlington, the challenge for these forums is to ensure there is appropriate linkage to ensure that duplication of work does not occur.
22. The Working Together consultation is now complete and the final version is awaited. This, alongside the Munro implementation, will impact on the LSCBs work in relation to policies and procedures and how Serious Case Reviews are undertaken. The LSCB will be reviewing the functions, policies and procedures following the revised Working Together being published which is anticipated to be imminent.