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**SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE –  
ROLE OF THE LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD**

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**SUMMARY REPORT****Purpose of the Report**

1. To update members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on the roles and responsibilities of Darlington Safeguarding Children Board.

**Summary**

2. The Functions of Darlington Safeguarding Children Board

Darlington Safeguarding Children Board is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing and monitoring how relevant organisations in Darlington co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The Board has responsibility for ensuring this is done effectively.

3. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is a key priority of Central Government. The Children's Act 2004, established Local Safeguarding Children Boards to replace Area Child Protection Committees (ACPC) and placed a duty on all agencies to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The new version of 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (HM Government 2006) provides further details on the functions of Local Safeguarding Children Boards.
4. The scope of Darlington Safeguarding Children Board covers three areas:
  - (a) To engage in activities that safeguard all children and aim to identify and prevent maltreatment, or impairment of health or development, and ensure that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care.
  - (b) To lead and co-ordinate proactive work that aims to target particular groups.
  - (c) To lead and co-ordinate arrangements for responsive work to protect children who are suffering, or at risk of suffering, maltreatment.
5. Representatives include:
  - (a) Darlington Borough Council Children's Services
  - (b) County Durham and Darlington PCT/ Acute and Foundation Trusts
  - (c) Durham Constabulary
  - (d) Durham Probation
  - (e) Adult Services
  - (f) Voluntary Sector
  - (g) Legal services
  - (h) State, independent schools and further education colleges
  - (i) Youth Offending Service

The Board currently meets on a bi-monthly basis and is chaired by Jenni Cooke (Assistant Director- Children and Families).

### **Recommendation**

6. Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

**Murray Rose,  
Director of Children's Services**

### **Background Papers**

‘Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006’ (HM Government).

Jenni Cooke: Extension 2861

S17 Crime and Disorder	The Board supports crime and disorder reduction with increased safeguarding of all children and young people. The Board has close working relationships with Durham Constabulary.
Health and Well Being	This strategy contributes to improved health and wellbeing for children and young people.
Sustainability	No sustainability issues.
Diversity	The Board aims to consider the needs for all children and young people. Needs of any specific groups will be recognised and supported.
Wards Affected	All wards.
Groups Affected	All children and young people.
Budget and Policy Framework	The Board has its own budget, established by contributions from Board members.
Key Decision	No key decisions arising from this report.
Urgent Decision	No urgent decisions arising from this report.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Ensure the safety of children and young people (Safer Darlington).

## **MAIN REPORT**

### **Information and Analysis**

#### **7. Objectives of Darlington Safeguarding Children Board**

These include:

- (a) To review how well local services work together to safeguard children.
- (b) To develop and agree local policies and procedures for inter-agency child protection work.

- (c) To make sure that agencies share a common understanding of how and when action should be taken to protect a child.
- (d) To make training available to improve the quality of inter-agency working.
- (e) To carry out any serious case reviews where a child has died and abuse or neglect has been confirmed or suspected; and
- (f) To make sure that any lessons learned locally or nationally are shared, understood and acted upon.

#### 8. Local Safeguarding Children Board and its Relationship with the Children's Trust

The work of Darlington Safeguarding Children Board is part of the wider context of Children's Trust arrangements that aim to improve the overall wellbeing of children in Darlington. It has a focus on the 'staying safe' outcome (Every Child Matters outcomes). The relationship between the Board and the Children's Trust arrangements should not compromise the Board's separate identity and independent voice.

#### 9. Darlington Safeguarding Children Board's Sub-Groups

To ensure that the priorities of the Board are managed effectively, a number of multi-agency sub-groups have been established to develop and monitor clear work programmes. All sub-groups meet at least on a quarterly basis, some due to work priorities may meet on a bi-monthly basis.

Current sub-groups include:

- (a) Policy and procedures
- (b) Performance management
- (c) Training
- (d) 'Improving Practice'- discussing multi-agency cases studies with an aim to improve operational practice
- (e) LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer)- dealing with allegations against staff, carers and volunteers
- (f) Anti-Bullying Action Group
- (g) Hidden Harm- looking at the effects of parental use of drugs and alcohol on children and families
- (h) Child Death Overview Group (joint group with County Durham)
- (i) Serious Case Review/ Incident Group (as required)

#### 10. Work Priorities

The work of the Board and associated sub-groups reflects local issues as well as national drivers. Recently developed national indicators measure incidents of bullying, hospital admissions with both unintentional and deliberate injuries and preventable child deaths. Progress on the sub-groups' work programmes is reported to the Board on a six-monthly basis. (An example of the Policy and Procedures sub-group is attached to this report at **Appendix A**).

A business plan is published on an annual basis, that incorporates together in one document, priorities and achievements of the Board.

#### **New Responsibilities since April 2008 ('Working Together' 2006)**

- 11. From 1st April 2008 new responsibilities were placed on Local Safeguarding Children Boards. New procedures for managing allegations against staff and reviewing all child deaths (see sections below). The increasing number of new responsibilities that the

Government places on Local Safeguarding Children Boards not only widens the 'safeguarding agenda' but also gives the Board a wider monitoring function. Darlington Safeguarding Children Board, as with other Boards in the region has clear links with Government Office North East.

## 12. Managing Allegations Against Staff, Carers and Volunteers

Darlington Safeguarding Children Board has responsibility for ensuring there are effective procedures in place for dealing with allegations against people who work with children and for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the procedures. Each Local Authority must appoint a LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer). The LADO will be involved in the management and oversight of individual cases, ensuring that the cases are dealt with as quickly as possible consistent with a thorough and fair process.

## 13. Child Death Reviews

Each Local Safeguarding Children Board must collect and analyse information about all child deaths, with a view to identifying any matters of concern affecting the safety and welfare of children within the local area. A joint Child Death Overview Group has been established with County Durham to ensure that the appropriate reviews are taking place and any avoidable factors are identified across services and agencies.

## 14. Budget and Resources

'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006' states:

"An effective LSCB needs to be staffed so that it has the capacity to:

- Drive forward the LSCB's day-to-day business in achieving its objectives, including its co-ordination and monitoring/ evaluating work.
- Take forward any training and staff development work carried out by the LSCB in the context of the local workforce strategy.
- Provide administrative and organisational support for the Board and its sub-committees, and those involved in policy and training."

Board members have agreed to increase contributions to cover current costs (Business Manager Post, multi-agency training) and to develop the systems required for the new responsibilities and to fund a post of Business Support Officer.

As the Board's functions change there will be a continued need to review the budget and resources and to include agencies that haven't contributed previously. Examples of this are the funding of the LADO role and increased training provision.

## 15. Accountability and Governance

In order to fulfil its functions effectively, robust governance arrangements are necessary. The Board is currently developing a 'Challenge and Improvement Tool' (in line with DCSF guidance), which will look at identifying areas of effective practice as well as areas for improvement.

Board members have recently completed their own agency self-assessment tools, addressing their own roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding, as well as analysing their direct contributions to the Board.

To ensure the effectiveness of work by member organisations, Darlington Safeguarding Children Board will continue to look at a peer review process, based on self-evaluation, performance indicators and joint audit.

All of the Board's sub-groups have been established by the Board and work to agreed terms of reference, with clear lines of reporting to the Board. All of the chairs of the sub-groups are Board members.

#### 16. Role of Elected Members

“3.56 LA Elected Members and non-executive directors of other Board partners should not be members of a LSCB. Their role, through their membership of governance bodies such as the cabinet of the LA or a scrutiny committee or a governance board, is to hold their organisation and its officers to account for their contribution to the effective functioning of the LSCB.”

(Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006)

#### 16. Sources of Information

All of the Darlington Safeguarding Children Board's Child Protection Procedures are web-based and can be accessed via [www.darlington.gov.uk/cprocedures](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/cprocedures). Further information regarding the Board can also be accessed via this link, including the Board's Terms of Reference and Training Programme.

### **Outcome of Consultation**

17. No consultation was required in the production of this report.

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