

Briefing note:

Children's Select Committee – Safeguarding children and young people

Purpose

1. To update members on work undertaken by the Children's Select Committee with respect to safeguarding children and young people in Wiltshire.

Background

2. Following recent news stories regarding cases of child sexual exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham, the Chairman of the committee requested a report describing the overview and scrutiny work that has been, and is being, undertaken on safeguarding children and young people in Wiltshire.
3. The Chairman has also met with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and the Chairman of the Children's Select Committee to discuss what measures could be put in place to clarify members' role as corporate parents and the correct procedures to follow should they have concerns about a child's safety.

NB. If you think a child or young person is at risk of significant harm, or is injured, contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 0300 4560108 (out of hours: 0845 6070 888) or if there is immediate danger phone the police or emergency services on 999.

Children's Select Committee work

4. In May 2012 the Safeguarding Children and Young People Task Group was established by the Children's Select Committee following a multi-agency Ofsted inspection of Wiltshire. The Task Group met on 16 occasions and its final report ([here](#)) contained 41 recommendations, grouped under the four work themes:
 1. Communications
 2. Children's Social Care workforce
 3. Locality working
 4. Members and safeguarding

5. The full executive response to the report can be viewed on the council website [here](#). A significant majority of the Task Group's 41 recommendations were agreed and implemented, including:
 - All committee reports (including those to cabinet) now include a 'safeguarding considerations' section requiring authors to consider the safeguarding implications of any proposal.
 - Following the local elections in 2013 all elected members were asked to sign a statement confirming that they understood their safeguarding duties and safeguarding training was provided by the NSPCC. Members also received an 'easy-reference' guide to safeguarding.
 - The child protection referral service incorporated a multi-agency approach through the development of the Wiltshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). This has been visited by members of the task group and a full update on its implementation was brought to the Children's Select Committee in March 2014.
 - The council established a Safeguarding Children and Young People Panel (in addition to the overview and scrutiny task group) run alongside the Corporate Parenting Panel.
 - A number of recommendations were made to strengthen ongoing scrutiny of safeguarding.
6. The task group membership was shortlisted for the Local Government Association's (LGA) Scrutineer of the Year Award 2014.
7. In July 2013 the Children's Select Committee resolved that safeguarding children and young people should remain one of its priority work areas. The Safeguarding C&YP Task Group was re-established but with a greater focus on monitoring the key performance indicators relating to children's social care activity. It meets 6 times per year; 4 data-focused meetings plus 2 'deep-dive' meetings looking at single topics in detail. In April 2014 the task group looked at the auditing process for children's social care case work. In September and November 2014 will look at the operation of Multi Agency Forums (MAFs) and the work of the Wiltshire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB).
8. In March 2014 the Children's Select Committee received a 45-minute information briefing on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) from council officers. This was a condensed version of a full-day CSE conference held in Salisbury on 6 March, which was attended by the vice-chairman of the committee.

Information for all members

9. On 5 September 2014 the chairman of the O&S Management Committee met with the chairman of the Children's Select Committee and the Cabinet Member for Children's Services. The following was agreed:

- A members' briefing note will be circulated describing members' role as corporate parents and the procedure to follow if a member is concerned about a child's safety.
- A short presentation will be given to the Children's Select Committee immediately before its meeting on 14 October. This will cover the information described in the members' briefing note.
- Arrangements will be made to circulate an easy-reference guide to safeguarding for members. This was originally provided in the Members' Induction materials following the local elections in 2013.

Proposal

10. To note the overview and scrutiny work undertaken by the Children's Select Committee on safeguarding children and young people.
11. To note the measures in progress to clarify members' role as corporate parents and the procedure to follow if they have concerns about a child's safety.

Report author: Henry Powell, Senior Scrutiny Officer, 01225 718052,
henry.powell@wiltshire.gov.uk