

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee
September 11th 2008

WILTSHIRE LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to present the multi-agency Local Safeguarding Board (LSCB) Business Plan of 2008-9 (attached at [Appendix 1](#)).

According to S13 of the Children Act 2004, and its associated guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' HM Govt 2006, Local Authority, members are required to monitor the work of the LSCB, and hold its officers to account for their contribution to its effective functioning (see section 3 below).

Action Required of the Scrutiny Committee

2. The Scrutiny Committee is requested to receive the 2007/2008 LSCB Business Plan, to note progress against the plan and the planned objectives for 2008/2009. The Committee is invited to consider if there are particular aspects of the work of the LSCB for which they would wish to receive a further report.

Background

3. Within S13 of the Children Act 2004, **the function of the LSCB –a multi-agency body to ensure safeguarding of children, led by the Local Authority- is:**
 - (a) to coordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in the area of the authority by which it is established; and
 - (b) to ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for those purposes.

Government guidance within 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' explains the role of members thus:

- 3.56 Local Authority Elected Members and non-executive directors of other board partners should not be members of an LSCB. Their role, through their membership of governance bodies such as the cabinet of the local authority 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.
- 3.57 The Lead Member for Children's Services within the Local Authority will have a particular focus on how the Local Authority is fulfilling its responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and will hold the DCS to account for the work of the LSCB.

- 3.90 The effectiveness of the LSCB itself should also form part of the judgement of the Inspectorates, particularly through the JAR. This may be done, for example, by examining the quality of the LSCB's planning and determining whether key objectives have been met. It will be for the Local Authority to lead in taking action, if intervention in the LSCB's own processes is necessary.

When the LSCB report to Scrutiny Committee was presented last year, a request was made to see the 08/09 annual business plan report, information on how the multi-agency child protection conference system works, reference to MAPPA, and details of findings and actions being taken as a consequence of the Quality Assurance Sub Group' audit of police response to child abuse cases.

The 08/09 Business Plan is attached at Appendix 1, and a copy of a guide for families on child protection conferences is attached at Appendix 2. The MAPPA report to Scrutiny Committee was undertaken in July of this year separately. The LSCB Quality Assurance sub-group can report that all recommendations of the audit of Police work have been followed through successfully, thus;

Police officers have been reminded through training and dissemination of information that; Strategy discussion post referral must be recorded on the data base including the decision to carryout section 47 investigation; Appropriate background checks on receipt of child protection referrals; Checks to the Child Protection Register post referral will be the responsibility of Children's Social Care; Record the strategy discussion with paediatrician on every occasion even when a decision is made not to conduct a medical examination; Remind all staff of the requirement of recommendation 99 of the Laming report (to record the lead officer in joint interviews-(normally police); Procedures to be followed on receipt of child protection referrals; Consultation requirement with children's social care in respect of all children at risk of suffering significant harm

The Local Safeguarding Board Business Plan of 2008-9, and how the LA fulfils its functions with the LSCB.

4. The LA fulfils its functions within the LSCB by;
- a) Officers time, particularly through the Head of Safeguarding post, and
 - b) Financial contribution (see 6 below);
- a) Officers time with the LSCB includes;
- The Director of Children's Services chairs the Board;
 - The Assistant Director for Children And Families chairs the Executive Board, who together with the Director for Children's Services, provides a liaison role with the Childrens Trust Board
 - The Head of Safeguarding chairs the LSCB Quality Assurance Sub-group, the S11 sub-group, the Allegations sub-group and the Serious Case Review sub-group
 - The three Area Service Managers lead the twice yearly multi-agency LSCB Practice Fora;
 - The Head of Area Services, a member of the Board, is the DCE lead for S11 implementation;
 - The Head of Youth Offending and Early Years manager also sit on the Board.
 - A Child Protection Coordinator chairs the LSCB Procedures sub-group and represents Wiltshire on the regional group to agree new South West multi-agency CP procedures.

- An LSCB Business Manager collates and disseminates safeguarding information across all agencies, including updating the website www.wiltshirelscb.org
- A dedicated LSCB Development Officer post is being recruited this year from the multi-agency pooled budget, to respond to the rapidly expanding government safeguarding agenda and help the Executive, Board and sub-groups to complete the annual objectives.

Work undertaken during the year 2007-8. The LSCB Business Plan 2008-9 reports that 6 out of 6 of last years objectives have been completed –five completely and one partially (child deaths response and review training occurred in the next financial year).

Statistical analysis for child protection during the year shows a similar number of registrations to the CP register as in previous years, and the high achievement of 100% of such cases being reviewed on time. Neglect and emotional abuse remain as the most common categories, still following national trends. Our re-registration rate has successfully reduced to 13% (being appropriately within government recommended banding of between 10 and 15%).

Child protection Co-ordinators - who provide independent chairing of child protection conferences on behalf of the LSCB – monitored the most significant factors associated with conference cases. Domestic violence is the most common factor - 50% of all cases; alcohol = 47% and parental mental health =36% are also significant factors. Such information is being tabled at the Trust Board in order to help inform appropriate planning of joint services.

The Business Plan outlines **this year's LSCB Objectives for 2008-9** as follows;

1. **E-Safety-** To Co-ordinate and develop an e safety strategy
2. **S11 of the Children's Act 2004 and S175 Education Act-**Ensuring agencies are complying with their statutory duties under S11 of the Children's Act 2004 and S175 Education Act and ensuring that Allegations against staff are reported within guidance and monitoring the implementation.
3. **Child Deaths- Implementation of multi-agency rapid response to unexpected deaths, and reviewing of all deaths to learn lessons for prevention.**
4. **Promoting Awareness of the LSCB-**To deliver the action plan for the awareness of the LSCB and its work to partner agency staff and the public including children.
5. **Reviewing Allegations against staff-** Allegations against staff are recorded, reported and managed in accordance with Working Together guidance across all agencies.
6. **Missing children-**To coordinate the work of agencies re Missing children, identifying patterns and ensuring the appropriate procedures, training and practice are in place.

Service Implications

5. The quality and resourcing of childrens services, particularly that of social workers are key to providing safeguarding responses through child abuse investigations and conferences, and work to prevent child abuse. Social workers need regular supervision with dedicated time to reflect upon practice in terms of the success of their interventions in improving outcomes for children.

Financial Implications

6. The Local Authority is contributing £51,200 towards a multi-agency pooled budget in the LSCB of £98,100 for the year 2008-9. In addition we have received £38,014 from central government towards the cost of reviewing child deaths.

Risk Assessment

7. The work of the LSCB is dependent upon multi-agency funding contributions to the pooled budget (as above in 6), and officer time (as outlined in 4 above). The Director for Children and Education, as Chair of the LSCB, will to continue to ensure a degree of independent scrutiny of the work of the Board, and Local Authority Elected Members need to regularly scrutinise its work in addressing strategic safeguarding issues based upon government guidance.

Conclusion

8. The Local Safeguarding Board is judged to be working well in Wiltshire. It will continue to report to members annually through Children's Services Scrutiny.

CAROLYN GODFREY
Director, Department for Children & Education

Report Author: Name Sarah Webb, Head of Safeguarding