

Dudley Safeguarding Children Board

'Working Together to Keep Children & Young People Safe'

Annual Report 2012-13 & Business Plan 2013-14

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

<http://safeguardingchildren.dudley.gov.uk>



What is Dudley Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB)?

The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how relevant organisations will co-operate and work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Dudley, and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do.

Safeguarding children – the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm – is *everyone's responsibility*.

Safeguarding means:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

The Board is made up of senior representatives from a range of organisations from the statutory and voluntary sector. The LSCB is not accountable for operational work, but holds partners to account on the effectiveness of their safeguarding services for Dudley's children and young people.

The Board is chaired independently by Roger Clayton.

promoting an understanding that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
improving the safety and wellbeing of children and young people across all communities
developing safer services and employment practices across all organisations

What does DSCB aim to achieve?

Since its inception in April 2005, Dudley Safeguarding Children Board has been working to 3 key objectives. In order to achieve this Dudley Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB) will work to ensure that:

- All children and young people have safe environments to help promote their welfare and well-being
- Action is targeted at *vulnerable groups* such as disabled, children in care; and
- Responses to children who have been harmed to minimise lifelong impact are co-ordinated and effective

The revised 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' guidance (2013) requires the Chair of the LSCB to publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding in their local area:

- DSCB's responsibility to **co-ordinate** work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people
- DSCB's responsibility to ensure that local work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people is **effective**

How will the Board achieve its aims?

The Board has a number of defined functions and responsibilities, which are outlined within statutory guidance known as 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and underpinned by the Children Act 2004 and LSCB Regulations 2006. These are:

- ✚ Thresholds, policies and procedures
- ✚ Training & Development
- ✚ Communicating and raising awareness
- ✚ Monitoring and evaluation
- ✚ Participating in planning and commissioning
- ✚ Functions relating to child deaths and Serious Case Reviews

What safeguarding activity happened during 2012-13?

From a population of 74,830 children and young people aged 0-19, during 2012-13:

- ⇒ 386 children were reported as missing from home to the Police, an average of 32 children per month;
- ⇒ 989 children (under 18 years of age) were victims of recorded crime, of which 26 were victims of knife crime and 6 victims of gun crime
- ⇒ 40 young people (under the age of 18 years) were charged with drug related offences, 39 of whom were in respect of Class B drugs and 1 young person in relation to Class A drugs
- ⇒ there were 6,653 referrals made to Children's Social Care
- ⇒ Section 47 child protection investigations took place in respect of 625 children and young people
- ⇒ there were 281 child abuse recorded crimes by the police and 90 cases were detected as child abuse related offences
- ⇒ 1516 notifications were made to social care involving children living within the household where a domestic abuse incident had taken place
- ⇒ 117 child protection medicals were undertaken by a Consultant Paediatrician or other suitably qualified clinician
- ⇒ 40 young people were referred to the Young People's at Risk of Sexual Exploitation Panel
- ⇒ there were 170 concerns or allegations in respect of people who work with children, leading to 114 independently chaired 'Position of Trust' Complex Strategy Meetings concerning 80 individual members of the workforce
- ⇒ there were 182 Initial Child Protection Conferences, 21 'Receiving-In' Conferences and 332 Review Conferences – a total of 354 children were the subject of an Initial Child Protection Conference

As at 31st March 2013:

- ⇒ 3082 children (around 4% of all children and young people) were defined as 'in need' by children's social care,
- ⇒ 248 children and young people were subject to a child protection plan
- ⇒ 730 children and young people were looked after by the local authority

What did we do during 2012-13?

- ⇒ Made progress in respect of our previous years 3 key priorities, for example:
 - Introduced new inter-agency child protection standards aimed at improving the consistency and quality of inter-agency child protection practice
 - Increased the number and completion of common assessments to help ensure that children and young people who are vulnerable received earlier support and help to meet their needs;
 - Strengthened inter-agency responses to children & young people at risk, or who have suffered, sexual exploitation or abuse
- ⇒ Introduced new inter-agency guidance for frontline practitioners and their managers in respect of professional resolution/escalation, serious or significant safeguarding incidents, standards of recording, protecting children living in highly resistant families or who move across local authority borders
- ⇒ Facilitated a total of 8612 safeguarding training places, of which 1730 places were part of the multi-agency training programme, with an additional 730 people attending briefings conducted by DSCB
- ⇒ Facilitated a major Conference and launched a public awareness campaign on Child Sexual Exploitation in May 2012, just ahead of the London Olympics
- ⇒ Concluded and published a Significant Incident Learning Process (SILP) in respect of Child D in June 2012 and a Serious Case Review in respect of Child C in April 2013
- ⇒ Conducted 35 reviews of expected and unexpected child deaths
- ⇒ Held a series of events as part of European Safer Internet Day in February 2013, attended by over 500 adults and children



How well did we do it and what difference are we making?

The Board is highly committed to improving both the consistency and quality of safeguarding practice across services working with children, young people and their families.

During 2012-13, over 500 individual cases were audited by partners on the Board and a range of improvements implemented to improve both the quality and effectiveness of safeguarding practice.

In respect of multi-agency safeguarding training, 92% of delegates said that the training was excellent or very good in respect of 'usefulness in terms of their practice' and 92% described the quality of training as 'excellent' or 'very good'.

The Board's will be working to strengthen the 'voice' and participation of children, young people and their families during the next 12 months as part of its commitment to continuous learning and improvement.

The full annual report contains some examples of impact and how agencies and safeguarding is making a difference in promoting the wellbeing of children and young people in Dudley. The Board will continue to strive to improve the outcomes of all, and the most vulnerable children, through effective partnership working at all levels. For most, this will mean continuing to live with their families and in their communities, but for a small number it is necessary to ensure that their welfare is safeguarded through the provision of 'care' – in 2012-12, 151 children became looked after by the local authority as a result of 'abuse or neglect'.

What difference are our safeguarding arrangements?

The last external judgement of Dudley's safeguarding arrangements was made by Ofsted in January 2012 – they were deemed to be 'adequate with good capacity to improve'.

In August 2012, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission undertook a 3-day thematic inspection of adult services' arrangements for the safeguarding of children where they are parental substance misuse or mental health services. An action plan has been developed in respect of the feedback to address key areas of improvement identified by the inspectors.

Inspections in respect of regulatory services such as early years, schools, children's homes and health trusts include their safeguarding arrangements. For example, in September 2012, 93% of child care providers in Dudley were judged by Ofsted to be either good or outstanding.

How effective are we as a Board?

Currently, there is no formal judgement of the Board's effectiveness, although this is likely to be introduced into the national inspection framework during the coming 12 months.

The Board has refreshed its own self-evaluation against the Ofsted good practice criteria as:

Good Practice Area	Self-Assessment	
	2012	2013
Governance arrangements	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Partnership working	Good	Good
Engagement with children and young people	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Business planning and relationship with Children's Trust/Partnership	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Quality Assurance	Poor	Satisfactory

What are the Board's key priorities for the next 12 months?

The Board's full Business Plan & Work Programme outlines in greater detail planned activity during the next year, taking account the risks and challenges that we face.

DSCB has set 5 key priorities for 2013-15. These are

PRIORITY 1

Improve the protection of children from abuse and neglect, through more effective inter-agency working and consistent approaches to minimising risk and strengthening resilience within families

PRIORITY 2

Improve the effectiveness of early help and intervention for children and young people who are vulnerable

PRIORITY 3

Strengthen the effectiveness of support and challenge provided by partners of the Board to improve safeguarding outcomes for children, young people and their families

PRIORITY 4

Improve inter-agency responses to young people who are at risk of, or who have suffered, sexual abuse or exploitation

PRIORITY 5

Improve the safeguarding and protection of children and young people who are living in households where there is domestic abuse, parental mental health and parental substance misuse

For more information about the work of Dudley Safeguarding Children Board go to <http://safeguardingchildren.dudley.gov.uk> or contact Graham Tilby at Safeguarding & Review Service, 6 St. James's Road, Dudley, 01384 813016 – graham.tilby@dudley.gov.uk