

Select Committee on Children's Services – 15 November 2007

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Dudley Safeguarding Children Board

Purpose of Report

1. To present to the Committee the Business Plan of the Dudley Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB) and for the Committee the key priorities for scrutiny for 2007/8.

Background

2. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children requires effective co-ordination in every local area. For this reason, the Children Act 2004 requires each local authority to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).
3. The LSCB is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in each local area will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in that locality and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do.
4. Whilst the work of LSCBs contributes to the wider goals of improving the well-being of all children, it has a particular focus on aspects of the 'staying safe' outcomes of Every Child Matters.
5. The core objectives of the LSCB are set out in S 14(1) of the Children Act 2004 as follows:
 - To co-ordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of the authority
 - To ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for that purpose
 - 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
 - Understanding that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully
6. The scope of LSCBs role includes safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in three broad areas of activity
- 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
 - Proactive work that aims to target particular vulnerable groups
 - Responsive work to protect children who are suffering or at risk of suffering harm
7. The DSCB is chaired by the Assistant Director for Children's Services who is accountable to the LA via the Director of Children's Services (DCS) for the effectiveness of their work as LSCB chair.
8. The DSCB and its activities are part of the wider context of children's trust arrangements. The work of LSCBs contributes to the wider goals of improving the well-being of all children.
9. Whilst the DSCB 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 own existing lines of accountability for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children by their services.
10. The DSCB was established in April 2005, one year ahead of the statutory requirement.
11. At the heart of the establishment of DSCB is the desire to develop a shared sense of responsibility across all agencies working with children and their families and communities to keep children safe from harm.

12. In order to achieve this DSCB recognise the need to develop a more preventative and community-based approach to safeguarding children and young people with a strong emphasis on partnership, integration, information sharing, participation and accountability at all levels.
13. The DSCB Business Plan for 2007/9 is attached as Appendix A. The key priorities for this year are listed from page 10.

Role of Elected Members

14. Local Authority 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.
15. The Statutory Guidance states that the Lead Member for Children's Services within each local authority will have a particular focus on how it is fulfilling its responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and will hold the Director of Children's Services to account for the work of the LSCB.

Finance

16. The annual budget for the Board is £94,000, including contributions from partner agencies, which fund the training programme of the board.
17. The DSCB is supported by a Safeguarding and Development Manager, which is joint funded by Dudley PCT and the LA, and a full-time Training Officer, who reports to the Divisional Manager for Safeguarding and Review within Children's Specialist Services.

Law

18. The establishment of a LSCB is a statutory requirement under the Children Act 2004 which places a duty on local agencies to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.


Equality Impact

19. The work of the DSCB supports parents, families, communities and partner agencies in providing safe homes and environments, security and stability for all children and young

people in the Borough. The DSCB responds to the needs of vulnerable groups to minimise the incidence of child abuse and neglect to ensure that all children can maximise the opportunity to achieve positive outcomes against the Every Child Matters agenda.

Recommendations

20. It is recommended that the Committee:
21. Note the DSCB Business Plan;
22. Identify which key priorities Select Committee would wish to scrutinise for 2007/08;
23. Agree future reporting arrangements



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Dudley Safeguarding Children Board

'Working Together to Keep Children & Young People Safe'

BUSINESS PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2007-09

Welcome to Dudley Safeguarding Children Board's Business Plan 2007-08. The Board 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.

The Terms of Reference and membership of the Board are laid out in a separate document, which can be accessed on our website at: <http://safeguardingchildren@dudley.gov.uk>, along with details concerning key functions such as training & development and policies & procedures. Dudley Safeguarding Children Board is committed to contributing towards improved outcomes for all children and young people – we believe that being safe matters to every child and we must take responsibility as adults to ensure that children and young people are safeguarded in order that they can be healthy, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being.

This Executive Summary provides a brief overview of the work of the Board over the last 12 months, and outlines its key inter-agency and single-agency priorities for 2007/09, including the work programme for each of its main sub-committees.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Sharing Responsibility

Promoting an understanding that safeguarding children & young people is everyone's and every organisation's responsibility

Engaging Communities

Promoting a more holistic, preventative and community-base approach to safeguarding children & young people

Ensuring Safer Services

Developing ways of ensuring safer services and employment practices

"All agencies (should) work together to prevent children suffering harm and to promote their welfare, provide them with the services they require to address their identified needs and safeguard children who are being or who are likely to be harmed."

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS 2006/07

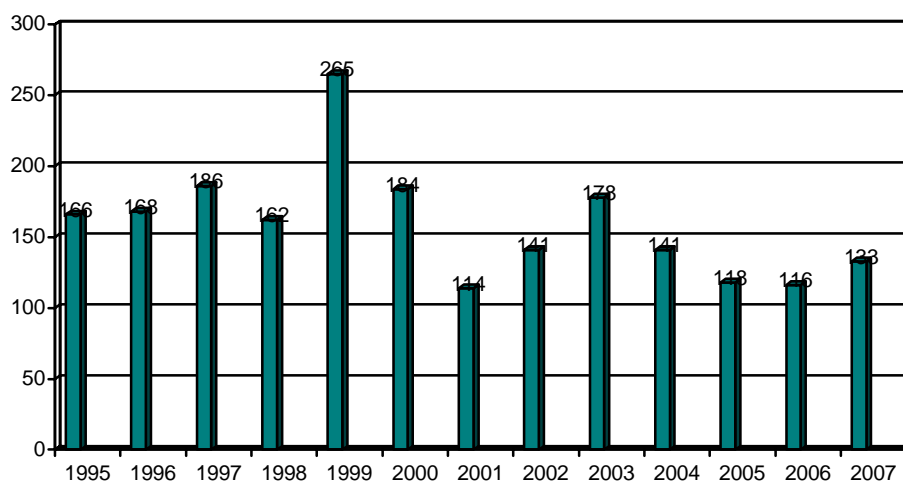
Some of our achievements during 2006/07 include:

- Development of the 'SafER' Newsletter and DSCB website to support awareness-raising in respect of key national, regional & local safeguarding issues;
- Delivered training to over 2,200 people who work with children & young people;
- Completed major revision of children protection policies & procedures in the light of new 'Working Together' guidance;
- Initiated internet safety programme with Key Stage 3 pupils and their parents;
- Reviewed working together arrangements in respect of child protection and domestic abuse and developed new training opportunities in collaboration with Dudley Domestic Abuse Forum;
- Completed self-assessment against Standard 5 of the National Service Framework for Children, Young People & Maternity Services.

KEY TRENDS

Between 350-400 children are subject of Section 47 child protection enquiries made jointly by children's social care and the police on average per year. Of these, around 50% are then brought to Initial Child Protection Conference for a decision about whether they are at further risk of '*significant harm*'. Approximately 85% of children brought to Initial CP Conference are deemed to require an inter-agency Child Protection Plan. This is broadly in line with national averages.

Following a 3-year downward trend in the number of children on the Child Protection Register (CPR)*, we have seen an increase during 2006/07 – on 31st March 2007, 133 children in Dudley were subject to an inter-agency child protection plan, although this was as high as 171 children during late December and early January 2007. Dudley is comparatively low per 10,000 population for children on the child protection register.

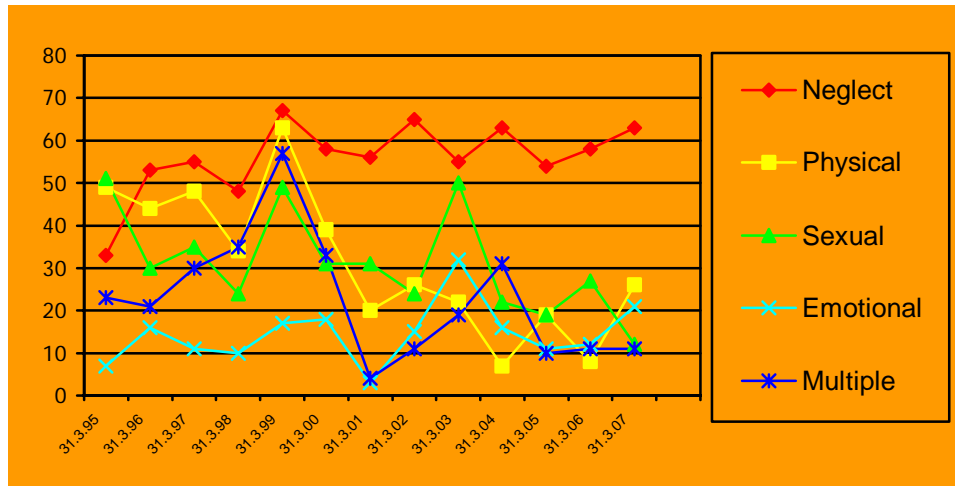


Number of children on the Child Protection Register at 31st March

In terms of performance against key national indicators, Dudley continues to perform well in terms of ratings. The proportion of children who are placed on the CPR and then subsequently de-registered is broadly in line with national averages.

* Please note that as from 2008 the Child Protection Register will not exist

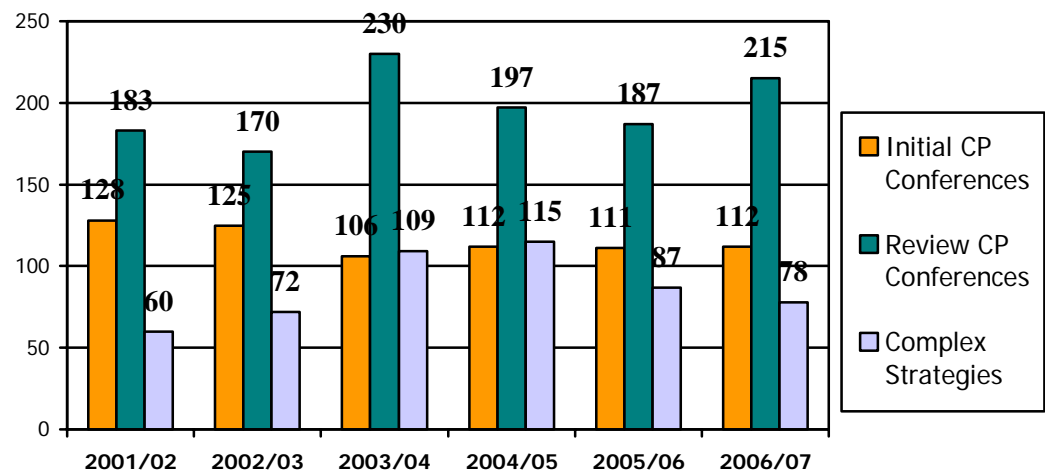
Figure 2: Children on the Child Protection Register per Category of Abuse 1995-2007 as at 31 March



Dudley's pattern of registrations by category is broadly similar to the national picture, although the figures for 31 March 2007 indicate a rise in the proportion of children who are registered under the categories of physical and emotional abuse due to a greater professional awareness of domestic abuse and the impact upon children.

During 2006/07, a total of 405 independently chaired child protection meetings took place. The number of Initial Child Protection Conferences has remained fairly static over the last 3 years, although during 2006/07 we have seen a rise in the number of CP Review Conferences in line with the trend in registrations.

Figure 3: Number of CP Meetings Independently Chaired 2001-2007



The Safeguarding & Review Unit is responsible for chairing Complex Strategy Meetings – the majority of these are requested where there is a concern in respect of an adult working with children & young people and a need to co-ordinate possible criminal, child protection and disciplinary processes. Although there has been a fall over the last 2 years in the number of Complex Strategy Meetings, this is an area of activity that is expected to rise as a result of new guidance in respect of the management of allegations and increased awareness across the statutory, voluntary & community sector in respect of the adults deemed to be 'unsuitable' to work with children & young people and/or vulnerable adults.

DSCB Statements of Intent:

"have a business like focus" - "have capacity and resources" - "hold and be held to account" - "make a difference to children's lives" - "be seen and heard" - "encourage agencies and communities to work together" – "have children's voices percolating all that we do"

REPORTS FROM SUB-COMMITTEES

Training & Development Sub-Committee

It's been another successful year for training – we now have 24 accredited trainers and have delivered multi-agency training to over 1,200 staff during 2006/07. A further 920 people have been trained on a single-agency basis. The training team have developed several new Level 3 courses such as Emotional Abuse & Neglect, Domestic Abuse, Internet Safety, MAPPA, Risk Assessment and Safeguarding Disabled Children. We have also joined an Advisory Group with 14 other local authorities and Virtual College to develop e-learning safeguarding modules for adults working with children & young people. For more information concerning our Training & Development Strategy & Programme go to:

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

Key Aims of our Training & Development Strategy 2007/09 include:

- Significantly increase number of people completing Level 1 Basic Awareness Training notably in the voluntary, community sector and faith groups through implementation of e-learning modules
- Increase public awareness of safeguarding and 'what do if you 're worried a child is being abused' with the support of Local Safeguarding Children Networks across 5 townships
- Increase awareness of internet abuse through rolling-out internet safety to primary schools pupils and their parents/carers

Needs & Services Sub-Committee

The Sub-Committee will be looking at pathways through child protection processes when children experience abuse & neglect, from initial recognition to assessment & intervention to therapeutic support. The Board is keen to develop improved needs analysis in order to better inform its business planning and priority-setting in the future.

PRIORITIES FOR 2007/08

- Implement action plan from baseline self-assessment against Standard 5 of the National Service Framework for Children, Young People & Maternity Services
 - Analyse service gaps in respect of children who are suffering child abuse, initially in respect of neglect

Serious Cases (Child Death) Review Sub-Committee

There have been no new Serious Case Reviews in accordance with Working Together guidance during 2006/07. However, the sub-committee has been given access to a number of single-agency Management Reviews where abuse has occurred perpetrated by adults in a position of trust.

PRIORITIES FOR 2007/08

- Monitor Action Plans from previous Serious Case Reviews
 - Develop child death review processes including rapid responses to ensure compliance with statutory guidance by April 2008



Policy & Procedures Sub-Committee

The publication of a new version of 'Working Together' guidance during 2006 has precipitated a revision of the Child Protection Procedures, which are due to be published on the DSCB website by the end of June 2007. The last 12 months has also involved a review of multi-agency arrangements in respect of domestic abuse, following changes in referral processes by West Midlands Police and the introduction of the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) concerning victims at high risk. Other work has included the development of a Photographic Policy in collaboration with marketing & media colleagues, a review of the Asthma Policy for schools...

The current Child Protection Procedures are available to be downloaded at:

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



PRIORITIES FOR 2007/08

Revise and up-date Safeguarding Children Procedures to include:

- Review procedures for management of allegations in respect of adults who work with children & young people
- Develop procedures to support multi-agency rapid response to child deaths and implementation of review processes

Quality & Performance Sub-Committee

The Quality & Performance Framework includes an audit programme – messages from these audits have been published within the SaFER newsletter. The Sub is also the focal point for promoting children & young people voices in child protection and safeguarding activity and the involvement of parents/carers in key processes.

For more information go to: <http://safeguardingchildren.dudley.gov.uk>

PRIORITIES FOR 2007/08

- Develop advocacy arrangements for young people attending Child Protection Review Conferences in collaboration with the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)
- Undertake quality audit and review processes in respect of child protection investigations

DSCB Principles of Development

public awareness & education - protection – prevention of abuse & neglect – partnership working – professional development & training – participation of children, young people and carers – project & performance management – policies & procedures

KEY PRIORITIES 2007/09

Key national policy issues and local evidence have informed the strategic inter-agency priorities for 2007/09:

Sharing Responsibility

- Undertake a self-audit of the extent to which agencies are fulfilling their collective and respective role & responsibilities in the context of Section 11 (Children Act 2004) duty to safeguard and promote children's well-being
- Develop a communication strategy to support the workforce and public in understanding safeguarding issues and the work of the Board
- Develop more effective risk assessment and working together arrangements for children & young people witness domestic abuse

Engaging Communities

- Strengthen working together arrangements in respect of the identification, assessment and support for children & young people at risk of child sexual abuse & exploitation, and the disruption of the activities of those wanting to abuse & exploit them
- Work with young people, parents/carers & communities to improve understanding of safeguarding issues concerning use of internet & mobile phones
- Develop a multi-faith Safeguarding Children group to improve working together arrangements
- Improve identification & early intervention for children & young people who are at risk of suffering neglect

Developing Safer Services

- Improve safer employment practices in the context of the Vulnerable Persons Act and the implementation of the national Vetting & Barring Scheme
- Prepare for the implementation of new statutory duties in respect of child death reviews
- Review arrangements for the management of allegations against adults who work with children & young people

SINGLE-AGENCY PRIORITIES 2007/09

Dudley MBC

Develop the Joint Safeguarding & Review arrangements in partnership with Health & Police

Lead Officers: *Graham Tilby & Jackie Jennings*

Develop new protocols with schools and other establishments in respect of 'on-site' activities and the adoption of SEAL

Lead Officers: *Graham Tilby & Rachael McKiernon-Doyle*

Improve multi-agency working in respect of children suffering neglect, notably with parents with learning disabilities

Lead Officers: *Graham Tilby & Jackie Jennings*

Implement regional protocol in respect of joint investigations in partnership with the police and in the context of the outcomes of the regional Best Value Review

Lead Officers: *Christine Ballinger & Graham Tilby*

Develop new strategies to actively manage children's cases under the auspices of an inter-agency child protection plan in order to prevent children from becoming looked after

Lead Officers: *Christine Ballinger & Graham Tilby*

Improve safeguarding arrangements within criminal justice system and develop protocols with safeguarding staff within secure estate

Lead Officer: *Trevor Brown*

Improve inter-agency arrangements and public awareness in respect of the identification of children who are privately fostered

Lead Officers: *Graham Tilby & Jackie Jennings*

Raise awareness in respect of young people's substance misuse

Lead Officers: *Audrey Hear*

West Midlands Police

Improve inter-agency training and working together arrangements, particularly in relation to child protection investigations

Lead Officers: *DCI Andy Carter & DI Kevin Ludwig*

Improve inter-agency communication, working together arrangements and understanding of roles by joint training and meetings at strategic & operational levels

Lead Officers: *DCI Andy Carter & DI Kevin Ludwig*

Develop more effective risk assessment for children witnessing Domestic Abuse

Lead Officers: *DCI Andy Carter & DI Kevin Ludwig*

Primary Care & Acute Hospital Trusts

Up-date Pan-Trust Child Protection Policy following up-date of DSCB Child Protection procedures and formulate stand for Optometrists

Lead Officers: *Pauline Owens & Dr. Zala Ibrahim*

Undertake on-going training for Domestic Abuse (DA) & working with Pan-trust DA Policy

Lead Officers: *Pauline Owens & Dr. Zala Ibrahim*

Schools & Colleges

Develop closer working relationships between education settings & child protection agencies

Lead Officers: *Head Teacher Reps & Graham Tilby*

Implement guidance and undertake training in respect of safer employment practices

Lead Officers: *Lisa Morgan-Danks & Graham Tilby*

Black Country Connexions & Learning Skills Council

Embed safeguarding into business activities including Service Level Agreements with providers

Lead Officers: *Helen Ellis & John Cunningham*

Ensure operational/delivery staff are trained to Level 1 & 2 (non-delivery staff to be trained to a minimum of level 1 basic awareness)

Lead Officers: *Helen Ellis & John Cunningham*

National Probation Service

Implement Offender Management model as part of multi-agency public protection arrangements in respect of adults who pose a risk to children & young people

Lead Officer: *Viv Townsend*

Dudley Voluntary & Community Sector

Improve capacity to ensure that training is offered for the voluntary & community sector such as in respect of child protection

Lead Officers: *Graham Tilby, Jackie Jennings & Arnie Troxler*

Establish a 'quality charter mark' for voluntary & community sector organisations working with children & young people to ensure they provide a safe, positive and secure environment

Lead Officers: *Graham Tilby & Arnie Troxler*

Improve capacity to ensure that all voluntary & community organisations working with children & young people are supported in developing risk assessments procedures and safer recruitment practices

Lead Officers: *Chris Ballinger & Arnie Troxler*

Improve training, awareness-raising and dissemination of information in ways appropriate to the size of the Voluntary Community Organisation and their type of work

Lead Officers: *Graham Tilby, Jackie Jennings & Arnie Troxler*

West Midlands Fire Service

Improve inter-agency training, working together and information-sharing

Lead Officers: *Borough Commander Steve Vincent & Andrew Reaves*

Increase home safety and reduce arson through targeting vulnerable families via schools, children's centres, community work, and partnership work

Lead Officers: *Borough Commander Steve Vincent & Andrea Reaves*



For more information about the work of Dudley Safeguarding Children Board please email graham.tilby@dudley.gov.uk: Safeguarding & Review Unit, 6 St. James's Road, Dudley, DY1 3JL - 01384 813061