

Health and Well Being Board

Report of the Director of Children's Services

The Annual Report, Business Plan and Work Programme of the Dudley Safeguarding Children's Board

Purpose of Report

1. To present to the Health and Well Being Board the annual report, business plan and work programme of the Dudley Safeguarding Children's Board.

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 Local Safeguarding Children Board 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. The core objectives of the Local Safeguarding Children Board are set out in Section 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
5. The scope of Local Safeguarding Children Board's 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

6. An independent chair of the DSCB (Roger Clayton) has recently been appointed.

The chair is accountable to the Local Authority via the Director of Children's Services for the effectiveness of the work of the Board. The Director of Children's Services will be held to account for the effective working of the Local Safeguarding Children Board by the Chief Executive and challenged where appropriate by the Lead Member

7. Chief Executives are responsible for satisfying themselves that their Director of Children's Services is fulfilling their managerial responsibilities for safeguarding.

8. Lead Members for Children's Services

- Are politically accountable for ensuring that the local authority fulfils its legal responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people
- Provide the political leadership needed for the effective co-ordination of work with other relevant agencies with safeguarding responsibilities

- Should also take steps to assure themselves that effective quality assurance systems for safeguarding are in place and functioning effectively
9. The Lead Member is a 'participating observer' of the Local Safeguarding Children Board
 10. Whilst the Dudley Safeguarding Children's Board 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.
 11. At the heart of the establishment of Dudley Safeguarding Children's Board 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 Dudley Safeguarding Children's Board 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. There is now a statutory requirement (through the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009) for Local Safeguarding Children Board's to publish an annual report including achievements and challenges that still remain.

Finance

14. The annual budget for the Board for 2012-13 was £231,179.00, including contributions from partner agencies, which fund the core expenditure and training programme of the board.

Law


15. The establishment of a Local Safeguarding Children's Board 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

16. The work of the Dudley Safeguarding Children's Board 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 Dudley Safeguarding Children's Board 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.

Recommendation

17. That the Health and Well Being Board receive and note this up-date and receive the annual report from Dudley Safeguarding Children's Board in due course.



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