

Select Committee on Children's Services – 17 June 2010

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Dudley Safeguarding Board Annual Report

Purpose of Report

1. To present to Select Committee the Annual Report of the Dudley Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB) for 2009/10.

Background

2. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children requires effective co-ordination in every local area. For this reason, the Children Act 2004 require 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. Whilst the work of Local Safeguarding Children Board's 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 Local Safeguarding Children Board 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 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
- 7.0 The Dudley Safeguarding Children's Board is chaired by the Assistant Director for Children's Services who is accountable to the Local Authority via the Director of Children's Services (DCS) for the effectiveness of their work as Local Safeguarding Children Board chair. The Director of Children's Service will be held to account for the effective working of the Local Safeguarding Children Board by the Chief Executive and challenges where appropriate by their Lead Member.
- 7.1 Chief Executives are responsible for satisfying themselves that their Director of Children's Services is fulfilling their managerial responsibilities for safeguarding.
- 7.2 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
- 7.3 The Lead Member should be a 'participating observer' of the Local Safeguarding Children Board's.
8. The Dudley Safeguarding Children's Board and its activities are part of the wider context of children's trust arrangements. The work of Local Safeguarding Children Board's contributes to the wider goals of improving the well-being of all children.
9. 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.

10. 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.
11. 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.
12. 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.
13. Local Safeguarding Children Board's must publish their first report by 1 April 2011. Attached at Appendix one is the Annual Report of the Dudley Safeguarding Children's Board for 2009/10.

Finance

14. The 2010/11 Local Authority budget for the Board is £86,700. The Board also currently receives partner contributions of £81,400 to help support the training programme. There is increasing pressure on this budget due to high levels of activity.

Law

15. The establishment of a Local Safeguarding Children 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 against the Every Child Matters agenda.

Recommendations

17. That Select Committee receive and note the Dudley Safeguarding Children's Board Annual Report.



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