



## Dudley Safeguarding Children Board Executive Summary April 2013-2014



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### 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.

For more information about the work of Dudley Safeguarding Children Board go to <http://safeguarding.dudley.gov.uk>

## 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:

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☑ *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

## Summary of Safeguarding & Child Protection Activity

The following information provides an overview of the Safeguarding Data from April 2013-2014

- 3262 children (around 4% of all children and young people) were defined as 'in need' by children's social care.
- 304 children were subject to a child protection plan.
- 754 children were looked after by the local authority.
- There were 6014 contacts made to Children's Social Care of which 3452 were new referrals.
- Section 47 child protection investigations took place in respect of 938 children and young people.
- There were 281 child abuse recorded crimes by the police and 90 cases were detected as child abuse related offences.
- 2368 notifications were made to children's social care involving children living within the household where a domestic abuse incident had taken place. There has been a 50% increase of referrals from 2012-13 where the figure was 1798.
- There were 170 concerns or allegations in respect of people who work with children leading to 114 independently chaired positions of trust complex strategy meetings concerning 80 individual members of the workforce.
- There have been 204 Initial Child protection conferences of which 377 children were made subject of a Child Protection Plan, 12 Receiving In Conferences and 332 Review Child Protection Conferences.
- 376 children were reported as missing from home to the Police, an average of 31 children per month.
- 35 young people were referred to YPSE panel and assessed at risk of sexual exploitation.
- 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.



## Progress in respect of Key Priorities 2013-2014

### What did we do?

#### **PRIORITY ONE:**

- Continue to revise our Quality Assurance Framework.
  - Produced new inter-Agency Child Protection Standards.
  - Published Quality Assurance Overview Report of agency audit outcomes.
  - Continued to secure additional funding to appoint a temporary Quality Assurance Officer.
  - Revised Performance Data Set taking account of national framework and regional activity
- Commissioned additional multi-agency Signs of Safety Training for practitioners and briefed range of frontline managers across key partner agencies.
  - Quality Assurance Overview Report of agency audit outcomes.
  - Continued to secure additional funding to appoint a temporary Quality Assurance Officer.
  - Revised Performance Data Set taking account of national framework and regional activity
  - Commissioned additional multi-agency Signs of Safety Training for practitioners and briefed range of frontline managers across key partner agencies.

**This work was led by the DSCB Quality & Performance Management Group**

#### **PRIORITY TWO:**

- Continued to promote use of common assessment across key agencies such as Children's Centres, Health and other partners.
- Created education liaison officer post.
- Continued Troubled Families support through a Family Intervention Programme targeted to include children on the edge of care and in need of protection.
- Restructure of Children Centre provision into cluster models.

#### **PRIORITY THREE:**

- Multi agency audits completed which have highlighted areas for improvement.
- Section 11 audits completed and scrutiny of agency plans.
- Forums have continued to take place and offered the challenge on an operational level to interventions with families

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**PRIORITY FOUR:**

- Contributed to the development and implementation of a West Midlands Regional Strategy to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation.
  - Reviewed and implemented changes to our Young People at Risk of Sexual Exploitation (YPSE) Panel arrangements to improve the effectiveness of screening, risk assessment and specialist support.
  - Secured additional investment (10k) for Street Teams to undertake more targeted work with children's social care.
- Developed a CSE Framework and Directory of Services to support the introduction of a Delivery Plan during 2013-14  
Secured short-term funding to support the development of a regional Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC).

- Developed and launched a multi-agency CSE referral toolkit.

**This work was led by our Vulnerable Children & Young People's Task Group**

**PRIORITY FIVE:**

- Implemented single assessment in Children Services to ensure that the journey of the child is recorded consistently with robust information gathered from partner agencies.
- Domestic Abuse Strategic group have been reviewed through CAADA and a MARAC action plan devised.
- Substance misuse safeguarding forum have raised practice issues following an adult death. Internal review completed to consider the missed opportunities and learning disseminated through an action plan.
- Secured additional investment (10k) for Street Teams to undertake more targeted work with children's social care.
- Developed a CSE Framework and Directory of Services to support the introduction of a Delivery Plan during 2013-14.
- Secured short-term funding to support the development of a regional Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC).
- Developed and launched a multi-agency CSE referral toolkit.

## SAFEGUARDING EFFECTIVENESS IN DUDLEY

### How safe are children and young people in Dudley?

The last full inspection of safeguarding arrangements in Dudley by Ofsted was in November 2011 (published in January 2012). The overall effectiveness of safeguarding was rated as adequate with good capacity for improvement. The report made a total of 13 recommendations to be actioned and DSCB has contributed to the implementation and monitoring of improvement activity during 2012-13 alongside conducting further self-assessment work in respect of safeguarding outcomes

In August 2012, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission undertook a 3-day thematic inspection of adult services' arrangement for the safeguarding of children where there is parental substance misuse or mental health services. The a Experience of children, parents, carers e.g. feedback surveys

Actions against the plan have been progressed and reported to DSCB.

In November 2013, the LGA have reviewed provision of Services to Looked After Children through peer review. An action plan has been devised to address findings related to reducing the numbers of looked after children and ensuring improved and timely care planning. The findings and progress will be reported in next year's Annual report.

The Quality Assurance Framework was revised in March 2012 with four key components:

- Experience of frontline staff e.g. surveys, focus groups
- Children's, parents case records e.g. file audits
- Other organisational activity e.g. supervision, practice observations
- Experiences of children, parents carers e.g. feedback surveys

The QA group of the Board have held oversight of these and have reported on its activity in this report. There has been progress in ensuring the application of standards within child protection and that children at risk of sexual exploitation are identified quickly and have access to support services within the Borough

### LSCB Self-Assessment

DSCB conducted a self-assessment of its own effectiveness using Ofsted Good Practice Checklist in 2013. The findings indicated the following:

- Governance arrangements – satisfactory
- Partnership working – good
- Engagement with children and young people – satisfactory
- Business planning and relationship with children's trust/partnership – satisfactory
- Quality assurance – satisfactory

DSCB will prioritise a self-assessment in 2015 to review these findings and incorporate the new Ofsted guidance for inspection arrangements for LSCBs.

The main mechanism for self-assessing how safe children and young people are in Dudley is through the application of the Board's Quality Assurance Framework, which was revised in March 2014, with 4 key components:

- Experiences of children, parents and carers
- Experiences of frontline staff
- Children's and parents case records
- Other Organisational Activity

## Looking Ahead: Key Challenges

DSCB has a key role in supporting agencies in respect of their safeguarding arrangements, largely through the provision of services provided by Safeguarding and Review Service. There are occasions when the Board are required to challenge agencies where it is considered that safeguarding issues are not being sufficiently addressed, either in respect of an individual child or at a more strategic level. In January 2014, DSCB commenced a review of its structure and membership. This work continues and will be reported on in next year's report. The work around the risk register falls within this review period

### Key risks and Challenges

There are a number of risks and challenges that will require action to mitigate against and minimise. Some of these risks are more specific to partner agencies, others to the work of the Board:

#### Safeguarding Risks and Challenge

- Capacity of front-line services to respond to increasing demand and complexity of child protection work, notably at a time of recession with the impact of poverty increasing pressures within some families and cuts within public sector services on the provision of early intervention and some areas of more specialist assessment and intervention.
- The continued impact on frontline practice of continued national and regional organisational change and reform within health and police.
- the impact of the Family Justice Review in terms of capacity to adhere to timescales and additional requirements with family court proceedings, particularly in view of the increasing complexity of the circumstances of some children who are subject to care proceedings.
- Lack of consistency in respect of child protection planning and review evidenced through quality assurance activity and case reviews.
- Potential for increased risks to children who suffer from asthma as a result of legal changes with regards to the provision of emergency inhalers.

#### Board Risks and Challenges

- Capacity to deliver key priorities and improvements identified within business plan and work programme.
- The loss of 24 hour rapid response cover within health for unexpected child deaths.
- The lack of timely distribution of child protection conference minutes.

#### The Board appointed an Independent Chair in June 2013. Roger Clayton's priorities continue over the next year:

- Review and set a work programme for improving LSCB communications, including the development of the website in-conjunction with Dudley Safeguarding Adults Board.
- Review and set a work programme to improve the engagement and participation of children and young people with the LSCB.
- Review and set a work programme to improve partnership engagement and leadership across the Board structure.

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