

Local Members' Interest
N/A

Safe & Strong Communities Select Committee - 22 January 2019

Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2017 - 2018

Recommendation

- a. Members are asked to receive the report to understand the role and function of Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board (hereafter referred to as the SSCB). Members are asked to consider or comment on the progress that the Board has made since the last annual report was presented to the committee on 15th January 2018. This SSCB Annual Report sets out the progress made by the partnership during 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018.

Report of Cllr Mark Sutton, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Summary

What is the Select Committee being asked to do and why?

The SSCB should report annually on the progress made by the Board to the Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee to enable robust Member scrutiny of its statutory functions. SSCB Annual Reports provide a transparent, public account of the work of the partnership during 2017-2018.

Report

Background

1. The SSCB is the key statutory mechanism that brings together representatives of each of the main agencies and professionals responsible for promoting the welfare and safety of children and young people. It is an inter-agency forum for agreeing how the different services and professional groups should cooperate to safeguard children throughout Staffordshire (except Stoke-on-Trent which has its own Local Safeguarding Children Board) and for making sure that arrangements work effectively to help to promote better outcomes for children.
2. The SSCB works together in partnership to safeguard and promote the welfare of children across three broad areas of activity all of which take into account the need to promote equality of opportunity and to meet the diverse needs of all children living in our communities. Specifically:
 - a. Engage partner agencies to set the strategic direction for safeguarding all children;
 - b. Identify and prevent harm and impairment of health or development and help ensure that all children are provided with safe and effective care as they are growing up;
 - c. Lead and coordinate on proactive work to target vulnerable groups;
 - d. Lead and coordinate on responsive work to protect children suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm; and

e. Lead and coordinate the development and delivery of multi-agency safeguarding training.

3. The objectives of the Board are pursued through core statutory functions which are set out within the Children Act 2004 and the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015. These core functions are achieved through the work of the Board's subgroups which are chaired by a Board member or representative of one of the partner agencies. Each subgroup is responsible for measuring its performance against an annual work plan, which is derived from the SSCB Business Plan. Members of the Executive Group and the Board monitor the effectiveness of the work completed.

Membership

4. Membership of the SSCB is set out in section 13(3) of the Children Act 2004 and has been updated in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 (page 68/69). Organisations that include local authority, police and health are required to cooperate with the local authority in the establishment and operation of the Board and have shared responsibility for the effective discharge of its functions. The Staffordshire County Council Cabinet Member for Children and Young People also attends the Board as a participating observer.
5. Until March 2018 the SSCB Independent Chair is continuing to steer the strategic direction of the Board and provides an opportunity to promote improved synergy within safeguarding children arrangements across the whole of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

Budget

6. The SSCB is reliant on the contributions it receives from statutory member agencies and the SSCB is funded through a multi-agency budget. Please refer to page 8 of the SSCB Annual Report for further details of the contributions for 2017/18.

Governance

7. The governance arrangements of the SSCB have been the subject of significant review since 2014 and are in line with the statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015. The Board is confident that it is fully compliant with the statutory function requirements for local safeguarding children boards.

SSCB Activity and challenges

8. Since the last report to the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee the SSCB has made considerable progress on a wide range of objectives through effective local partnership working, despite the challenges presented by the current economic climate and agency restructures. This includes engaging in activity which is targeted at groups of children and young people who have been identified as being vulnerable due to sexual abuse and exploitation, or neglect as a result of parental alcohol use, substance misuse, parental mental health and / or domestic abuse. The information provided in the annual report highlights some of the most noticeable achievements in respect of CSE and work undertaken with schools and other educational settings.

9. In 2018 following consultation on a national basis and following the Wood Review, the government published a revised Working Together 2018. Latterly in July of this year, the SSCB were successful with their bid to the DfE to become an early adopter to re-focus the work of the Board across both Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, and to bring together six Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and numerous acute, community and mental health providers.
10. In 2018/19 the SSCB will produce an annual report that details the outcome of the early adopter's programme and how this has influenced the new arrangements under Working Together 2018.

Link to Strategic Plan

11. The work of the SSCB contributes to and supports the values and principles detailed in the Staffordshire County Council's Strategic plan for 2014-2018, particularly in relation to the priority outcome for the people of Staffordshire to, *'Feel safer, happier and more supported in and by their community'*.

Link to Other Overview and Scrutiny Activity

12. The work of the SSCB links to Committee's overview of the local authority's Children's Social Care arrangements, domestic abuse and child sexual exploitation.

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List of Appendices

Appendix A - Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report: 2017-2018.