

Local Members' Interest
N/A

## **Safe & Strong Communities Select Committee - 6<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

### **Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) Annual Report 15/16**

#### **Recommendation**

1. Members are asked to receive the report to understand the role and function of Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board (hereafter referred to as the SSCB). They 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 14<sup>th</sup> December 2015. This SSCB Annual Report sets out the progress made by the partnership during 1st April 2015 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

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

#### **Summary**

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

2. 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 2015-2016 and includes key messages for local commissioners to consider to help strengthen local safeguarding children arrangements.

#### **Report**

#### **Background**

3. 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 LSCB) and for making sure that arrangements work effectively to help to promote better outcomes for children.
4. The SSCB works together in partnership to safeguard and promote the welfare of children across three broad areas of activity all of which takes 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.
5. 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**

6. 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.
7. The Independent Chair of both Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Local Safeguarding Children Boards is continuing to steer the strategic direction of the Boards and provides an opportunity to promote improved synergy within safeguarding children arrangements across the whole of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

## **Budget**

8. The SSCB is reliant on the contributions it receives from statutory member agencies and the SSCB is funded through a multi-agency budget. The agreed budget allocation for 2015-2016 was £253,047.

## **Governance**

9. 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**

10. Since the last report to the Safe & 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 and / or domestic abuse (known as the 'toxic trio'). The following information provides examples of some of the progress and achievements the SSCB partnership has made during this year:

### **Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation**

11. The SSCB and Voice Project consulted with three high schools to seek children and young people's views on sexting. 100% of young people were unaware that sexting is unlawful. Their views and ideas were shared with Burton and Derbyshire College who developed and produced a short 'For the Whole World to See' DVD for children and young people. This DVD was shared with all education establishments across Staffordshire to help children and young people keep themselves safer.
12. A Joint CSE Outcomes Framework for CSE has been developed in partnership with Bedford University and funded by the Staffordshire OPCC. Phase 1 included extensive consultation across partner agencies and with children and young people, families and communities. This is first time that this has been done and it has attracted national interest. The framework will be piloted during 2016-2017.
13. A Staffordshire Police Signs and Indicators Leaflet and Police intelligence form was developed for use by agencies, parents, carers and young people to provide information and report concerns about potential perpetrators of CSE. Every school in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent has been sent an information leaflet with details of who to contact for advice when there is concern that a young person is vulnerable to CSE.
14. Staffordshire Police working together with the two local authorities has formed a multi-agency Preventing Child Sexual Exploitation Team; a Staffordshire social worker with specialist skills in supporting young people who have experienced CSE is seconded to this team. The Prevention Team has been delivering CSE awareness and internet safety advice to a range of diverse communities and local businesses. The team offers support and education to families, potential victims and their families and will also work with perpetrators and potential perpetrators. Off the curriculum subjects at schools such as the danger of Youth Generated Sexual Images and interactive sessions on how to recognise the signs of grooming online have also been provided by the team.
15. A joint LSCB multi-agency CSE Campaign was delivered across the city and county from November 2015 to March 2016 and included specific activity around Safer Internet Day and CSE Awareness Day. As part of this campaign a new

website [www.knowaboutcse.co.uk](http://www.knowaboutcse.co.uk) has been developed to help young people, parents and carers, and practitioners to access information on being targeted and groomed, spotting the signs of CSE and reporting concerns. The campaign has used social media (Email; Facebook; Twitter) and has had a significant reach across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. Letters were also sent to all schools in March 2016 asking them to contact parents to let them know about resources available in relation to CSE including the website.

16. In November 2015 a survivor of CSE gave an emotionally moving description of her experiences to more than two hundred frontline professionals attending the joint Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Training Conference to help raise awareness about the risks posed to children and young people. Feedback from attendees demonstrates that the event was successful in meeting its objectives of raising awareness.
17. Well attended multi-agency CSE Panels, chaired by the County Managers from the CSC Specialist Safeguarding Service continue to operate across Staffordshire on a bi-monthly basis. These are proving critical in supporting the development of local problem profiles.
18. In addition there are a number of ongoing joint operations with Staffordshire Police and partner agencies which are subject to the Joint Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent LSCB Organised and Complex Abuse Procedures.
19. The CSE support service called Base 58 provides specialist support to children and young people at risk of or involved in sexual exploitation in Staffordshire. The service is designed to meet the principles of effective practice as required in the SSCB policies and procedures. The service delivers one to one support in partnership with the child or young person and also works closely with partners in order to reduce risk and improve outcomes. A number of outcomes have been achieved as a result of the support offered by the service which includes reductions in risk taking behaviour; in missing episodes; in harm to self; and improvements in emotional health and resilience. Over the 12 month period the service has regularly supported 29 children and young people. The service has also provided regular advice and support to professionals and family members in relation to CSE.
20. Since the launch of the Staffordshire Police 'Operation Safenet' in July 2015 to 31 March 2016 there have been 108 persons arrested and processed for child sexual offences in the Staffordshire Force area and 138 children have been directly safeguarded as a result of Safenet's investigations. One significant individual identified by Operation Safenet officers as abusing children online resulted in 32 victims being identified (additional to the 138 safeguarded above). Safenet investigations have also identified and provided information regarding a further 29 people in other force areas who are strongly suspected of involvement in child sexual abuse.
21. Training to taxi drivers, operators and passenger assistants in respect of CSE is ongoing. The focus of the training is on recognising abuse and neglect, communication, disability, hate crime, how to report, the law on consent, CSE with

an underlying message that taxi drivers and passenger assistants are the “eyes and ears of the community.” Work is being undertaken to agree content of the presentation and reciprocity across all licensing authorities and community transport services in the county and city. All taxi firms are being required to adhere to a number of safeguarding requirements and these are set out in their conditions of contract. Taxi driver badges are now only issued following a standard DBS disclosure and evidence that training has been completed.

## **Neglect and the Toxic Trio**

22. Around half of all children looked after by the local authorities are known to have experienced harm as a result of neglect. The SSCB has a particular focus on the impact of parental behaviours and influences that can often lead to neglect of the welfare and safety of children and young people specifically, domestic abuse, drug and alcohol misuse and parental mental ill-health. In combination these factors are often referred to as the ‘toxic trio’.
23. The two LSCBs are currently developing a joint Neglect Strategy which will set out the vision, commitment and inter-agency approach to help promote the effectiveness of local arrangements to safeguard children from parental neglect.
24. The two year pilot Perpetrator Programme delivered by Core Assets will finish in October 2016. To date seven local programmes (four in Stafford, two in Newcastle and one in Lichfield) have either been run or are currently underway. Following completion of the Programme, both men on the Programme and the victims who are being supported are asked to complete a feedback form. 100% of men who completed the programme felt they had a better understanding of domestic abuse and its effects and data for the end of March 2016 indicates that 67% believed that there had been a reduction in their abusive behaviour.
25. In order to effectively communicate information about how to report domestic abuse and how to get help in an accessible, inclusive and relevant way information has been made available on the Staffordshire Web about existing services across Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent and regional / national services.
26. Training continues to be provided directly by local domestic abuse support service providers and through the SSCB. Targeted training is also now underway for BRFC practitioners.
27. Guidelines for Working with Male Victims of Domestic Abuse have been endorsed by both Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Steering Groups and are available online.
28. A Safeguarding Housing Subgroup has been established which will consider a range of safeguarding issues.
29. For children and young people the ‘Treated Badly’ communication campaign completed last year is still live on the website and posters / leaflets are still displayed in numerous locations.

30. There has been a significant increase in the number of reported cases, primarily since January 2016 as a result of Operation Liberty which was Staffordshire Police's response to the HMIC 2015 inspection learning. The improvement action resulting from this included mandated training for all frontline staff and changes in the structure across the force to help ensure all risk assessments (DIALS) have effective management oversight. All officers have been trained on the importance of seeing, hearing and speaking to any children present when they attend a domestic incident.
31. The SSCB has been assured that in all the domestic incidents (in which a total of 1035 children and young people were involved) the children either directly within the family or as associated to the families have been discussed in either the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or by the Staffordshire Police Vulnerability Hub. Where appropriate their information is shared with Children's Social Care services and when required a formal assessment has been undertaken to help ensure that children and young people are properly safeguarded.
32. In November 2015 Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the Staffordshire Police and Crime Commissioner initiated a review of the provision of domestic abuse services across the neighbouring local authority areas. The review will examine the feasibility of the joint-commissioning of domestic abuse services across the City Council and County Council areas under joint contracts that are designed to be more responsive to the needs of victims and their children; will promote early identification and referral; will have a greater focus on prevention and the addressing of perpetrator behaviours; and will provide a consistent high quality service across the whole of the area. It is intended that the new contracts will commence in early 2017.
33. The development of a comprehensive needs assessment that will highlight the needs of children and young people is also underway and will be utilised to inform the commissioning cycle, the development of the first pan-Staffordshire Domestic Abuse Strategy and future collaborative governance arrangements.
34. Confirming with commissioners and providers what data and information should be received from children and drug and alcohol services for inclusion in the Safeguarding Board performance data set.
35. The SSCB has sought assurances that commissioners of drug and alcohol services have systems in place to monitor the extent to which providers of those services meet their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children. They have also been required to provide information on the number of adults receiving specialised drug and alcohol services who are parents or carers; in order to develop an understanding of local needs relating to children affected by parental substance misuse and to seek assurances that children and young people are being supported.
36. The Board has been assured that senior managers from connected partners have arrangements in place for supervision and oversight and evaluate the quality of joint working through analysis of referrals and case file audits; and that all

children's and adults services practitioners working with families affected by drug and alcohol problems have the competence and confidence in identifying the impact of these difficulties on the child or young person.

37. Senior managers and practitioners across all connected partner agencies services are made aware of learning from Serious Case Reviews relevant to drug and alcohol misuse; and commissioners of drug and alcohol services ensure that the role of adult drug and alcohol services in safeguarding is set out explicitly in all relevant tender documents and contracts.

### **Early Help**

38. During 2015-2016 the SSCB and the Families Strategic Partnership (FSP) developed the Staffordshire Early Help Strategy in recognition of the significant national and local focus on early help and prevention. To launch the new strategy the SSCB commissioned a low-cost, digital campaign and a range of different products were developed and launched.
39. Surveys completed pre and post the campaign evidenced that 87.7% of respondents to the evaluation survey found the Early Help webpages informative; 97.54% respondents to the survey agreeing that they felt confident in being able to spot the signs that a family needs early help; 95.9% of people agreed they have a role in ensuring families receive early help; 73% agreed that the information received has increased their confidence; 87% agreed that they feel confident in knowing how to support a family to get the early help they need; and 94% were committed to using the tool in the future.
40. In summary this campaign was a success and has achieved a high level of awareness around the strategy, an evidenced increase in confidence around early help and an improved commitment to use the shared tools in the future.
41. Staffordshire County Council provided a train the trainers event for 80 Early Help Champions to cascade Early Help assessment training to all partners within Staffordshire. Approximately 950 professionals have received face to face early help training this year and over 1800 have completed the SSCB 'Delivering Early Help in Staffordshire' eLearning module.

### **Other Safeguarding Children Activity**

42. The SSCB website has a total of 41,013 visitors this year and continues to provide a wealth of relevant and up to date information to children, parents, carers and front line professionals, much of the content has been informed by feedback using on line surveys and through SSCB training events. Front line practitioners continue to make contact with the Board and raise suggestions at training events which helps the website remain current and topical.
43. The SSCB newsletter continues to be widely distributed to front line practitioners and managers, promoting the Board priorities, the learning from serious case or learning reviews, Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHR's), as well as key national and local information relating to the safeguarding of children. This communication

is supported with a range of short practitioner guides and briefing papers to Board partners. Managers and practitioner feedback evidences the value of this newsletter in keeping frontline staff up to date with national and local learning.

44. A range of locally developed policies and procedures are available to the safeguarding workforce in order to support frontline practice. Sixteen inter-agency procedures have been developed or revised and communicated to frontline staff this year.
45. During 2015-2016 three serious case reviews (either the actual review or the monitoring of the respective action plans) were managed through the SCR Subgroup. The publication of the three reviews has been delayed due to parallel investigations; however the action plans approved by the Board have been actively progressed. The SSCB Annual Report sets out how learning has helped to strengthen local safeguarding children arrangements.
46. A section 11 safeguarding children peer audit has been coordinated with partners of both LSCBs. This enabled additional scrutiny and challenge to local arrangements and provided an opportunity for evidence to be scrutinised. There was good engagement from all partners with a variety of supporting evidence as well clear improvement actions where improvements were required.
47. Throughout 2015-2016 Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) has continued to work with partners locally and nationally to continue to improve child safety, child welfare and develop the functions and effectiveness of CDOP. This has included the development of a Safety Booklet entitled 'Protect Your Little Bundle... From Birth and Beyond' to raise awareness of potential hazards in and around the home and to prevent unintentional injuries to babies and children. Funding has been provided by Stoke on Trent Public Health to launch this from 1st April 2016 and health Visitors will supply and explain the contents of the booklet to all new parents.
48. CDOP have also conducted a thematic review of three child deaths relating to asthma in Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent and devised a learning and improvement action plan for Primary Care (GP Practices), acute health services (including community establishments), Education and Public Health.
49. SSCB multi-agency training courses remain popular and during 2015-2016 we trained more staff than ever, proving to be a very successful year. In total 153 events have been coordinated and 2953 practitioners from across all agencies have attended our training. Following targeted activity there has been an increase of 41% for district/ borough staff attending SSCB training events; a 90% increase in Probation Service attendance; and a 48% increase in specialist service providers for substance misuse and domestic abuse attending.
50. SSCB has been a founder member of Safeguarding Children e-Academy since 2006; through this academy our members can access 41 e-learning modules; this is a free resource for our contributing partners and the voluntary/charitable sector.



51. To date we have had 31,678 licence requests (this is an increase of 38% since last year). Of these 10,905 were allocated to our main Level 1 Awareness of Child Abuse and Neglect modules (including Safeguarding Children Refresher training); 8,307 people have completed the modules, taken the on-line test and passed the module. This is a good completion rate of 76%.
52. A 'Dreamkeepers' drama focusing on cyberbullying and CSE was delivered to 131 primary schools and 13,825 pupils across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. From a questionnaire completed by 646 children 97% of children thought that the play explained cyberbullying quite well or really well. The questionnaire asked '*Having watched the play do you understand that if you send a picture online or by mobile phone that this picture could end up being used by any person, anywhere in the world?*' 91% responded 'Yes' and 9% 'No'. This demonstrates real improvement outcomes.
53. As part of the SSCB's role in preventing abuse and neglect the Board have considered activities to raise awareness of sexual exploitation and healthy relationships with children and young people. During 2015-2016 the SSCB part funded and organised the tour of Chelsea' Choice drama. Approximately 8,900 pupils saw the production and over 140 professionals. 763 pupils out of the 8,900 responded to the online questionnaire (9%). The results indicate that 95% of pupils enjoyed the play and 67% of pupils said that they would now do something differently to keep themselves safer as a result of watching this drama.
54. The District Safeguarding Subgroup has reviewed and updated the District and Borough council policies to take account of national legislative changes and updates relating to Prevent/ radicalisation, forced marriage, early help and CSE. They have also reviewed and updated all district and borough council websites to provide information on safeguarding, including promoting the work of the SSCB.
55. Staffordshire Council of Voluntary Youth Services (SCVYS) has produced and distributed 5000 safeguarding cards for volunteers along with flowchart posters to help the workforce make the most appropriate decisions. 48% of SCVYS members report using the SSCB website to find relevant information. The impact is a safer sector where the workforce knows how to respond appropriately to concerns and disclosures, helping to keep children and young people participating in voluntary youth groups safe in Staffordshire and its surrounds.

### **Remaining Challenges and Issues**

56. The socio-political developments that occurred during 2015-2016 have been considered by the Board and have resulted in the SSCB identifying the following key messages for commissioners and local agency leads:
57. Neglect (particularly for children under the age of 5 years old) due to parental factors such as domestic abuse, parental mental ill-health and substance misuse continue to present the greatest risk to the welfare and safety of children and young people in Staffordshire. Commissioners are asked to continue to work together with partners (including the voluntary and private sector) to ensure that

the scale and nature of these issues are clearly understood and that resources are targeted to promote effective and coordinated local responses.

58. The SSCB must strongly advocate for commissioning and delivery plans, as well as the work of the SSCB, to be clearly informed by national drivers and local based evidence. As a board we need to know what the needs and risks are for our local children and their families and become smarter about how work can be coordinated across the key statutory partners to target prevention and responsive activity in a proactive and more efficient way. The first proposed step to achieving this change is through an enhanced Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for safeguarding children with key partner agencies who work with children and their families. A partnership approach to sharing intelligence and producing a shared analysis based on local strengths, needs and risks would help to provide an evidence base to clearly identify what we need to collectively do to reduce need and risk and promote improved outcomes for children. This would create the potential for a shared vision about working together to help keep children safer, smarter multi-agency prioritisation and cohesive strategically aligned planning and delivery that could be more innovative. This multi-agency approach would complement the national drive towards integrated inspection, joint accountability frameworks, stronger local multi-agency governance and scrutiny arrangements.
59. Local strategic governance and partnership arrangements should be mapped out to identify which strategic board has the governance lead for the key strategic issues identified as priorities from the JSNA analysis. This would create strategic synergy across the wider system by clarifying and streamlining local accountability arrangements and prevent confusion over governance when there are cross cutting strategic responsibilities such as domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental ill-health. This approach would help to align strategic and operational activity in a cohesive way across the county and city and promote a whole system approach to learning and development across all statutory partners who commission or deliver services to children and their families.
60. Improved effectiveness in safeguarding arrangements could be achieved through more robust commissioning standards explicitly set out the safeguarding role, responsibilities and expectations placed on providers. Commissioners from all partner agencies have a critical role to play in embedding safeguarding children vision, priorities, standards, principles and inspection requirements into provider arrangements from the initial tendering process right through to the review of the contract.
61. Embedding the Early Help Assessment (EHA) through formal commissioning is yet to be an automatic process; commissioners should affirm their commitment to ensuring that the requirement of the use of the EHA at the first sign of early concerns for a child and/or young person is explicit within contractual arrangements with external providers.
62. The Board needs to have an agreed neglect strategy in place to be clear about its strategic aims, the activity required to achieve these aims and how outcomes will be measured. This strategy should be underpinned by a SMART action plan that

aligns with other Hidden Harm and partnership board's activities to avoid duplication and improve local coordination.

63. The national review of LSCBs being undertaken by Alan Wood is due to be published in May 2016. The proposed vision is for a framework where there would be the local freedom to recognise geographical and political differences. This provides an opportunity to reduce system bureaucracy, to work more efficiently as an inter-agency partnership and refocus partner agency resources back onto the coordination and effectiveness of child protection arrangements. It will be critical however to ensure that these arrangements retain strong links to partner agencies children's and adults services in order to retain a strong local partnership and reduce the risk of repeating previous failures.
64. This year a significant piece of work has been undertaken to develop a Performance Service Level Agreement between the Families First Business Improvement and Development Team and the three local adults and children boards. It is imperative that a more robust multi-agency quality assurance and audit process is developed quickly to monitor the effectiveness of local safeguarding arrangements, particularly in respect of early help, child protection processes and LSCB priorities.
65. All children and young should have equal access to information about how to keep themselves safer regardless of where they live in the county and what education provision they are accessing. Parents and carers should also receive consistent messages about how to help keep their children safe and education staff should know about local multi-agency arrangements or learning that helps them to fulfil their critical safeguarding role. Whilst some good work has been undertaken, further action is required to help to build on this to ensure that there is a consistent approach across the county; this is particularly pertinent given the change in local authority roles and responsibilities. This includes communication to all early years' providers, schools, colleges and alternative education provision.

**Link to Strategic Plan:**

66. The work of the SSCB contributes to and supports the values and principles detailed in the Staffordshire County Council's Strategic 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:**

67. 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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**Appendices/Background papers:**

**Appendix A:** Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report: 2015-2016.