



Annual Report 2008/9

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Chair's Foreword

Lord Laming's recent report on the Protection of Children in England concluded that Central Government and local agencies are at the 'half way point in a ten year programme of change' to improve children and young people's safety. It is recognised that although significant progress has been made, many challenges remain. I suggest that this describes our experiences in Telford & Wrekin. There is tremendous commitment and energy for local children and young people and fantastic work is being done every day to protect them from harm and make sure they grow up safe and well. The challenge for local agencies and for the Local Children's Safeguarding Board is to ensure that best practice becomes standard practice.

We recognise and welcome Lord Laming's acknowledgement of the scale of the task facing key frontline safeguarding teams and of the need to build capacity in early intervention and preventative services. His report firmly challenges both Central Government, to ensure that services are sufficiently resourced; and local leaders, to translate policy, legislation and guidance into day-to day practice on the 'frontline'.

In Telford & Wrekin we believe that children are our future. We accept that 'we depend on them growing up to become fulfilled citizens well able to contribute successfully to family life and to wider society' and we recognise that 'it is of fundamental importance that the life and future development of each child is given equal importance'. I am pleased to present this annual report on the work of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. It provides a helpful overview of our recent activities and it identifies achievements and anticipates challenges for the months ahead. Most importantly it offers evidence that our ambition for every child in Telford & Wrekin is that they are nurtured and protected from harm.

Colin Watt

NSPCC

Chair of Telford & Wrekin's Safeguarding Children Board.

May 2009

Introduction

What is Safeguarding?

“Making sure that children grow up in safety and in a way that they are cared for; protecting them from harm or ill-treatment; making sure that their health or development is not damaged in any way and doing this in a way that means that children have the best possible chances in life.”

(adapted from Government Guidance)

Why do we need a Safeguarding Children Board (SCB)?

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children requires effective co-ordination. For this reason the Children Act 2004 requires each Local Authority to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). In Telford & Wrekin this responsibility is delegated to the Head of Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting.

Section 10 of this Act places a duty to co-operate to improve the well being of children on the Local Authority and its Board Partners. The organisations which are partners are laid out in S 13(3) of the Act and include representatives of the Chief Police Officer; Area Probation Board; Youth Offending Service; Strategic Health Authority; Primary Care Trust; NHS Acute Trust; Connexions; and CAF/CASS;

The associated guidance also states that the Local Authority should secure the involvement of other relevant local organisations and specifies the duty of individual members to contribute to the effective work of the LSCB.

The LSCB is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in Telford & Wrekin will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in that locality and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do.

The work of the LSCB fits within the wider context of all children’s services’ aims to improve the well being of children in Telford & Wrekin in respect of all the Every Child Matters Outcomes: Being Healthy, Staying Safe, Enjoying and Achieving, Making a Positive Contribution and Achieving Economic Well-being. Its particular focus however is that of the ‘staying safe’ outcome.

Role and organisational arrangements

What is the board for?

(as set out in the Government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children')

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 Telford & Wrekin

To ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each person or body for that purpose.

NB: Safeguarding and promoting welfare includes **protecting from harm**. The guidance is clear that ensuring that work to protect children is properly co-ordinated and effective remains a key goal of the LSCB.

The guidance divides the scope of the board into 3 broad categories:

- Activity that affects all children
- Pro-active work that aims to target particular groups of children
- Responsive work to protect children who are suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm.

T&W SCB works across all three categories, having due regard to the central need to protect as outlined above.

The LSCB is **not** accountable for the work of individual organisation's work and each Board partner retains its own lines of accountability. The LSCB **does not** have a power to direct other organisations.

Who is on the board?

As noted in the introduction, certain organisations are required by law to be partners of the SCB: The Local Authority, the Police; the Probation Service; Youth Offending Service; Strategic Health Authority; Primary Care Trust; NHS Acute Trust; The Learning & Skills Council; and CAF/CASS (child and family court advice and support service).

Most of these partners also support the Board by jointly funding some of its work.

Here in Telford & Wrekin, we recognise that there are many other people involved in safeguarding and our Board also has representatives from the Voluntary Sector; the Race Equality and Diversity Partnership; Schools (Primary and Secondary); Further Education Colleges; Armed Forces; the Safer & Stronger Communities Partnership; and Fire and Ambulance Services; and we have an independent Chairperson who is from NSPCC

During the year work has been undertaken to review the membership and structures of the board and this will be finalised in 2009/10.

How does the board work?

The SCB makes use of existing arrangements to facilitate the close working with the Children's Trust Board (CTB), maximising resources and reducing duplication. The LSCB and CTB act as "critical friends" to ensure that safeguarding children and young people is achieved locally. The CTB is responsible for monitoring the activity and performance of the LSCB. Safeguarding is an integral part of our Children's and Young People's Plan and for 2009-10 we have strengthened this further by the addition of our new CTB outcome priority: *Keeping children & young people safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation*. As such the key safeguarding performance indicators are now included in the CYPP performance framework. Furthermore we have developed a draft performance framework for the SCB which includes indicators relating to staff (supervision, training, safe recruitment, turnover and sickness, decision-making and managerial oversight), agency accountability, meeting objectives, customers views, quality of practice and effectiveness of meetings as well as national KPIs.

The SCB has a number of sub groups;

- Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP);
- Serious Case Review Panel (SCRCP);
- Training;
- Children Abused Through Exploitation (CATE);
- Safer Schools Partnership;
- Domestic Abuse;
- E-safety;
- Executive committee;

The executive committee of the SCB has acted as the Staying Safe Sub Group and reported both to the Board and the CTB as necessary. The executive committee consists of nominated representatives of the main statutory agencies and funding partners, namely, Local Authority (including Connexions4Youth); Primary Care Trust; Police; Probation; and Safer & Stronger Communities Partnership and was responsible for the development and implementation of the Staying Safe Outcome Sub Group Action Plan, and for the National Service Framework (NSF) Standard 5 action plan as well as acting as the Executive of the SCB.

These arrangements have also been reviewed during 2008/9 and a decision made that the Children's Trust will no longer have 'outcome sub groups' but will progress its priorities through other means. The Executive provided a valuable co-ordinating mechanism at an operational level which is likely to continue to be necessary eg for Business Planning and monitoring purposes; a review of the SCB Executive membership will be undertaken in 2009/10.

Report on Progress 2008/9

What has the board done?

In 2008/9 the SCB identified 4 key priorities: Domestic abuse and its impact on children; Internet safety; Listening to children and young people; and the impact on children of their parents' problems.

Work has progressed against all these themes:

The Domestic Abuse Strategy was agreed in October 2008 and contains several sections which impact on children. Through the MARAC (multi agency risk conference) process which has been in place since February 2008, we have a much clearer picture of the prevalence of the problem and through monitoring the children with protection plans where the concern surrounds domestic abuse we have been able to intervene on a multi agency basis. 64.5% of all children who were subject to a plan for these reasons ceased to need a plan within 12 months. This remains a priority for the SCB and work continues to ensure that children are supported at the appropriate level in these circumstances.

Considerable work has been undertaken during the year in respect of internet and modern technology safety. The SCB has established an E safety sub group and this has developed an e safety strategy to be presented to the board in April 2009. West Mercia Constabulary have been particularly pro-active in supporting this area of work and have developed a training package for use across all agencies. In addition we have been able to offer free software to all parents to protect their children at home in a similar manner to that already in place in all our schools.

The priority young people themselves identified in respect of safeguarding was 'Help young people not to feel vulnerable and scared for their personal safety (especially at night). A working group has been set up to address this and it has been agreed to look at best practice models within one area (Hadley). This will involve both professionals and young people and further discussion has taken place with young people about their specific issues. In addition it has been agreed to set up a safer schools partnership to look at wider issues relating to young people's safety.

A formal 'Think family' (family intervention) project will be commencing in 2009, largely funded by DCSF grant. It was the work undertaken in 2008 to establish what the issues were and how to address them; to identify an area (south cluster) to pilot a model; and to identify resources to provide 'adult services expertise' to support this, that made it possible for a successful 'Think Family' bid to be made.

In addition to supporting work on specific priorities, the board has also overseen the work of the standing sub groups – Child death overview panel; serious case review panel and the training sub group.

A significant event during 2008 for all agencies involved in safeguarding was the Joint Area Review (JAR) which was carried out in May. Inspectors rated the local services overall and capacity to improve as 'good'. Safeguarding was rated as

'adequate' although inspectors made it clear in their report that 'appropriate action is taken to protect children at risk of harm' (28). Since then the Children's Trust has implemented a robust action plan addressing the recommendations and made safeguarding more explicit by establishing it in the children and young people's plan as an outcome priority in 2009: 'to keep children & young people safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation'; this makes us well placed to respond to Lord Laming's findings as well as the JAR report. Year end performance for 2008/9 regarding Child protection related performance is generally positive

With respect to the Safeguarding Children Board specifically the JAR report states: 'Partners are fully engaged in the work of the Safeguarding Children Board ... The Board has embraced the wider safeguarding agenda well and there is a comprehensive business plan. Child protection training is readily available and well received by all agencies. The procedures are web based, regularly updated and easily accessible. There are good links with the multi-agency public protection arrangements and with the Children's Trust' (29)

Looking forward

What is the board going to do next?

The Safeguarding Children Board (SCB) has agreed a number of **Priority Areas** to address in its scrutiny and co-ordination role during 2009/10. This does not necessarily mean that the SCB will be undertaking these activities but it has identified or commissioned various lead groups to take work forward and to present progress reports to board meetings. (See Board Priorities Action Plan below).

Particular developments which have become greater priorities during 2008/9 and which will now form discrete elements of the plan are the work of the **CATE** (children abused through exploitation) group and the establishment of a **Safer Schools Partnership**. The **Think Family** priority from last year's plan has also taken on greater significance during the year and is developing into a project which will be monitored by DCSF. Similarly the work in relation to **E safety** has developed over the year and continues to be a priority for the board as does the impact of **domestic abuse** upon children which is a priority shared with the Children's Trust.

A significant area of work for 2009 will be developing and implementing an action plan in response to the **Laming Report** and the **Government's Response** although several aspects have already been incorporated into developments.

Also within the business plan is a **work programme** of activities for the board to undertake itself, including matters relating to structure, membership and funding. The board is in the process of finalising a more comprehensive **performance framework** which will monitor and quality assure a range of activities across partner agencies including issues such as safer recruitment; agency engagement; views of parents carers and children; and overall the success of interventions in keeping children safe .

The SCB will also continue to monitor the work of the **Serious Case Review Panel** (SCR) and the **Child Death Overview Panel** (CDOP). Currently there are no outstanding actions from any reviews.

The SCB continues to develop new training opportunities as well as revising its rolling programme and, this year will develop and an over arching **Training Strategy**. As part of the 'new' clarified relationship with the Children's Trust a joint **Communication Plan** is being developed and the implementation of this will form part of the overall business plan.

Performance and statistics 2008/9

How much, how many, how well?

General statistics:

- There are 38,500 under 18s in Telford & Wrekin (estimate from population projections), this is the sum of cluster figures below.

Clusters 4300 Newport
7200 Wellington
11300 North
10500 Central
5200 South
- Approximately 3000 children and young people are from a black or minority ethnic (BME) background - 8% of all children under 18.

Child protection work

Number and characteristics of CYP with Child protection plans

- The total number of children subject to CP Conferences during the year (both initial and review) was 625 (some of these are multiple counts of the same children who had more than one conference).
- The number of children who were subject of an Initial Child Protection Conference during the year was 160, of which 156 children became subjects of a plan.
- There have been 164 Child Protection Plans that ended during the year.
- There were 153 children with a Child Protection Plan at the end of March 2009. This is 8 less than last year.
- At 31.03.2009 the age group 1-4 Years had the highest number of CP Plans, however children made subject to a CP Plan during 2008/09 the 10-15 year age group has most children. Neglect remains the category where there are most children subject to a CP Plan for both year end and plans made in the year 2008/09.
- 10.9% of children with a Child Protection Plan are from a BME background

Improving outcomes

- Subsequent Plans (children whose names have had a CP Plan more than once) as at 31 March 2009 was 14.1%, an improvement upon last year of 18.18% and meeting our target of 14%. This is likely to be similar to or slightly worse than

statistical neighbours and England average (13.8% and 13.6% respectively in 2007/8). It is in the acceptable banding. 6 children have had a subsequent plan within 1 year of their last CP Plan (Subsequent CP Plan figures are made up of 14 families).

- The proportion of children who retained a Child Protection Plan for two years or more before the plans ended was 4.9%, a decrease from last year's outturn at 5.11%, remaining in the best band. (in fact this relates to 8 and 7 children respectively)
- Of the 164 cessations from 01/04/2008 to 31/03/2009 62 of the children were known to have domestic abuse issues, of which 40 ended their CP plan within one year of being made subject to a CP Plan.
- Timeliness of Initial Assessments has improved between 2007/8 and 2008/9 in Telford with the percentage achieved within 7 days going up from 59% to 63.5%. However performance is likely to remain below statistical neighbours and England averages (66% and 71% respectively for 2007/8)
- Timeliness of Core Assessments has also improved between 2007/8 and 2008/9 from 88% to 89.7% and the percentage achieved within 35 days is likely to remain above both statistical neighbours and all England averages (80% for both for 2007/8)
- 100% of Child Protection Conferences during the year were held within the prescribed timescale. This is better than statistical neighbours and England averages (99.9% and 99.4% for 2007/8 respectively)
- 100% of children with a Child Protection Plan at 31 March 2009 were allocated to a Social Worker.

Domestic abuse

Performance indicator	Borough 08/09	Newport	Telford N	Telford S	Telford C	Wellington
Domestic abuse incidents where a child has been identified as being at risk	3.16 per 1,000 (122/38,500)	0.3per 1,000 (1.3/4300)	2.8 per 1,000 (32/11300)	6.15 per 1,000 (32/5200)	4.1 per 1,000 (43/10500)	1.8 per 1,000 (13/7200)

Multi Agency Public Protection arrangements (MAPPA)

48 case discussions were undertaken at MAPPA Level 2 in respect of 35 individuals

12 case discussions were undertaken at MAPPA Level 3 in respect of 8 individuals

Management of Allegations

A total of 84 allegations against people working with children were recorded during the year. These related to social care (9), Health (4), Police (3), Connexions (3), Education (49), Others (8) and foster carers (8) and the majority were in respect of physical abuse (35) and sexual abuse (21)

In 33 cases no further action was taken; but 12 resulted in criminal investigations; 18 in disciplinary procedures; 18 suspensions and 17 in child protection enquiries. 17 were referred to a regulatory body and 2 referrals to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA); 9 were dismissed; 11 cessation of use; 2 resignations; 5 unfounded; 4 being malicious; 0 convictions (although 2 are still outstanding) and 2 cautioned. (NB: Several actions can relate to one incident)

Resources

Where does the money come from and how is it spent?

Introduction

Although it is a legal requirement to have a safeguarding children board, there is no central government funding for this and each board relies on its partners to resource it. (but see note below with regard to child death reviews)

The resources for the Telford & Wrekin Board are, therefore, far more complicated than the following statements suggest since many people give their time and expertise in addition to the financial resources outlined.

Worthy of particular note is the fact that the expenses of the independent Chair of the Board are met by the **NSPCC** which is a significant contribution not enjoyed by SCBs elsewhere and which will cease from 2009 when a new chair is appointed..

The main source of funding for the board, relates to a service level agreement drawn up prior to the board's existence to provide multi agency training and to provide for administration and accommodation. The income from this arrangement for 2008/9 was **£116,100** which includes financial support from Children's Services*; PCT; Police; Probation; Adult and Consumer Care; Shropshire and Telford Hospital Trust (SaTH) together with contributions from Community Services; CAFCASS and YOS.

*Includes original SLA partners: children's social services, education and connexions

In addition 46 schools have now agreed to contribute £250 pa in return for 'free' whole school training and access to other training events;

During 2007 the Board approached both existing partners and other agencies with a view to securing additional funding for future years and to agree a three year funding package.

As well as allowing us to develop the training aspect of the board, where the demand is greater than we can meet; establishing designated administrative support and enabling the implementation of the communication strategy, additional funding would assist in meeting the broader responsibilities – notably the management of allegations and child death reviews.

Unfortunately most partners were not in a position to increase their financial commitments. They were however prepared to make a three year commitment which was very helpful as it provided stability for the staff concerned.

The PCT have been able to increase their funding and in 2008/9 agreed a further £11,000 to cover the expanding tasks of the Board. This is a very welcome addition.

This, together with 'slippage' from previous years has allowed us to expand the staffing and the service provision of the board.

In addition the board received a grant of £26,000 to assist with the establishment and running of child death reviews which was be used to support training and administration in respect of this new duty. This grant will be repeated in 2009/10.

2010/11 will be the final year of the current 3 year agreement and work will be undertaken during the current year to establish a longer term, more stable arrangement for the board and its partners.

Feedback Form

If you think that there is anything which would make Telford & Wrekin a safer place for children, the Board would love to hear from you to see if they can help to achieve this.

Please complete this form and send it to:

Telford & Wrekin Safeguarding Children Board,
30 West Road,
Wellington Telford. TF1 2BB

My name is.....

My address is.....

.....

My suggestion is.....

.....

.....

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Remember: safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility

If you are concerned about a child and want to talk to someone about it please contact Children's Services on 01952 385700

Or you can contact West Mercia Police on 03000 333 3000
or the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 500