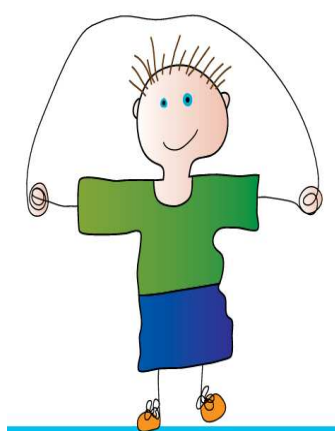


Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board

Annual Report 2011 – 2012



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1. Independent Chair's Summary of Safeguarding Performance and Issues

This is the second annual report of the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board. The report looks back on safeguarding activities in Central Bedfordshire between April 2011 and March 2012 and looks forward to the progress to be made and challenges anticipated in 2012 –2013. The Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board, (CBSCB), became independently chaired in 2009, following the restructuring of the local authorities in Bedfordshire. It brings together the main organisations working with children, young people and families in the area so that they can coordinate their work, evaluate their accomplishments and receive multi-agency training on safeguarding issues.

Overall, partners in Central Bedfordshire have worked together well to safeguard children and this was confirmed by the recent Ofsted/CQC inspection, which rated safeguarding as 'Good'. In addition, there is clearly a great commitment from the Council and its partners to continue to improve and build on the suggestions which Ofsted made, through the development of a wide ranging improvement plan.

The Board has continued to review all deaths of children through its Child Death Overview Procedure (CDOP). It has not had cause to initiate any Serious Case Reviews in the past year, but reviews some individual cases and carries out audits to identify lessons to learn for all agencies. It has continued to make good progress in delivering multi-agency training and has been particularly successful in carrying out briefings to staff about the lessons which have come from local cases and those of note from elsewhere.

Current Issues for Safeguarding

This report is produced at a time when the partner agencies face major upheaval. All public sector and voluntary organisations are struggling to reduce their budgets in a time of national austerity. In addition, the key safeguarding partners are facing specific restructuring of their systems and governance which could have significant impacts on the safeguarding of children. These are particularly:

- **NHS Restructuring**

Local health services are undergoing major changes with the development of Clinical Commissioning Groups and Local Offices of the National Commissioning Board. Clarity is starting to appear in the way in which the new Health Structures will ensure that children are safe, but the Board will need to find new ways of coordinating the efforts of GPs and other clinicians to continue to develop NHS safeguarding effectiveness. It is particularly important that the new leaders in health recognise that safeguarding children is a key part of their new role.

- **Health and Wellbeing Board**

In addition to these NHS changes, the relationship between the health organisations and the Council is altering with the introduction of the shadow Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB). The Board will lead strategies for the health of children and it will be a challenge for members to keep a balance between the needs of the young and the pressures of the more expensive provision of services to a growing elderly population. The relationships between CBSCB and the Central Bedfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board have yet to be agreed. Clear processes which allow the Safeguarding Board to effectively contribute to and challenge the new strategies and their outcomes are a critical requirement for the two Boards to work well in the long term without the burden of excessive bureaucracy.

- **Election of a Police and Crime Commissioner**

The Constabulary faces a new challenge in its governance with the election of a Police and Crime Commissioner in November 2012. This role will carry responsibility for the development of the community safety strategy in Central Bedfordshire. Current community safety approaches make a significant contribution to safeguarding children through their focus on substance abuse and domestic abuse. Children are at risk from adults they live with who abuse alcohol or illegal drugs or where relationships are violent. In some households substance abuse and violence is aggravated by adult mental ill-health leaving children extremely vulnerable. Community Safety Strategies are particularly important in addressing these behaviours and reducing risk to the young. The election of the Commissioner brings a risk to existing services, but also an opportunity for a greater impact on such parental behaviours as a new Police and Crime Strategy for the coming years is developed.

- **The role of Schools and Children's Centres**

Changes in national legislation have required and enabled schools to work more independently from the Council as the Local Education Authority. Whilst these new freedoms bring opportunities they also bring increasing responsibilities for governors and management teams to ensure that schools are resilient and effective in safeguarding. Schools and for the younger ages Children's Centres, also have a key role to play in identifying children suffering from the early impact of abuse and neglect, offering appropriate support and working with partner agencies to help families. In times of reducing budgets such early help is at risk. Following the government's Munro Report and recently published draft of the Working Together guidelines, CBSCB is likely to have an obligation to evaluate the success of this early help. This has been included in the new CBSCB plan as a specific project which partners will need to contribute to over the coming months.

It is generally recognised that during periods of change, organisations experience a reduction in their operational performance. There is therefore a risk that through restructuring and relocation of staff, organisations which have been very successful in safeguarding children may 'take their eye off the ball' to the detriment of vulnerable children in Central Bedfordshire. The Safeguarding Board has a duty to ensure that this does not happen and to continually remind directors and managers of the need to monitor operational effectiveness. To date this has been achieved but the coming year will continue to test the resilience of partners.

The CBSCB Business Plan

At the start of 2011-12, CBSCB set itself a very ambitious plan to address a wide range of issues. As you will see from the following report, the priorities were generally accomplished well, even though, with reducing resources all organisations struggled at times to actually report progress and attend meetings. However there is still a need to both maintain performance and improve in specific areas, both within individual organisations and through joint working. To address the pressure on partners and manage resources better, the Board reduced the need for some sub-committees to meet routinely and set a smaller number of realistically achievable priorities for 2012-13. These five new priorities are:

- Better identifying early signs of physical and emotional abuse and neglect.
- Improving the response to domestic abuse
- Dealing more effectively with sexual abuse and exploitation
- Development of the Board, such as the recruitment of lay members

- Monitoring and, on some occasions, implementing actions in response to the Munro review and the local Ofsted and CQC Inspections.

Joint Working across Safeguarding Boards

In its sub-committees CBSCB works jointly with Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board and the two independent chairs regularly discuss common issues. The partners who work across more than one of the local authorities of Luton, Central Bedfordshire and Bedford, such as the Police, the PCT, some providers of health services and Probation are particularly challenged to service two or three Safeguarding Children Boards. The three Directors of Children's Services and their Safeguarding Chairs have discussed the potential for further close working. Whilst recognising the challenges for some partners, the local authorities as the lead agencies are unanimous in their view that the only effective way of ensuring safeguarding is through separate Safeguarding Boards working jointly when priorities are similar. This discussion led to the recognition that there were further opportunities to pool safeguarding efforts and as a result the Boards now have one combined plan for tackling Sexual Exploitation and a joint initiative to further address domestic abuse more effectively.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Phil Picton', with a horizontal line underneath.

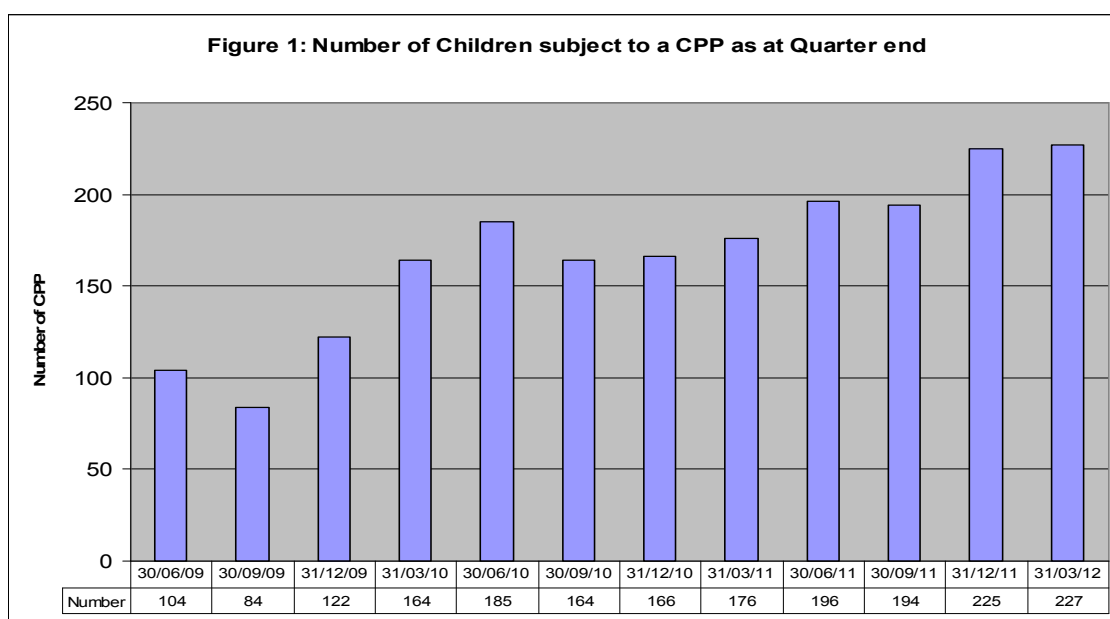
Phil Picton
Independent Chair
Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Board

2.0 The Context for Safeguarding Children in Central Bedfordshire

- 2.0.1 Central Bedfordshire has a resident population of approximately 56,400 children and young people aged 0 to 18, representing 22.1% of the total population of the area. In January 2011, 13.2% of the school population was classified as belonging to an ethnic group other than White British compared to 22.5% in England overall. Some 3% of pupils speak English as an additional language. Polish and Urdu are the most recorded commonly spoken community languages in the area
- 2.0.2 The majority of these children are educated in the 140 local schools comprising 96 primary schools, 33 secondary schools (23 middle schools and 10 upper schools), seven special schools/pupil referral units and 4 Independent schools. The structure and governance is changing as increasing numbers of schools seek academy status. Up until 31st March 25 schools had achieved Academy status. Early years service provision is delivered predominantly through the private and voluntary sector in over 108 settings; there are four local authority maintained nurseries.
- 2.0.3 Central Bedfordshire Council is the statutory lead agency for safeguarding children across the area and in appropriate cases has the legal powers to take children into care. On 1 April 2009 when Central Bedfordshire Council became a unitary authority, the Looked After Children population stood at 132 children & young people. The numbers of Looked after Children have risen steadily since that time to 176 at 31 March 2011 and the population as at 31 March 2012 stood at 208. This represents a rate per 10,000 of the population under 18 of 37, up from 31 per 10,000 the previous year. This compares to a national rate of 59 and a statistical neighbour rate of 46 per 10,000 population under 18 in 2010/11.
- 2.0.4 During 2011/2012 the following trends have been identified in relation to child protection activity compared to the previous year.
- 7.3% increase in the number of contacts to Children Social Care;
 - 18.5% decrease in the conversion rate: Contacts to Referrals;
 - 12.5% decrease in the number of referrals to Children Social Care;
 - 30.8% increase in Section 47 enquiries started;
 - 19.1% increase in initial assessments undertaken;
 - 24.4% increase in core assessments undertaken;
 - 36.9% increase in children who were the subject of an initial child protection conference;
 - 38.2% increase in the number of children starting to be looked after
- 2.0.5 Changes in the number of children subject to a child protection plan and looked after as at 31.3.11 and 31.3.12 identify the following:
- 27.5% increase in children subject to a child protection plan at period ends (31/03/11 & 31/3/12)
 - 18.2% increase in the numbers of looked after children at period ends (31/03/11 & 31/3/12)

- 2.0.6 The numbers of children subject to a child protection plan have risen from 178 at the end of March 2011 to 227 one year later. This has led to a 27.5% increase in the number of children subject to a plan at year end.
- 2.0.7 Expressed as a ratio per 10,000 of the population (under 18) in Central Bedfordshire, as at 31 March 2011, 32 per 10,000 (178 children) were subject to a child protection plan. As at 31.3.2012 40 per 10,000 of the population were subject to a plan. This compares with the national average for 2010/11 of 38 children per 10,000 and our statistical neighbour average of 28 per 10,000. It is important to note that during 2010/11 a 9.2% increase nationally was reported in respect of child protection plans. At the time of writing the outturn for 2011/ 2012 nationally is not available.

Figure1 illustrates the change on a quarterly basis of children subject to a child protection plan since the beginning of Central Bedfordshire in 2009



- 2.0.8 Between 1.4.2011 and 31.3.2012 268 children became subject of a child protection plan compared to 208 children during the previous year. This is a 22.3% increase in children becoming subject to a child protection plan.
- 2.0.9 Expressed as a ratio per 10,000 of the under 18 population, 268 children becoming subject of a plan equated to 47.5 compared to 37 per 10,000 population under 18 at the end of March 2011. National and statistical neighbour rates per 10,000 under 18 at the end of March 2011 were 44.4 and 33.3 respectively. Central Bedfordshire has therefore experienced a considerable increase in children becoming subject to a child protection plan. 114 children were made subject of a plan during the first six months of 2011/12 hence the rise in activity has been noticeable during the period October 2011 to March 2012 when 154 children were made the subject of a child protection plan.
- 2.0.10 The increase can be attributed to two main factors – the increase in referrals meeting a threshold for child protection interventions and the application of more rigour than the previous Bedfordshire County Council in applying thresholds and intervening to ensure children are protected from harm.

2.1 Categories of Child Protection Plans

2.1.1 Figure 2 illustrates the category of child protection plan for children subject to a child protection plan at the end of March 2012. 61% were recorded in the category of neglect; 28% in the category of emotional abuse; 7% in the category of sexual abuse and 4% in the category of physical abuse.

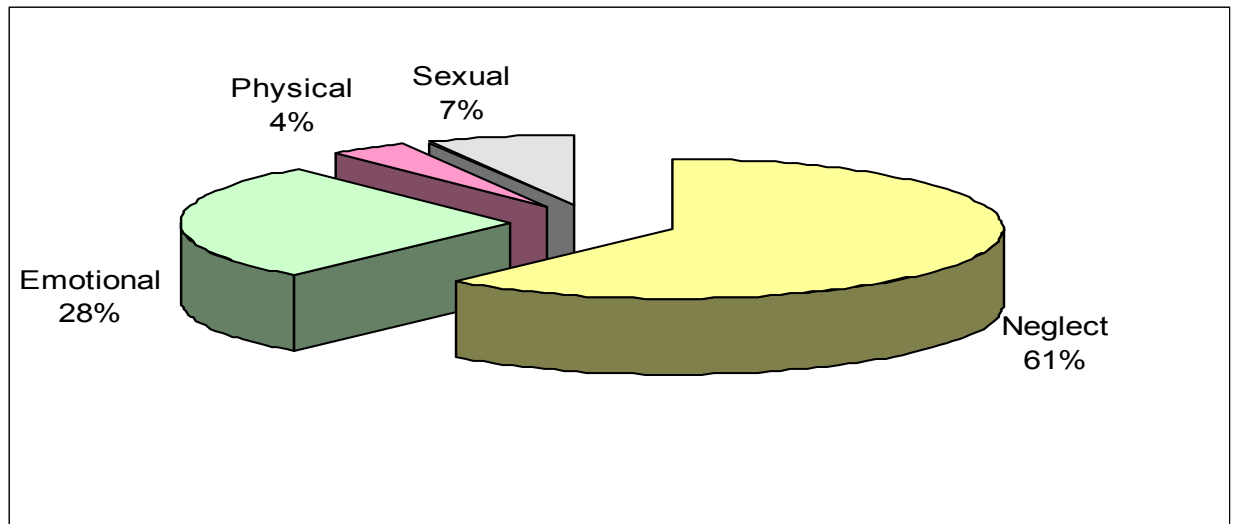


Figure 2: Percentage of children subject to a CPP at 31/3/12 by category of abuse

2.1.2 National figures for categories of child protection plan for 2010/11 were as follows: 43.9 % neglect; 29.2% emotional abuse; 10.6% physical abuse; 5.4% sexual abuse and 11.8 % multiple categories.

2.1.3 The categories of abuse recorded in relation to child protection plans is in line with the national average for emotional abuse and higher than the national average in relation to neglect. Locally there is a smaller percentage of children on a plan in the category of physical abuse and a higher than national average of plans in the category of sexual abuse.

2.2 Children subject to a plan on more than one occasion

2.2.1 Performance in relation to the national indicators for children subject to a plan on more than one occasion at the end of March 2012 was 9.3%. Nationally for the year ending March 2011 the percentage was 13.3% and for our statistical neighbours the figure percentage was 12.1%. Central Bedfordshire has seen a reduction in the year end figures in respect of children subject to a plan for the second or subsequent time compared to the previous year.

2.2.2 Performance in relation to duration of child protection plans i.e. children on plans over 2 years was 6.8% at the end of the year. This relates to 15 children whose plan was discontinued over two years of a total of 219 discontinued plans. The outturn at March 2011 was 6.5% locally compared to a national outturn of 6%.

2.3 Child protection cases reviewed on time

2.3.1 All children subject to a child protection plan have had their reviews held within timescale since 01/04/09. All children subject to a child protection plan have a qualified social worker allocated to their case.

2.3.2 As at March 2012 the percentage of children on child protection plans from non white backgrounds was higher than the Central Bedfordshire population by 3.7% and 11.5% within the looked after population. Expressed in terms of a percentage in relation to Central Bedfordshire schools the percentage is 0.3 % lower for child protection and 8.5% higher for looked after children. The number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children account for this in part due to the relatively low numbers of looked after children.

2.4 Gender and age of children subject to a child protection plan

2.4.1 The gender profile of children with child protection plans is almost equal. As at 31 March 2012 the gender of children subject to a Child Protection Plan in Central Bedfordshire is consistent with the national average.

2.4.2 The age profile of children subject to a plan in Central Bedfordshire is set out below.

CP Plans by Age					
	31/03/2011			31/03/2012	
	Total CBC	% CBC	National	Total CBC	% CBC
Unborn	4	2%	2%	0	0%
Under 1	18	10%	11%	25	11%
0-4	53	30%	32%	78	34%
05-09	53	30%	29%	67	30%
10-15	47	26%	26%	51	22%
16-17	3	2%	2%	6	3%
TOTAL	178	100%	100%	227	100%

3.0 Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Activity in 2011 – 2012

3.0.1 The Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in Central Bedfordshire will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Central Bedfordshire, and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do.

3.0.2 The functions of the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board is set out in primary legislation and regulations. The core objectives of the Board are:

- 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; and
- to ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for that purpose.

3.1 Progress against the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board 2011-12 Business Plan Priorities

3.1.1 Each year the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board develops a business plan to focus its work on key priorities. The 2011-12 business plan was ambitious

reflecting the desire of partners to continue to make progress across a wide range of safeguarding issues. The key improvements against each priority are shown below and the full report against this plan can be read at Appendix A to this report.

3.2 Strategic Priority 1

To improve the effectiveness of Child Protection interventions, analysing carefully the reasons why increasing numbers of children have become subject to child protection plans and looking at ways to prevent this. This will involve maintaining strong relationships with health and schools during a period of transition and promoting the safeguarding of older adolescents who may be vulnerable to crime, homelessness, or sexual exploitation.

- 3.2.1 Schools are able to access the 2 day Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board training and e-learning courses and can commission their own single agency training. Within the Ofsted School Inspection framework safeguarding is an element and the Ofsted reports are monitored by the Council.
- 3.2.2 Central Bedfordshire Council has made available to schools a course dealing with cyber bullying. Schools are kept informed of safeguarding issues and available training via the Central Bedfordshire Council's Central Essentials newsletter which is issued to schools fortnightly.
- 3.2.3 A health and well-being questionnaire is currently being modelled to seek the views of children and young people in schools. Its outputs will be available to partner agencies to inform service planning and development. The questionnaire includes bullying.
- 3.2.4 Central Bedfordshire Council's secure website holds the policy and procedures and all relevant documentation for schools to access on safeguarding and safer recruitment. The Council assists schools with processing CRB checks.
- 3.2.5 A report on proposals for the delivery, monitoring and evaluation of GP practice training in safeguarding was presented to the Board. Each GP Practice in Bedfordshire now has a safeguarding children Lead GP. NHS Bedfordshire continues to monitor GP training.
- 3.2.6 NHS Bedfordshire has updated the Board in relation to the planning and provision of Child Protection Medicals. NHS Luton and Bedfordshire (project management lead), together with most of Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board partners have made significant progress over last 9 months in the development of sexual assault services. The Bedfordshire and Luton Sexual Assault Referral Centre – The Emerald Centre – opened in March 2011 to provide a forensically secure environment for medical examinations plus a 'soft room' where professionals can meet with victims.
- 3.2.7 The Emerald Centre sees all victims aged 14 and over. For child sexual assault cases that are not forensically acute, negotiations are underway with Bedford Hospital to move these services, which currently take place in the community, into the hospital which will provide an more integrated service to be provided.
- 3.2.8 NHS Bedfordshire and Luton and Bedfordshire Police have put in place an agreement with Peterborough Sexual Assault Referral Centre and Cambridge & Peterborough Foundation Trust community paediatricians to provide Sexual Assault Referral Centre paediatric services i.e. examination of children under the age of 13 (and those aged 13 and over with additional needs as determined by the forensic medical examiner) by a community paediatrician alongside a forensic medical examiner in a forensically

secure environment. The out of hours rota provided by Peterborough Sexual Assault Referral Centre allows cases to be seen in a timely manner. There is now therefore one pathway across the county, both in and out of hours for acute sexual assault.

- 3.2.9 Health Crisis aims to establish clear processes to support young people who may require acute admission to a mental health adolescent in-patient unit.
- 3.2.10 MAPPA (multi agency public protection arrangements) work closely with partners to communicate and manage and reduce the risk of harm to children in the community where parents or guardians are supervised by the Probation Trust. MAPPA attendance by children's services staff is excellent as evidenced by Ministry of Justice thematic inspection results with 100% attendance of staff invited to MAPPA meetings.
- 3.2.11 Bedfordshire Probation Trust has begun to develop the criminal justice children and families pathways and has recognised that domestic abuse in families and child safeguarding issues are a high priority when addressing risk and the needs of offenders. Community Domestic Abuse programmes to include I-DAP and Caring Dads have been set up.
- 3.2.12 Sexual Exploitation was a growing priority during 2011-12 as a number of high profile national cases highlighted the risks to children particularly young teenage girls. In response to the Government Sexual Exploitation Action Plan, Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board linked with the Bedford and Luton Boards to develop a joint local action plan which features as a significant priority in the 2012-13 Business Plan (see section on 2012-13 priorities).

3.3 Strategic Priority 2.

To incorporate the lessons from the Serious Case Review of Child J, namely the identification of sexual offending and liaison between adult criminal justice services and children' social care in relation to work with sex offenders. Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board should ensure that strategic links between adult and children's safeguarding are strengthened.

- 3.3.1 The Child J Serious Case Review was completed in 2010, but some actions resulting from the review were still to be completed at the start of 2011-12. Although the action plans are now complete, the issues have been combined into multi-agency training sessions.
- 3.3.2 As a result of the Child J Serious Case Review a joint Guide for the Police, Crown Prosecution Service and Local Safeguarding Children Boards to assist the exchange of information when there are simultaneous Serious Case Reviews and criminal proceedings was signed off at the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board in July. This document has been accepted nationally as good practice.
- 3.3.3 Briefings were held on the 20th June 2011 to provide good practice guidance and advice in respect of the risk assessment of sex offenders. These briefing events were attended by 274 frontline professionals and volunteers and were very positively evaluated.
- 3.3.4 In keeping with the Serious Case Review's recommendations, Central Bedfordshire Council presented a report to the Strategic Board in respect of commissioning services (Child J). The Commissioning Team completed an audit of practice to ensure appropriate procedures are in place when commissioning specialist assessments and risk assessments.

3.4 Protecting children and keeping them safe (Children & Young Peoples Plan)

3.4.1 Partners have continued working closely to develop the processes for identifying and responding to children whose safety is, or is likely to be, compromised. The national Tellus survey to gauge children and young people's feelings of safety no longer exists. The Central Bedfordshire Children's Trust is assessing partners' engagement and youth participation activities. Once this is complete, Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board will look to develop its approach to youth engagement building on the Children's Trust's work.

3.4.2 The Board has achieved a number of new initiatives including:

- Reinvestment of training income to provide better evaluation of the longer term learning from courses. Initial data is very good.
- Continued dissemination of learning points from Serious Case Review Child J, through staff briefings and training events.
- Development of e-learning modules with good take up by GPs
- Development of an annual audit programme and performance management framework.
- Discussion and collection of information from agencies on sexual exploitation which has led to a strategy of training frontline staff in the awareness of sexual exploitation in preparation for further Sexual Exploitation training and work streams in 2012

3.5 Reduce the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people:

3.5.1 Domestic abuse in households where children live is a continuing risk to safeguarding. The Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) was launched in 2007 in order to provide a multi-agency response to the most high risk cases in order to safeguard against domestic abuse and ensure that effective information sharing was taking place. Central Bedfordshire now holds a monthly MARAC meeting where an average of 18 cases is referred every month (based on data from December 2010 – January 2012). Referrals are received from a range of agencies including Police, Children's Services and Housing. As part of the recommendations from the Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment for 2012 a review of the MARAC will be undertaken this year.

3.5.2. 35% of domestic abuse starts or escalates during pregnancy. In order to address this, an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) is now based in the maternity unit at Luton & Dunstable Hospital one day a week. Arrangements have recently been agreed with Bedford Hospital for a similar arrangement. A series of briefing sessions took place during 2011 which trained all Community Midwives based out of Bedford Hospital on what the MARAC & IDVA Service is and how to refer into these services. It is planned that similar sessions will be arranged for all midwives based out of the Luton & Dunstable Hospital.

3.5.3 In Central Bedfordshire there was an 8.8% decrease in overall reporting to the police from 2793 incidents between April 2010 – March 2011, to 2546 incidents for the same period 2011-2012.

3.6 Central Bedfordshire MARAC:

Jan 2011 – Dec 2011:

- 174 referrals (an increase from 141 in 2010)
- 15% were repeat referrals (19% in 2010)
- 318 children were resident in the households subject to MARAC (243 in 2010)
- 56% of the referrals originated from the Police (similar in 2010)

Central Bedfordshire IDVA Service:

April 2011 – Sept 2011:

- 135 referrals (264 in the previous six months)
- 37% were re-referrals (25% in previous six months)
- 61% referrals originated from the police (56% in previous six months)
- 65% of clients have engaged with the service (national average 60%) (previous data not available).

(Data for October to March 2012 is not available at this point due to the re-tendering of the IDVA Service)

- 3.6.1 The Freedom Programme is for women who have experienced domestic abuse and supports women in an abusive relationship to identify and recognise abusive behaviours and be aware of the impact that this has on any children in the household. The programme also supports women who are no longer in an abusive relationship, reminding them of the early warning signs, and providing beneficial peer support to other women.
- 3.6.2 The Freedom Programme has been co-ordinated through the Parenting team of Central Bedfordshire Council since October 2011. Since taking over the co-ordination role awareness training has been delivered to 40 professionals and there are 15 newly trained facilitators delivering rolling programmes in 5 locations – Dunstable, Houghton Regis, Leighton Buzzard (run through Homestart), Sandy and Stotfold, The team also hosted an awareness raising event (Mockingbird High) during Domestic Abuse Awareness Week which was attended by over 100 professionals. The Team hosts a support network for all those involved in delivering the programme and also promote the Freedom Home Study Course for women unable to access the programme.
- 3.6.3 Until recently there has been a gap in provision of services for individual children where families do not meet the threshold for children's social care intervention. As a result families no longer living with domestic abuse might not meet the threshold for support, despite the experience of living with domestic abuse still having a significant impact on their lives. The organization, 'Sorted', have been commissioned to deliver one to one therapeutic interventions for children aged 5 – 13 years affected by domestic abuse. Interventions combine talking therapies with play and theraplay appropriate to the age of the child.
- 3.6.4 A robust training programme relating to domestic abuse has been established and delivered by the Bedfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership has also involved a 'Training for the Trainers' component to ensure continuation of training. Much of the programme is available via the Domestic Abuse Partnership however there is close working with the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board which offers a specific course on Domestic Abuse and the Impact on Children & Young People (see later Multi-Agency Training section 5).

- 3.6.5 In response to a lack of coordinated education in schools, Healthy Relationships Education Packs were developed, culminating in a launch event in March 2011. The packs are now being used in a number of schools in the area. The packs won an Equality & Diversity Award in October 2011 presented by the Bedfordshire Race & Equalities Council at their annual Equality Awards. There will be a second stage launch in 2012 which will target schools who did not attend the original event. This will be arranged jointly between the Bedfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership and the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board. Schools are also provided with signposting information and advice and guidance with regard to pupils who may disclose domestic abuse taking place at home.
- 3.7 To ensure that a comprehensive, set of multi-agency policies, practice and guidance is available to all staff working with children across Central Bedfordshire.**
- 3.7.1 The Joint Policy and Procedures Group have continued to meet in order to develop and revise the web based Pan Bedfordshire Interagency Child Protection Procedures that are compliant with national and local changes.
- 3.7.2. Web based Interagency Child Protection Procedures developed by Tri X Childcare with Luton LSCB at <http://bedfordscb.proceduresonline.com/index.htm> these continue to be worked on by the 3 LSCB's.
- 3.8. To further develop the agreed performance framework to measure and report on safeguarding performance**
- 3.8.1 The Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board monitors performance to assist in understanding the manner in which agencies work both individually and together to safeguard the welfare of children and young people in Central Bedfordshire.
- 3.8.2 Information is obtained from a variety of sources including:
- Case File Audits
 - Thematic Audits
 - Serious Case Reviews/Management Reviews.
 - Data collection at child protection conferences and core groups that assists the LSCB to understand the effectiveness of these crucial decision making activities.
 - Multi-agency safeguarding data set.
 - Local direct contact with hundreds of multi-agency staff attending training, workshops and conferences.
- 3.8.3 The Joint Performance Management & Audit Group case file audit programme has undertaken themed case file audits in relation to Core Groups, Strategy meetings and Section 47 enquiries. These audits included the development of a theme specific audit tool; the selection of cases; the analysis and evaluation of information collected and the dissemination of messages arising from the audits to Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board partners.
- 3.8.4 In addition the Joint Performance Management & Audit Group considers cases (which can be presented by any agency) where the Boards believe there is learning that should be shared.
- 3.8.5 The purpose of multi-agency audits is to learn from existing casework to:

- improve effectiveness of multi-agency assessment, planning and intervention
 - improve management, supervision and decision making in casework
 - improve outcomes for children and families
- 3.8.6 Multi-agency audit is a critical part of the Boards scrutiny and challenge role. They involve each agency bringing their audit of a pre-determined case(s) and sharing the findings amongst partner agencies. The process enables scrutiny of the effectiveness of multi-agency practice including information sharing, agreeing any lessons learned from the audit; and any corrective actions and / or actions to improve safeguarding practice.
- 3.8.7 Multi-agency audits are organised and overseen by two joint groups - the Joint Performance Management and Audit Group and the Joint Executive Serious Case Review Panel. Multi agency audits are also achieved through Inter-agency Practice Reviews; Independent Management Reviews and Serious Case Reviews.
- 3.8.8 Responsibility for producing a comprehensive quarterly Performance Monitoring Summary of Child Protection activity, with trend and contextual benchmarking information with our statistical neighbours has been the responsibility of Central Bedfordshire Council and reported to all the Strategic Boards in the last year.
- 3.8.9 The Joint Performance Management & Audit Group developed a data set for the purposes of collation and analysis of activity data from partner agencies in line with the themes identified in the Business Plan. Difficulties in accessing some of the data have been experienced by some agencies, either as a result of the form in which the data was requested or because of the demands placed on them to produce additional activity reports. However the data which has been collected will be completed for dissemination in July 2012. Going forward a performance framework for 2012/2013 will be developed by the Performance Management and Audit Group taking into account the national proposals for reporting performance activity.
- 3.9 To ensure the effectiveness and quality of the multi agency safeguarding training improves outcomes for children.**
- 3.9.1 During the financial year 2011-2012 the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board delivered 43 courses involving 56 days of face to face training to 1001 delegates a 6% increase on the previous year. Free Online E learning has continued to be provided and the E learning training menu has been extended to 8 courses including one specifically designed for Young people aged 13-18 years. 1177 workers and volunteers have successfully completed an E learning course and 88 are in progress. E learning completion runs at 93%. E learning and face to face training has been provided at a charge to private and independent organisations and this has resulted in significant income generation.
- 3.9.2 Given the needs of partner organisations to assess the impact of all activity including training on positive outcomes for children then some of this income was used to fund a part time training evaluation administrator from December 2011 on a fixed term contract going forward until end April 2013. The key activity of this post is Course Evaluation and particularly how Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board courses impact on worker's practice. All partner organisations have been advised of feedback and reports will be continuously generated and refined to reflect job role and setting analysis going forward into 2012-2013.

3.9.3 All Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board courses are regularly over subscribed and extra 2 day courses have been arranged to accommodate delegates from across the extended children’s workforce.

3.9.4 Remaining challenges and issues include

- further improving links with schools and their Governing Bodies as more local schools convert to Academy status

3.9.5 Fuller reports of the multi-agency training activity and evaluation of training are included in Section 5 of this report.

3.10 To ensure that Serious Case Reviews are initiated appropriately and are timely, of good quality, and deliver maximum learning for all agencies.

3.10.1 No serious case reviews were commissioned during 2011-12. The work of the Serious Case Review Panel is set out in detail in section 3.14 of this report.

3.11 To ensure safer recruitment practices across all agencies working with children in Central Bedfordshire.

3.11.1 The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) reports to the Board have demonstrated that the role is exercised effectively, good reporting and tracking arrangements ensure that appropriate analysis of the referral patterns and levels of awareness across agencies is undertaken. Prompt action is taken to address any deficits. Learning from cases referred to the LADO is used well, for example in delivering training and in commissioning arrangements. Partner agencies, particularly schools, appear to value highly the consultation and advice available through the LADO service. Internal performance information demonstrates that notifications receive a prompt considered response with appropriate outcomes, and this was evidenced in a sample of cases reviewed by Ofsted inspectors.

3.12 Confirm the funding for the operation of the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board for 2012-13

3.12.1 The administration of the Safeguarding Boards for Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough is jointly managed and funding is agreed by both Boards with contributions by both councils and other partners. Proposed funding arrangements presented to the Strategic Board and agreed in December 2011 were as follows;

	Bedford Borough Council	Central Bedfordshire Council	Police	NHS Beds	Probation	CAFCASS
Funding Formula	25.09%	25.09%	12.15%	33.55%	3.82%	0.30%
Budget 2012/13	£51,927	£51,927	£25146	£69,437	£7906	£620

3.12.2 The Training Function is funded by Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board partners’ contributions funding commissioned training places at £60 per day per delegate for their workforce. Income is also generated from charges to other partner

organisations such as Probation, schools and GPs and from the Private and Independent sector requiring face to face training or E learning.

- 3.12.3 In addition to the progress made by the Board partners working together to achieve its 2011 -12 Business Plan, individual partners have made significant progress in taking forward plans within their own organisations.

3.13 Child Death Overview - Bedfordshire and Luton Child Death Overview Panel

- 3.13.1 Safeguarding Children Boards are required to carry out reviews of all child deaths in their area. Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board carries out this process by working jointly with Luton and Bedford Safeguarding Children Boards in the Bedfordshire and Luton Child Death Overview Panel. The panel comprises senior managers from across the partners together with relevant clinicians from health organisations. The panel also has a lay member who is able to provide a non-medical independent perspective on the review of child deaths. The CDOP process is managed by NHS Luton and Bedfordshire on behalf of the three Boards.

- 3.13.2 The specific purposes of the panel are:

To collect and analyse information about the deaths of all children (0-18yrs) in Bedfordshire and Luton with a view to identifying:

- Any matters of concern affecting the safety and welfare of children in the area of the authority, including any case giving rise to the need for a Serious Case Review (SCR)
- Any general public health or safety concerns arising from deaths of children

- 3.13.3 To put in place procedures for ensuring that there is a co-ordinated response by the authority, their Board partners and other relevant persons to an unexpected death of a child (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010)

- 3.13.4 During the period 1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012 a total of 58 child deaths were reported to the Bedfordshire and Luton Child Death Overview Panel. This is a reduction of just over 6% on the previous year. 19 of the child deaths were of children residing in Bedford Borough, 17 of the deaths were of children living in Central Bedfordshire and 22 of the child deaths were of children living in Luton.

- 3.13.5 During the year 2011-2012 eight CDOP panel meetings were held plus 1 extra meeting with neonatologists, senior paediatric nurses and midwives to review a cohort of neonatal deaths.

- 3.13.6 The panel are required to determine if there are any modifiable factors during the review of the death. These are defined as one or more factors which may have contributed to the death of the child and which, by means of locally or nationally achievable interventions could be modified to reduce the risk of future child deaths.

- 3.13.7 17 Central Bedfordshire child deaths were reported during 2011-2012. This is a slight increase of 2 on the previous year. 4 of the deaths were unexpected but notably there were no 'Sudden Unexpected Deaths of Infants (SUDI)' reported compared to 3 in 2010-2011. There are no common themes identified with the unexpected deaths.

- 3.13.8. 11 deaths were reviewed; some of the children had died during the previous reporting year. Of these 4 of the cases were noted to have modifiable factors. These were

concerned with maternal smoking and 1 SUDI where unsafe sleeping practices had been identified. This is similar to the situation across the partner Boards, with a total of 55 deaths in Bedfordshire and Luton - 43% of which had one or more modifiable factors.

- 3.13.9 The issues around smoking have been brought to the attention of Public Health in Bedfordshire. The Public Health Smoking in Pregnancy lead works closely with maternity units to ensure maternity staff understand the importance of raising the issue of smoking and to ensure best recommended practice (as per NICE guidelines) is implemented.
- 3.13.10 NHS Bedfordshire's Stop Smoking Service Specialist Advisors, offer dedicated tailored clinics to pregnant women at maternity units, with clinics also available to pregnant women in the community at a range of different locations.
- 3.13.11 'Smoke free baby and me programme' supports pregnant women from referral up to 6 months post partum. This is delivered in partnership with Children Centres. The programme is an incentive based scheme to encourage ongoing cessation.
- 3.13.12. The Stop Smoking Service also maintain links with stop smoking services in Hertfordshire, as many Bedfordshire mothers deliver at Lister Hospital Smoke free Homes and Cars is a national campaign that is being rolled out locally. In Bedfordshire it will include an online pledge system to 'keep homes and family cars smoke free'. This will be underpinned by a training programme for frontline staff that have contact with pregnant women and young families.
- 3.13.13 The emerging themes in regards to unsafe sleeping practices from the review of cases are incorporated into CDOP multi agency training sessions. The issue has also been flagged with maternity units and health visiting teams. It is known that the safe sleeping messages are being delivered to new mothers. Currently CDOP are considering how to re-launch the keeping baby safe campaign and an initial meeting has been held with service providers across the county. These safe sleeping issues are a national issue as they involve a complex public health message which needs to be delivered to parents from all communities and ethnic groups.
- 3.13.14. A meeting was held in March 2012 with providers across the county to discuss how the safe sleeping message is currently delivered and how it can be re-enforced. This will be the subject of ongoing discussion but the group felt the key issue was about educating the professionals to enable them to deliver the safe sleeping messages effectively.
- 3.13.15 During recent the Ofsted/CQC Inspections across the three local authorities in Bedfordshire concerns were expressed by the inspectors that frontline staff was not aware of the messages arising from the review of Child Deaths locally. Efforts had already been made within training sessions and by publication of the CDOP annual report and a newsletter to disseminate messages widely but an action plan has now been developed to include regular training sessions on CDOP issues identified for all frontline staff. The CDOP annual report and a short commentary on the emerging themes has also been placed on the independent contractors section of NHS Bedfordshire and Luton intranet
- 3.13.16 The CDOP annual report for 2011 - 2012 will provide further analysis of the data and any emerging themes in child death and will be presented to the Safeguarding Board and published on the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board website later in the year.

3.14 Serious Case Reviews.

- 3.14.1 Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board considers a serious case review when a child dies or is seriously injured, and abuse and/or neglect are suspected or known to be a factor, or there are concerns about how local agencies worked together. The purpose of such reviews is to learn lessons and improve practice. These reviews result in action plans that should drive this improvement.
- 3.14.2 The Joint Executive Serious Case Review Panel is convened when there is a need to consider an individual case where it is considered there might be a situation where a serious case review should be commenced. The Panel consists of colleagues from Health, Police, Children's Social Care and Probation. The Panel are supported by the Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children Board Independent Chair and Safeguarding Children Board Business Manager.
- 3.14.3 No Serious Case Reviews have been instigated in 2011- 2012. In one case referred to the Panel there were lessons to be learnt and the relevant agencies were asked to report back to the Panel on their response to the actions required. This was completed and the lessons learnt disseminated to agencies to disseminate to their staff and also presented to the Child Death Overview Panel. Another case referred at the end of March 2012 is in the process of being reviewed via a Multi Agency Case Review rather than as a Serious Case Review.
- 3.14.4 Key messages are incorporated into all Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board training courses and single agency courses validated by the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board. This is a standing agenda item for the Training Commissioning Group and Training Development & Implementation Group. Courses reviewed annually/bi-annually and as required by national developments. Training has been adapted to incorporate learning from local and national serious case reviews. New courses have been developed or commissioned in response to these findings e.g. Impact of Substance Misuse Awareness.
- 3.14.5. The last two serious case reviews which took place in 2005 (Child DL) and 2010 (Child J) both had comprehensive action plans where all the actions were been completed, evidenced and reviewed.

4.0 Governance and accountability arrangements for Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board

- 4.0.1 The Children Act 2004 places a duty on all relevant authorities to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; this primarily deals with how organisations working with children ensure that they have appropriate regard to safety and welfare.
- 4.0.2 Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010 (HM Government) provides statutory guidance regarding the governance of Safeguarding Boards, including the procedures for CDOP and Serious Case Reviews. Following the Munro Report on Child Protection published in May 2011, the national guidance is being re-written and is likely to be published during the summer of 2012. Following that, the Board will consider its governance structures and processes to ensure it responds appropriately.
- 4.0.3 The Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board has been effectively established since April 2010 The Strategic Board meets three times each year and has

good attendance by representatives from the senior levels of all organisations involved in protecting or promoting the welfare of children. Most key partners contribute well to its work at the strategic and operational level, although as responsibilities of public sector organisations change there is a need to have increasing involvement of new key players such as GPs and schools. The Board is actively working with these key partners to secure their active contribution. Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board demonstrates clear priorities through its business plan and specific areas of achievement such as the impact of multi-agency training and improvements in the quality of practice resulting from multi-agency audits.

- 4.0.4 Ofsted Inspection of safeguarding and looked after services in Central Bedfordshire in February 2012 rated Partnership Working as good. Most partners are engaged and communicate well with each other to safeguard children. In some instances conflicting priorities within individual agencies create barriers to partnership working and these are evident at both operational and strategic planning levels. For example issues such as health involvement in domestic violence initiatives at the strategic level, and appropriate police involvement in child protection conferences. Issues such as this are discussed and resolved within the Joint Steering Group (joint with Bedford Borough Board) which is led by the Chair of Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board and if necessary are elevated to full Board level for resolution.
- 4.0.5 Central Bedfordshire Council leads the Children's Trust Partnership in delivering the local Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). This plan includes a wide range of multi-agency initiatives to improve health and wellbeing including a 'Stay Safe' theme which emphasises the importance of the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board and promotes an active response to domestic abuse in families with children. This Children's Trust is chaired by the Lead Member for Children's Services and has appropriate representatives from key partners, including the voluntary sector, and has clear governance arrangements. It ensures that safeguarding is suitably prioritised across a broad range of organisations and has clear lines of communication, reporting and oversight with other strategic safeguarding fora such as the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 4.0.6 Representatives from the voluntary sector are actively engaged in a wide range of strategic and operational groups through the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board and Children's Trust, and are able to influence the development of services to support children and families. Voluntary sector organisations work well with statutory partners and some are commissioned to provide a range of readily accessible services to young people, in particular early intervention to prevent safeguarding concerns escalating and working with vulnerable groups. Strong collaboration between statutory and voluntary sector partners is enhanced through the secondment of some council staff to services provided by voluntary organisations and through some voluntary organisations delivering training to statutory partners.
- 4.0.7 In January 2012 a proposal to rationalise Board structures was presented to the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board in response to some partners concerns around capacity and being able to engage effectively across three safeguarding children boards.
- 4.0.8 As a result, the Board agreed to disband the below groups as sitting sub-committees with the groups meeting in future as needed by partners rather than routinely. Nominated lead officers have been identified to ensure that group meetings are called appropriately. The Lead Officers are responsible for the development and delivery of the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board business plan objectives, via flexible mechanisms determined by the Lead Officers and Joint Steering Group.

- Joint Policy & Procedures Group
- Joint Training Commissioning Group
- Joint Training Development & Implementation Group
- Joint Communications Group

4.0.9 The Board agreed for the following groups to remain as a formal part of the Board structure, meeting regularly to deal with relatively wide agendas;

- Joint Steering Group
- Joint Executive Serious Case Review Panel
- Joint Performance Management & Audit Group
- Cross border Child Death Overview Panel.

4.0.10 As part of their submission for this annual report, partners have set out their own governance contribution to the Board. The Police contribution highlights the challenge for partners of servicing three Safeguarding Boards during a period of public sector austerity but appreciates the view of Central Bedfordshire Council and the other partner councils that there is a need to retain the individual Boards in the foreseeable future.

5.0 Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board's Delivery of Multi-Agency Training

5.0.1 The Joint Training Commissioning Group has met quarterly during 2011-2012 and the Training Development and Commissioning Manager has reported directly to these meetings and has also presented reports to the Strategic Boards for each LSCB on the activities, finances and strategy for inter agency training in both areas.

5.0.2 The full time Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Training Officer co-delivers most inter- agency courses in conjunction with safeguarding leads/trainers from partner agencies. This assists in ensuring single agencies' training messages are consistent with local audit messages, research evidence and national safeguarding training messages. In addition these Pool Trainers are required to attend Pool Update meetings that are held 3 times per year where local, national and research messages are presented.

5.0.3 A Working in Core groups ½ day course was developed in direct response to Audit findings and four courses have run since November 2012. This course has been very positively evaluated and has had clear impact on practice e.g.

'Course also gave me confidence to insist on being a member of a specific core group of child dual rolled with another school as I felt I could add another perspective to meeting. Agreed that it is a priority for staff to attend these meetings to become involved & network for benefit of child '(BBC School delegate January 2012)

5.0.4 The Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board's quality assurance and performance monitoring activities e.g. Enquiries have recently been made of both Local Authorities with regard to service level agreements held with providers and the safer recruitment training and other Safeguarding training requirements of such agreements so that the Training Manager may contact the service providers direct and support and advise on S.11 compliance. This work will continue into 2012-2013. In addition messages for learning arising from multi-agency audits undertaken by the Joint Performance Management & Audit Group are incorporated into training.

- 5.0.5 Learning from serious case reviews: The training function developed responses to the training actions arising out of Child J Serious Case Review and these have been implemented during 2011-2012. Constructive challenge is now part of the core training content and activity for all inter agency training courses and a specific externally commissioned 1 day course on how this is maintained in particularly complex cases has been held bi –annually. Further awareness raising as well as targeted training events on Child Sexual Abuse themes and Sexual Exploitation are planned for 2012-2013 and indications are that recruitment will be excellent.
- 5.0.6 The Training Function collects and analyses evaluation data as already described above. In addition the Training Officer attends all events and engages in facilitated discussion with delegates around further training needs as well as the challenges and quality of partnership working. Where concerns are identified these are immediately responded to by the Training Manager via direct contact with the delegate, their manager and agency Board members as necessary. The response to these concerns by all has been excellent – prompt and thorough. Any newly identified Training needs (for example Working in Core Groups) are incorporated into the Joint Training Strategy and plans on a continuous basis.
- 5.0.7 There have been no complaints made regarding Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board inter agency training or other activities in 2011-2012

5.1 Areas of strength for interagency training

- 5.1.1. The consistency of the training messages that are given and the culture of working together are promoted by the course content and training delivery. As the Training Officer is involved in the planning and delivery of every course then key national and local messages can be delivered consistently at single agency training events in the co-trainers own agency.
- 5.1.2 The Training Function has commissioned courses from good quality external providers as all evaluation data shows and its work on the impact of interagency training is advanced when compared to other LSCBs in the region or indeed in England and Wales.
- 5.1.3 The Training Function is the preferred interagency training provider for the East of England Ambulance service and provided 26 days of training to their key safeguarding staff in 2011-12 and has pre-purchased 68 days for 2012-13.
- 5.1.4 The Impact on Practice evaluation work has been developing strongly and useful data evidence was provided to Agencies and OFSTED Safeguarding and Looked After Children inspections in Central Bedfordshire in February 2012.
- 5.1.5 Safeguarding in schools – In addition an Anti Bullying On line e learning package is being developed by the current E learning provider and this will be offered in addition to the current menu of courses in due course. An On line package for 11-18 year olds in peer mentoring or similar roles has been provided since October 2011.
- 5.1.6 Equality and diversity issues in safeguarding work with children young people and families are incorporated in to all inter agency training courses. Attendance data is collected from delegates regarding ethnicity and gender. Disabled staff and volunteer training delegates have been successfully accommodated and all venues have excellent disability access.

- 5.1.7 Safer workforce – An extended menu of FREE On Line e learning has been provided since October 2011 provided by the LSCB for all staff and volunteers from partner Agencies in both Local Authorities. Recruitment to these courses has been slow – 1177 for 2011- 2012 but completion rates of 93% are excellent and feedback indicates that 1148 of these individuals found accessing the system very easy (789) or easy (359). Income has been generated from GP and Dental practices who have adopted this form of learning for all staff in contact with children and families. It is intended to continue with the current menu into 2012 -2013. While completion rates are good, mail shots and other marketing strategies to promote this safeguarding learning opportunity will be made during the coming year.
- 5.1.8 Safer workforce strategies are implemented by partner organisations and the Training Manager advises on training needs of the workforce and how these may be met on request from the partner organisation and via workforce training manger meetings and other fora.
- 5.1.9 CDOP – the training function has assisted with the promotion of CDOP training events.
- 5.1.10 Sexual exploitation – Planning has been in progress since early 2012 and Briefing events for 340 staff from across Luton, Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough are planned for June 20th 2012. Further specifically targeted courses on this and other sexual abuse themes are planned going forward. An e learning package was added to the menu of on line learning in October 2011
- 5.1.11 Domestic Abuse – Impact on the Child course has run 3 times in 2011-12 and this is planned to continue in the next year. Delegates have assessed impact as follows; Highlighted behaviours in children that could be indicators. In corporate training for whole school Central Bedfordshire Council Schools; enabled me to discuss a recent incident with the child's carers, Voluntary Organisation. An added awareness level course is planned to run in Summer/Autumn 2012 on Teen and Dating Violence for targeted youth, health and schools workers.
- 5.1.12 Adult Mental Health – a newly developed 1 day Impact of Parental Mental Illness course has run seven times during 2011-12 and has been open to Luton delegates. This course is planned to run quarterly in 2012-13 and now requires mandatory successful completion of the E learning package prior to attendance. Impact Evaluation data shows excellent transfer to practice, for example 'From attending course have written a training package for staff with the Trust & information will be used for CPD for all operational staff', Ambulance Trust delegate; Raised awareness of impact on children & have used this knowledge gained in recent CIN meetings', CBC schools delegate
- 5.1.13 Learning Difficulties & Disabilities – a newly developed 1 day Safeguarding Disabled Children course was developed and ran twice in 2011-12, and will run 3 times in 2012-13. Impact data includes now looking at support groups within Children Services for families with children with SEN & Disabilities. Important to look at the effect on siblings - discussions re setting up a sibling support group, Children's Centre Manager; Improving monitoring & making students aware of who they can contact, Schools delegate.
- 5.1.14 Drugs & Alcohol a newly developed ½ day awareness of the Impact of Parental Substance Misuse on Babies Children and young people ran twice in the past year and is planned to run three times in 2012-13. A SEPT worker – Health Visitor assessed the impact on practice as: Am now more vigilant of possible effects such as

school absence, missed appointments & disengagement. Will bring these types of changes/ indicators to meeting re CIN & CP plans

5.1.15 Private fostering – content on this topic has been presented to every 2 day course audience since autumn 2010 and is set to continue. Indications are that awareness remains low in the general children’s workforce but delegates’ responses are positive with many indicating that they will raise awareness on return to their own settings.

5.1.16 Engagement of the wider community in safeguarding, e.g. VCS, faith groups – 176 volunteers and staff from VCS and faith groups have attended training events free of charge in 2011-12, this is a 6% increase on the previous year and the policy will continue for 2012-13. Any volunteer may also access E learning free of charge

5.2 Future areas for development include:

5.2.1 Expansion of the co-trainer Training Pool so as to limit the burden placed on health representatives who contribute in the highest numbers to the training pool. Senior Practitioner Social Workers have recently been recruited for co-delivery of the Working in Core groups and this has worked well to date.

5.2.2 Communication with schools - although schools’ designated personnel and deputies attend in good numbers these links could be improved. Two FREE Briefing events are being planned around the Somerset Serious Case Review for October 2012 and these personnel together with Lead Safeguarding Governors will be invited.

6.0 Monitoring and Evaluation activity

6.0.1 A key role of Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board is to monitor safeguarding activity in Central Bedfordshire and evaluate its impact. This is achieved in a number of ways:

- By considering reports of external agencies such as Ofsted and CQC which carry out inspections of services to safeguard children. Of particular importance to the Board is the monitoring of actions by the partners in response to the comments in those reports.
- By the Board carrying out its own audit and performance monitoring activity including the evaluation of its multi-agency training, and
- By the Board overseeing partners’ self-assessment auditing of their compliance with safeguarding standards (known as Section 11 assessment)

6.1. External Inspection and Assurance – Ofsted, CQC

6.1.1 A short Ofsted Inspection of contact, referral and assessment processes in Central Bedfordshire Council’s Children’s Social Care took place in March 2011 identifying one strength and some areas for improvement, as set out below. These have all been addressed – with the completed plan signed off at the Strategic Board 13th Dec 2011.

Ofsted Inspection of Contact, Referral and Assessment March 2011

Strengths

Arrangements for the transfer of cases between teams are undertaken efficiently and without delay. The transfer is underpinned by a two-stage process that ensures that all tasks are completed and that plans and ensuing actions are fully understood and promptly implemented in order to safeguard children.
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Areas for development

- The electronic record-keeping system does not provide effective support to staff and managers. Record-keeping, data retrieval and analysis and the efficient use of social worker time are all compromised by the inadequacies of the current system.
- Performance management systems do not provide an overview of the work of the intake and referral team. The council is not easily able to provide information on the amount or nature of duty work being undertaken at any given time.
- Unqualified staff undertake both initial and core assessments as part of supervised staff development. This is contrary to the guidance in 'Working Together'. Whilst there is no evidence that outcomes for children have so far been affected by work being carried out by unqualified staff, risks are increased by this arrangement.
- Work undertaken at the point of contact does not always meet the guidance in 'Working Together'. In some cases seen by inspectors decisions had been made to close contacts before full information had been gathered.
- Referrals from the police are variable in timeliness and the detail of information provided. This can impact on the council's ability to provide appropriate responses to safeguarding concerns.

6.1.2 A full Ofsted Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services in Central Bedfordshire was carried out over two weeks at the end of February 2012. This inspection was informed by a simultaneous inspection of safeguarding in health organisations by CQC. The headline findings of the inspection are given below and the full Ofsted report can be read at <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/local-authorities/central-bedfordshire>

Summary of Ofsted Comments following Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services in Central Bedfordshire, March 2012

Safeguarding services: Overall effectiveness Grade 2 (good)

The overall effectiveness of safeguarding services is good. Children and young people at immediate risk of significant harm are identified and responded to in a timely way and partner agencies collaborate well to safeguard children and young people. Safeguarding outcomes for children are good.

Partnership work is well embedded, with active engagement of most agencies including the private and voluntary sector. The Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board effectively promotes collaborative work and oversees safeguarding services.

Robust performance management and quality assurance systems are embedded across the partnership. Managers and independent reviewing officers provide effective oversight of safeguarding work and are readily accessible to staff for supervision and advice. However, supervision records do not always evidence that supervision is regularly undertaken.

The contribution of health services to safeguarding is adequate. A number of areas require improvement which include: ensuring that there are sufficient numbers of community practitioners; that training improves practice; that transfer arrangements of children to adult mental health services are effective and that service developments are informed by the experience of service users.

Safeguarding is assessed as good or better in the majority of provision. A range of effective early intervention services has been developed. Referrals are promptly acted on and assessments enable those children in need or in need of protection to be appropriately supported by partner agencies. However, chronologies do not sufficiently assist case planning, and diversity issues are often not sufficiently considered.

Workforce planning across the partnership has been sufficiently effective to secure and retain suitably experienced and qualified staff. Safe recruitment practices are well established.

Services for looked after children: Overall effectiveness Grade 3 (adequate)

The overall effectiveness of services for looked after children was judged to be adequate. Capacity for improvement, and ambition and prioritisation for looked after children were also judged to be adequate.

Inspectors judged that Health outcomes for looked after children are poor and that outcomes to enable looked after children to be healthy are inadequate. Ofsted concluded that health services face significant challenges in ensuring that the health needs of looked after children are addressed.

- 6.1.3 In response to the inspection findings, Central Bedfordshire Council, as the lead agency, are developing an action plan with partners in health and other agencies to address the findings and further improve services to children. Progress on this action plan will be reported to the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Strategic Board during 2012-13 and reported on in future Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board annual reports.
- 6.1.4 The monitoring and evaluation of the safeguarding of Looked After Children is within the remit of the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board, as it is for all children in the Local Authority area. Looked After Children all have an allocated social worker. There is a review of arrangements for Looked After Children within four weeks of coming into care, after a further three months, and thereafter every six months. Reviews are undertaken by Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs), who have within their duties the responsibility to see the child alone before the review. They review children's care plans at each Review which covers amongst other areas arrangements to ensure that a child's needs in respect of their health, education, and the need for safety and protection are met and that any actions identified in the previous Review have been followed up. IROs also have a responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of operational and senior managers and have in place a dispute resolution policy. The Corporate Parenting Panel made up of council members and officers is chaired by the Lead Member for Children and it receives an Annual Report from IRO's. Performance data in relation to key performance indicators specific to Looked After Children is reported regularly to Children's Services management teams and quarterly to the Children's Trust Board where the Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Board is an active member. In addition, the Lead Member for children is a participant observer on the Safeguarding Board. The Safeguarding Board specifically considers the systems for safeguarding these children when developing initiatives on matters such as sexual exploitation and missing children. It also receives regular reports on the safety of children who are fostered through private arrangements which are monitored by the Council.

6.2 Audit and Performance Monitoring

- 6.2.1 Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board provides the forum through which partners audit or share the results of their audits of activity in cases where good partnership working is crucial. It also provides an opportunity for partners to consider their own and other's performance on safeguarding children. This work takes place in the Joint Steering Group and the Joint Performance Management and Audit Group. Where appropriate audit and performance issues are reported to the Strategic Board for further discussion and decision. In addition partners carry out their own individual monitoring and evaluation.
- 6.2.2 The Joint Performance and Audit Group (with Bedford Borough) undertook a number of multi agency case file audits. In addition multi agency case audits were completed as part of the recent Ofsted inspection. All the messages from the case audits have been disseminated to agencies and incorporated into Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board training.
- 6.2.3 The Joint Performance Management & Audit Group case file audit programme has been set out with themed case file audits such as Core Groups, Strategy meetings and the Section 47 enquiries. These audits included the development of an audit tool; the selection of cases; dissemination to Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board partners and the analysis and evaluation of information collected.
- 6.2.4 Over the past year, 4 multi agency audits has been conducted including three audits specifically recommended from the Central Bedfordshire Child J Serious Case Review. The 6 reoccurring messages learned from these audits and others conducted over the last 2 years are;
- Information Sharing
 - Record Keeping
 - The Childs Voice
 - Practitioner Responsibility & Challenge
 - Assessments and Risk Assessments
 - Parental co-operation/engagement

6.3 Impact

- 6.3.1 Messages for learning from the audits have been collated and disseminated to all agencies through Single Points of Contact. This is designed to enhance standard practice for information sharing; record keeping; ensuring the child's views are considered Practitioner responsibility and robustness of Practitioner challenge; quality of assessments and risk assessments; parental cooperation and engagement.
- 6.3.2 Examples of impact from multi-agency audits include:
- Domestic Violence and Information Sharing - The Safeguarding Children Boards Information Sharing Protocol was revised with strengthened guidance for information sharing in cases of domestic violence impacting children. The Bedfordshire Domestic Abuse partnership ensures agencies are aware of and adopt the guidance to ensure improved protection of children affected by/living with domestic abuse.

- Escalation Procedures – Multi-agency audit has tested the effectiveness of the procedures, particularly the use of the procedure to bring Practitioner challenge to a local authority decision to convene or not convene a child protection conference.
- Responding to children who display sexually harmful behaviour – Multi-agency guidance has been revised to make it explicit that where a child/young person is assessed as posing a risk to other children/young people, then within a child in need meeting there is a multi agency plan/ response to managing that risk within and outside of school.
- Effective and appropriate use of written agreements - A direct outcome of this audit led to the development and dissemination of written guidance and an exemplar template, for agencies in the use of written agreements to ensure they are only used in exceptional circumstances as a bridging tool but not to replace or substitute the statutory plans. The effect will be to reduce the routine use of working agreements which have no statutory basis, and strengthen the quality of statutory plans and their accessibility and relevance to service users.

6.3.3 The Joint Performance Management & Audit Group has received single agency audits from the following agencies;

- Bedfordshire Community Health Services (Aug 2011) – Growth monitoring following a Serious Case Review in Hertfordshire
- SEPT Supervision Audit
- SEPT – Missed appointments (known as DNA – ‘did not attend’)

6.4 Evaluation of Multi-agency training

6.4.1 The Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Training Function has a responsibility to monitor arrangements and quality of provision for single agency and inter agency safeguarding training and to advise on effectiveness. Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board offers a validation service to agencies for the quality assurance of their single agency training courses as well as training advice and consultancy free of charge.

6.4.2 The full time Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Training Officer co-delivers most inter- agency courses in conjunction with safeguarding leads/trainers from partner agencies. This assists in ensuring single agencies’ training messages are consistent with local audit messages, research evidence and national safeguarding training messages. In addition these Pool Trainers are required to attend Pool Update meetings that are held 3 times per year where local, national and research messages are presented.

6.4.3 End of day course evaluation scores for all face to face inter agency training courses are excellent with 63% of all delegates reporting completely and 35% mostly achieving intended learning outcomes; 96% of delegates state that the courses attended were completely or mostly relevant to his/her job role and 71% stated that the trainer(s) had completely enabled the development of new knowledge and skills and a further 26% felt mostly enabled in this area. Delegate feedback is actively considered when courses are reviewed or new courses developed or commissioned.

6.4.4 All delegates self assess their level of safeguarding knowledge on entry to any inter agency training course and self assess progress at the end of the day. This data is analysed by Agency and also by job role. Should any cause for concern be identified

then this is communicated to the Agency. For example 18% of schools designated personnel in CBC self rated at 3/10 or below and 51% at 5/10 or below on entry to the 2 day interagency working courses held between April and October 2011. The possible causes for this were discussed at Joint Children's Workforce Training Managers meetings with both CBC and BBC and a Free to Schools Briefing Event on the Somerset First School Serious Case Reviews of 2011 is planned for October 2012.

- 6.4.5 Evaluation data for schools staff demonstrates that the learning is taken back to the workplace and actions instituted that have a positive effect on outcomes, for example an upper school teacher generated a student leaflet outlining the reasons why a School Counsellor may need to share information to stop child abuse, while many teachers reported having reviewed and updated school safeguarding procedures and policies in the 4-6 weeks following the course.
- 6.4.6 Impact on Practice evaluation of face to face courses has been extended and formalised since September 2011. Current available data is for courses delivered from September 2011 until the end of February 2012 and has revealed evidence of workers taking new or refreshed knowledge back to base and sharing it with colleagues and managers. Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Training has also impacted positively on safeguarding arrangements in Agencies, for instance several delegates including a GP report placing safeguarding as a standing item on weekly meeting agenda following the course attended; some report placing attendance at CP meetings as a priority as a direct result of Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board training.

6.5 Auditing of Partners' Compliance with Safeguarding Standards (s11 of the Children's Act 2004)

- 6.5.1 Section 11 of the Children's Act 2004, requires partners to work together to improve the safeguarding of children. Most Boards oversee a process in which partners self-assess their compliance with 8 safeguarding standards every two or three years. In keeping with the Boards desire to reduce the bureaucracy of this self assessment process, it was agreed that partners would submit a summary of their compliance with six of the standards within their 2011-2012 annual returns for this report. The remaining two standards will be the subject of in-depth self-assessment in 2012-13. These remaining standards are:

- Senior management commitment to the importance of safeguarding and promoting children's welfare;
- Effective inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

- 6.5.2 The initial summary of compliance on the six s11 standards from individual partners will be discussed within the Board during its meetings in summer 2012-13 and if necessary, further assurance will be required from individual partners to satisfy the Board that they are either compliant with the standards or taking appropriate action to achieve compliance.

7.0 Safeguarding Priorities for 2012 – 13

- 7.0.1 Taking into account the changing national requirements on safeguarding children, the discussed in the previous pages of this report and the local needs of children and agencies providing safeguarding services, Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board has developed its business plan for 2012-13 with the following priorities:

Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Business Plan 2012-13

Priority 1 - Early Signs and intervention in respect of physical, emotional and neglect

- Improve the awareness of early signs abuse and neglect amongst practitioners.
- Assess the impact of early intervention approaches by designing and implementing an appropriate project, to include collection of data on CAF.
- Evaluate the potential for implementing the Family Nurse Partnership programme for new mothers and if appropriate implement it in Central Bedfordshire as this is a model of good practice.

Priority 2 - Domestic Abuse

- Monitor the implementation and impact of the Domestic Abuse objectives in the Children & Young Peoples Plan (2011-14). Which are being pursued by Bedfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership
- Monitor and where appropriate contribute to the development of the Children Workforce Development Council funded domestic abuse project across the 3 LSCBs and review the achievements and outcomes of the work.
- Develop the multi agency training in respect of Domestic Abuse – The Impact on children and young people

Priority 3 - Child Sexual Abuse and Child Sexual Abuse through Exploitation

- Working with the neighbouring Bedford and Luton Boards, implement the LSCB elements of the Government's action plan on Sexual Exploitation.
- Review and if appropriate develop the Sexual Exploitation procedures
- Support the implementation of a local approach to Multi-Systemic Therapy for Sexualised Behaviours in young people
- Review and if appropriate deliver new multi-agency training in child sexual abuse and awareness of child sexual abuse through exploitation

Priority 4 - Develop the Board

- Develop the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Performance Monitoring and Reporting Process
- Recruit lay members to the Strategic Board
- Develop work with new NHS arrangements and improved engagement with Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and the new CCGs Structures
- Improve Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board engagement with and support for schools
- Monitor participation in and impact of Multi agency and Single agency Training
- Improve the dissemination of lessons from the Child Death Overview Panel
- Manage and disseminate the learning from partners S11 self evaluation audits

- Develop Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board relationship with Health and Wellbeing Board and Police and Crime Commissioner, (including the publication of an appropriate annual report)

Priority 5 - Implementing the recommendations from the Munro Review, Ofsted, CQC/IST & HMIP Inspections

- Implement the Munro recommendations for LSCBs.
- Monitor the implementation of Munro's recommendations by individual partners
- Implement any actions identified for Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board following the Ofsted inspection in March 2012
- Monitor the implementation of partners' action plans relating to safeguarding from the Ofsted/CQC Inspection in March
- Monitor the implementation of partner's safeguarding action plans resulting from other Inspections in 2012 – 2013 in relation to safeguarding children and young people
- Monitor the implementation of partner's safeguarding action plans resulting from the Criminal Justice Joint Inspection of Youth Offending (anticipated in May 2012)