

Central Bedfordshire Council

CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 8 December 2015

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD: ANNUAL REPORT

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Purpose of this report

To provide the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an opportunity to review the work of the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to:

1. scrutinise and comment on the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2014-2015.
2. note the key messages and priorities for keeping children safe that have been communicated to key partners and stakeholders.

Background

1. Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015) is the statutory guidance that sets out the legislative requirements and expectations on individual services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and it provides a framework for Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) to monitor the effectiveness of local services.
2. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 states that the Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board must publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding and the promotion of the

welfare of children in the local area and that this should be submitted to the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council, the local Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board. This has been done and the Annual Report has been submitted to this Committee for further scrutiny.

3. The statutory guidance states that the Annual Report should provide a rigorous and transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local services. It should identify areas of weakness, the causes of those weaknesses and the action being taken to address them as well as other proposals for action. The report should include lessons from reviews undertaken within the reporting period.
4. The report should also list the contributions made to the LSCB by partner agencies and details of what the LSCB has spent, including on Child Death Reviews and Serious Case Reviews. All LSCB member organisations have an obligation to provide LSCBs with reliable resources (including finance) that enable the LSCB to be strong and effective. The guidance states that Members should share the financial responsibility for the LSCB in such a way that a disproportionate burden does not fall on a small number of partner agencies.
5. This report shows how LSCB partners have worked together and individually to keep children safe, deliver agreed Board priorities and meet the legal duty to:
 - coordinate 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; and
 - ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for those purposes.
6. This year the Annual Report has also included a section setting out key priorities and messages for partners and stakeholders for keeping children safe in Central Bedfordshire (see section 6, page 28).

Council Priorities

7. This report shows how partners are working together to support the Council's priority to promote health and well being and protect the vulnerable.

Corporate Implications

Legal Implications

8. The Council has obligations to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board under the Children Act 2004 and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015). The appended annual report is prepared in

accordance with the guidance for annual reports and must be presented for consideration by the Chief Executive.

Financial Implications

9. There are no financial implications as a result of this report. The Annual Report of the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board sets out how the key partners fund the working arrangements of this statutory partnership. This includes the contributions of Central Bedfordshire Council where the partnership support is hosted.

Equalities Implications

10. Public bodies have a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
11. The Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board provides a range of best practice, policies, procedures and training to ensure that professionals working with children, young people and families have the support and information they need to work with vulnerable families, including those with disabilities and those from different ethnic groups.
12. The Board priorities include a strong focus on equality issues related to domestic abuse, adult mental health problems and child sexual exploitation. Other initiatives have included work in schools and other educational settings focussed on:
 - digital safety Child Sexual Exploitation, gangs and weapons, personal safety and around the PREVENT agenda (Counter terrorism and domestic extremism)
 - hate crime with officers and staff working with vulnerable young people encouraging them to report any incidents directly.
 - A review of policies. The update has considered children in specific circumstances such as Abuse Linked to Spiritual and Cultural Beliefs/Faith Groups and Supporting Individuals Vulnerable to Violent Extremism: Practice Guidance
13. A need for improved understanding about diversity and what that means for the families they are working with has been identified.
14. The future focus of the Board will include young people who may be at risk and vulnerable as a result of disabilities, caring responsibilities, radicalisation and female genital mutilation.

Conclusion and next Steps

15. The last year has again brought a raft of changes for partners to grapple with, whilst retaining a focus on working together to keep children safe. This report provides an opportunity for Overview and Scrutiny members to provide their views and feedback to the LSCB on the LSCB annual report and partners' impact on safeguarding children and young people in Central Bedfordshire.

Appendices

The following Appendices are provided through an electronic link:

[Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2014-2015](#)

[Working Together 2015](#)

Background Papers

16. None