

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

20th October 2011

SUNDERLAND SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD BI-ANNUAL REPORT AND BUSINESS PLAN CONSULTATION

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT CHAIR OF THE SUNDERLAND SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: Safe City

1. Why has this report come to Committee?

To consult the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee about the Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) Bi Annual Report April 2009 - March 2011 and the Business Plan 2011-2013.

2. Background

2.1 The Board had a number of development days considering the relationship and governance arrangements between the Children's Trust and the SSCB. A Board development day held on 9.3.11, focussed on the development of the Bi-Annual Report and Business Plan. It was agreed that the Business Plan should become more outcome focussed. The format reflects the priority areas identified by the SSCB and allows the outcome of these priorities to be demonstrated.

2.2 The Board will meet its statutory duty under Working Together 2010 to produce an annual report.

3. Current Position

3.1 The purpose of the SSCB Bi-Annual Report is to:

- Outline progress against the objectives in the Business Plan 2009-2012
- Provide information about agency commitment to safeguarding children and the Board's agenda and
- Reflect on child protection work and performance in Sunderland.

3.2 The Bi-annual Report reflects progress against the Business Plan including performance against statutory functions such as the Child Death Review process and Serious Case Reviews. Along with a foreword from the Independent Chair of the SSCB the report also includes achievements for the Board and sub committees in 2009-2011. Some of which are:

- Development of the SSCB website
- Launch of the SSCB e-learning system, which is now available for all multi agency professionals, volunteers and elected members

- Increased use of the Common Assessment Framework to ensure the availability of preventative services
 - A secure budget
 - Continued development of the training function of the SSCB to ensure professionals are skilled and knowledgeable when dealing with child protection concerns
 - Implementing frontline staff meetings with the purpose of hearing directly from staff about the challenges and issues as well as good practice
 - Completion of 2 serious case reviews
 - Development of procedures and
 - Ensuring compliance with changes to the serious case review process.
- 3.3 Following consideration by the SSCB on the 7th September 2011, the Bi-Annual Report has been redrafted to ensure a more accessible version is published. Reports outlining the contribution of each agency to safeguarding children in Sunderland will be made available on the SSCB website upon publication.
- 3.4 The report includes the work undertaken by the sub committees and the achievements in the 2009-2011 period.
- 3.5 The report also reflects the Board and partners agencies' commitment to learning from the death of Peter Connelly in Haringey. The findings of the Laming Report (The Protection of Children in England 2009) were reflected in an action plan, which enabled the Business Planning Group to implement and monitor the recommendations.
- 3.6 The report also reflects on the outcome of an internal audit undertaken by Sunderland City Council, which did not identify any high or significant risks. The audit made recommendations, which have now been fully implemented.
- 3.7 The report also contains performance information against national indicators and reflects on the reasons for the increase in the number of children who are the subject of a child protection plan in Sunderland.
- 3.8 The number of children subject to Child Protection plans has risen this year from 350 in December 2010 to 469 in August 2011. This represents a 36% increase in the number of children subject to Child Protection plans between December 2010 and August 2011.
- 3.9 During this time the conversion rate from S47 to Child Protection Plan has reduced, as the number of children commencing a plan has increased at a slower rate (45%) than the increase in S47s undertaken.
- 3.10 The number of children subject of a Child Protection plan at the end of July 2011 was 459. This is a 135% rise on the figure from April 2008, but also a 19.2% rise on the figure from just two months ago (May 2011; 385 children).
- 3.12 The period from January 2011, which covers Q4 2010/11 and Q1 2011/12, showed a significant rise in the number of children who start a plan, while the number of those who cease a plan has remained stable. This resulted in an increase in Q4 of 42 children, and in Q1 of 16 children.

3.14 The large number of children becoming subject to a plan in June and July 2011 were combined with low numbers of children ceasing to be subject to a plan – resulting in large rises in the total numbers. In June, 31 children’s plans ended, and in July only 12 ended.

4. Further Information

4.1 SSCB Business Plan 2011-2013

4.1.1 The Business Plan continues to be progressed through the work of the Board, the Business Planning Group and the subcommittees, that is, Local Child Death Review Panel, Case Review, Legal and Procedures, Quality Assurance and Communication and Workforce Development.

5 Recommendation

The Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee is requested to accept the report and respond to the following Consultation Questions:

- Does the Bi-Annual Report provide sufficient information to understand the functions of the Board, its work over the last two years and the achievements of the SSCB?
- Is the new format of the Report accessible?
- Do you agree that the changes made to the Business Plan provide a greater focus on outcomes?
- Do you agree with the priorities identified in the Business Plan?

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