

Dudley Safeguarding Children Board

'Working Together to Keep Children & Young People Safe'

Summary of Partnership Meeting



23rd September 2011

'Local Safeguarding Children Boards play an extremely valuable role and will remain uniquely positioned within the local accountability architecture to monitor how professionals and services are working together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. They are also well placed to identify emerging problems through learning from practice and to oversee efforts to improve services in response.'

*The Munro Review of Child Protection, Department for Education, 2011
2. www.education.gov.uk/munroreview*

"Is there scope for LSCBs to assume a strengthened leadership role in multi-agency learning about child protection?"

The above question was posed by Professor Eileen Munro in her interim report into her review of child protection in England. In response to this, Dudley Safeguarding Children Board is keen to ensure that there is no 'disjuncture between their strategic role and operational realities and practice. It aims to achieve this by keeping a strong focus on child protection and identifying ways of disseminating learning from practice.

the practice challenge

"The LSCB has a key role in achieving high standards in safeguarding and promoting welfare, not just through co-ordinating but by evaluation and continuous improvement"

Working Together, 2010

"A renewed focus on quality assurance processes and on practice evaluation can help build a culture of local performance...assuring the quality of both professional practice and organisational processes and structures depends on robust internal and cross-agency audit and quality assurance systems"

SCIE Systems Model

"Many practitioners see the Board as something up in the ether rather than something that affects practice"

National Evaluation of LSCBs, 2010



Shining a light on the realities of front-line practice

- some of the day-to-day challenges that you face in terms of safeguarding & protecting children
- what works well in Dudley
- ways in which you feel that DSCB could help you and your organisation better safeguard children or enable better partnership working

The Partnership session of the Board took place in two parts – an introduction followed by brief talks by practitioners/managers, each with different professional roles; a group exercise with Board members to further explore the issues raised and identify potential solutions.

This report is a summary of the session, and does not represent a full account of what was shared and discussed during the morning.

Input from Front-Line Professionals

Sgt Kay Redfern, Child Abuse & Investigation Unit, West Midlands Police

What works well?

Good working relationships with key agencies such as social care and understanding of respective roles

Key Challenges

Lack of capacity for police to attend Child Protection Conferences and the pressures on the team in terms of volume of work

Jeannette Manley, Team Manager, Assessment Services, Children's Social Care

What works well?

Multi-agency working, particularly with police and health colleagues, developments concerning CAF and the role of the ISM and the extended schools project

Key Challenges

Information-sharing – professional reluctance to share information or systems that impact on the timeliness of this, which can impact of effective assessment work; lack of understanding from some professionals about consent issues in terms of children in need referrals to social care

Jayne Underwood, Integrated Services Manager, Directorate of Children's Services

What works well?

Working with social care, positive impact of the CAF on outcomes for children, young people and their families where this is being used, the DART in the sense that it has identified the vulnerability of young people to the impact of domestic abuse and potentially the new threshold guidance

Key Challenges

CAF not embedded in some organisations and as part of a continuum of safeguarding and issues concerning its sustainability post-March 2012, notably in respect of co-ordination, brokering and support.

Pam Dumont, Health Visitor, Black Country Partnership Foundation NHS Trust

What works well?

Arrangements in respect of domestic violence, notably the DART

Key Challenges

Health visitor caseloads (national issue), information-sharing systems, notably in respect of cross-border issues and often dependent on relationships with GPs

Gill Leach, Children's Centre Manager, Queen Victoria

What works well?

Children's centres within schools are at the heart of the community, child protection training at advanced level

Key Challenges

Start again syndrome with individual cases,

Pete Small, Connexions Personal Advisor, Directorate of Children's Services

What works well?

YPSE Panel, work of ISMs to support CAF and it's impact of achieving better outcomes, supported housing providers and the work of the Connexions Service

Key Challenges

Information-sharing, notably with other local authorities, knowledge of thresholds, service gaps for 16-18 year-olds

Overarching Themes:

The key themes arising from this session were:

- early intervention, the embedding and sustainability of common assessment and understanding/promoting its positive impact
- information sharing – systems, consent, cross-border issues and professional understanding
- service gaps in respect of 16-18 year-olds and inter-agency responses to their needs
- effective multi-agency working and training in respect of child protection
- capacity to be effective due to high volume of work, notably within health, police and social care
- need for more common approaches such as through report templates for Child Protection meetings, language etc
- positive aspects of multi-agency working, such as through training and panels

**being the visible
face of the
Board...**



It is important that professionals and their managers working in partner agencies have an understanding of the role of DSCB, and who their representative is on the Board.

Neglected children shouldn't be invisible

If you suspect a child is being neglected, harmed or suffering domestic abuse, do something about it, call 01364 812343

Dudley
Partnership through Children

supported by safe & sound, Dudley safeguarding adults board and Dudley safeguarding children's board



As part of the session, each DSCB member was asked to make a pledge on behalf of their organisation to do one thing to effect change or make a difference (however large or small) in response to the messages and dialogue. They will then be asked to review their pledge in 6 months time and account to the Board for what they have done.

Key Issues & Solutions for DSCB

The following issues were identified for possible action by the Board as a result of feedback from the group exercise:

- produce some guidance on what are desirable outcomes of interventions for children & young people from a partner agency perspective in order to better understand what each agency is aiming to achieve
- need for Board to have more regular interactions with front-line practitioners/managers, for example, through use of case studies
- facilitate 'Practitioners Forums' - informal practice learning events for practitioners (1-2 hour sessions), where they can discuss cases and learn about what works
- conduct a review of information-sharing systems and processes and consider producing simple guidance on information-sharing – what can be shared, by whom, and when
- review the role of DSCB in the light of Munro, paying particular attention to 'early intervention'
- promote the QA Framework and processes for learning from practice
- review the role of the Board in holding agencies to account in respect of their responses to, and services in respect of, 16-18 year-olds

Up-dates in respect of progress concerning the above improvements will be incorporated with the editions of 'SafER'