



## **Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board**

**(SSCB)**

### **Annual Report Summary**

**2010 - 2011**

***'Safeguarding children is everyone's  
responsibility'***

## **Welcome to Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board's summary of our Annual Report 2010 - 2011.**

### **Introduction**

**Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board** (hereafter referred to as SSCB) is the key statutory mechanism that brings together representatives of each of the main agencies and professionals responsible for promoting the welfare and safety of children and young people. It is an inter-agency forum for agreeing how the different services and professional groups should cooperate to safeguard children throughout Staffordshire (except Stoke-on-Trent, which has its own Local Safeguarding Children Board) and, for making sure that arrangements work effectively to promote better outcomes for children.

### **Priorities for 2010 -2011**

Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board published its Business Plan for 2010 – 2011, in June 2010. This plan identified the key priorities and actions for the Board during this period and included detailed work plans on how these priorities would be achieved.

The SSCB identified five key Strategic Objectives, that underpin the overarching Strategic Priority;

- Coordinate and ensure the effectiveness of what member organisations do individually and together;
- Ensure children and young people are safe from abuse, neglect, violence and the consequences of other people's behaviour;

- Ensure children and young people are safe from accidents on Staffordshire's roads and in their homes;
- Enable children, young people, their families, carers and professionals to get the information they need;
- Promote children and young people, their families, carers and professionals to contribute to making Staffordshire a safe place to live.

### Local Arrangements

SSCB is made up of local representatives from key agencies such as children's social care, police and health, along with other important statutory and voluntary agencies who provide services and support to children, young people, families and carers who live in Staffordshire. The Board has an experienced Independent Chair and all members of the SSCB meet on a quarterly basis and an Executive Group which consists of all of the Chairs of our five sub-groups.

Our multi-agency sub-groups drive forward the work of the Board and focus on policies and procedures; performance management; professional workforce and development and serious case reviews. The SSCB and Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Board also work together to co-ordinate the Child Death Overview Panel. Short-term task-to-finish groups are additionally established when specific, focused work needs to be undertaken on behalf of the Board.

The new Coalition Government has embarked upon a programme of radical reform in public services to streamline services and provide value for money in a difficult economic climate. As part of this reform the Government has stated its intention to repeal the existing legislation which requires local authorities to have a Children's Trust Board, and is introducing the concept of 'localism,' to encourage local authorities to understand the needs of their community, target resources and be innovative in providing services to meet local needs.

Staffordshire County Council and partners are currently in the process of establishing a new Health and Wellbeing Board which will incorporate the previous role and responsibilities of the Children's Trust. It will therefore be critical in the coming months to develop and clarify governance and accountability arrangements between the SSCB and the Health and Wellbeing Board; and this will include presenting the SSCB Annual Report to the Health and Wellbeing Board when they are established.

### Inspection Outcome

In 2010 Ofsted carried out an annual children's services assessment and found that the majority of services, settings and institutions inspected by Ofsted are good or better. The large majority of early years settings are good, though a small number are inadequate. Performance in primary and secondary schools is more variable; although the majorities are good, a significant minority are only satisfactory. In 2009/2010 six primary schools and two secondary schools were judged to be inadequate. Provision for 16- to 19-year-olds is variable and too much provision is only satisfactory. Just under half of the 47 school

sixth forms and three of the five further education colleges were judged to be good or better at their most recent inspection.

Nearly three quarters of special schools and special school sixth forms are good, as are four of the six pupil referral units. The local authority fostering agency was judged to be outstanding at its most recent inspection. Four of the five local authority children's homes are outstanding and one is good.

A recent unannounced inspection of front-line child protection services found a balance of strengths and satisfactory practice with some areas for development. There were no areas for priority action. In July 2009 an inspection of safeguarding arrangements and provision for looked after children reported that both were adequate. Private fostering arrangements are good.

Recommendations arising from the assessment were to;

- improve the quality of post-16 provision in secondary schools and colleges;
- reduce the number of primary schools which do not meet minimum standards;
- improve the effectiveness of the youth offending service and reduce the rate of re-offending of young people.

### **Coordinate and ensure the effectiveness of member organisations**

The SSCB have undertaken an annual review and refreshed the terms of reference for the SSCB sub-groups and work streams. A more formal review and evaluation of the current structure has been carried forward into the 2010-2011 Business Plan in conjunction with the SSCB Constitution, in acknowledgement of the potential changes ahead as a result of the Munro Review of Child Protection; the Government's stance on Children's Trust arrangements and the introduction of Health and Wellbeing Boards in 2011.

The SSCB Annual Report for 2009-2010 has been presented to the Children's Trust Board and to Staffordshire County Council's Safeguarding Children Scrutiny Panel. This year however, due to national developments, Staffordshire Children's Trust has been significantly streamlined and the SSCB Annual Report for 2010-2011 will now need to be presented to the scrutiny committee and also the new Staffordshire Health and Wellbeing Board when it is formally established in October 2011.

### **Ensure children and young people are safe**

The SSCB has made good progress on this priority outcome and the key deliverable for the Children's Trust for this business planning period. Key SSCB Inter-agency Safeguarding Children Procedures have been updated to reflect the revisions made in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010 and there is a rolling programme in place to review and refresh all SSCB procedures in accordance with national guidance, local trends, themes and lessons to be learnt from serious case reviews.

Road shows have been undertaken with managers and practitioners. Some procedures are due to be re-launched on the SSCB website whilst others already have their place. Work is also in progress to review and revise all of the SSCB information leaflets and to undertake an equality impact assessment. Significant work is also planned for 2011-2012 to work towards merging Staffordshire LSCB's and Stoke-on-Trent LSCB's procedures, in recognition of the need to provide all practitioners with one set of inter-agency safeguarding children procedures.

During the reporting period a number of documents have either been developed, are under review or have been revised:

- The SSCB Escalation Procedure (an action arising from a local serious case review);
- Active contribution to the Children's Social Care Services Medication Guidance; a framework to be used alongside medical policies across all Staffordshire County Council premises;
- A revision of the LADO leaflet;
- Adult Mental Health and Safeguarding;
- A revision of the Multi-agency Referral Form
- Responding to Fabricated Illness;
- School Safeguarding Policy;
- A briefing on the Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme;

- Support with the development of Staffordshire's Children's Social Care Services 'Critical Pathways' document;
- Draft SSCB Responding to Self-harm and Disclosures of Intent to Commit Suicide (an action arising from a local serious case review);
- The new SSCB Inter-agency Procedures for Safeguarding Children (Chapters 1-8) have been produced in draft and made available for wider multi-agency consultation. These revised procedures reflect the changes made to Working Together 2010, national guidance and changes to local processes.

The SSCB Inter-agency Training Strategy 2011-2014 was developed by the 1st April 2011 and was formally ratified by the Board in June 2011. This training strategy helps to shape inter-agency and single agency training pathways with the aim of ensuring that front-line workers and their managers receive the appropriate level of safeguarding children training. The strategy is intended to add value rather than replace workforce strategies in a wide range of partner organisations. This is a live document which will be responsive to changes in national and local trends and themes and the strategy will be refined and re-focused as a result of ongoing monitoring and evaluation processes. To view this strategy in full please go to:

[www.staffsscb.org.uk/SSCBWorkforceDevelopmentTrainingStrat.pdf](http://www.staffsscb.org.uk/SSCBWorkforceDevelopmentTrainingStrat.pdf)

**Ensure children and young people are safe from accidents on Staffordshire's roads and in their homes**

The SSCB website was developed during 2010-2011 to offer specific information and guidance for children and young people as part of the initial stage towards achieving this priority outcome. Whilst progress is being made against this objective, it is recognised that is an important piece of work that will need to be developed further during 2011-2013, as part of a broader approach to engaging and seeking the views and experiences of children and young people. It will be equally important for these views and experiences to be used to help to improve and shape the function and delivery of local services.

Good progress has been made on the range of materials provided which offer practical advice, guidance and signposting with the development of a parents' and carers' information page on the SSCB website.

**Enable children and young people, their families, carers and professionals to find it easier to get the information they need**

A targeted information and communications campaign was implemented and rolled out across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent in relation to blind cord safety for children under the age of five years old, following the tragic deaths of three young children in Staffordshire as a result of blind cord strangulation since 2006.

The development of a wider public information and communications strategy on 'what to do if you have a

concern about a child' has been developed during 2011 and will continue to run through to the beginning of 2013.

New service developments (such as Staffordshire County Council's Families First Service, the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) are now implemented and key agency restructures (within children's social care, the police and health services) have been agreed and settled. The Board can actively support the clear communication of changes on how the public and practitioners can raise a concern about a child or their family.

Good progress has been made with the revision of the SSCB website, with information and guidance web-pages on safeguarding children issues in place for children and young people. During 2011 - 2013 additional work will be required in order to develop this initial stage of improving the way in which the SSCB engages the views and experiences of children across the thresholds of services.

The publication and distribution of hard copy posters and leaflets to enable people to report a concern about a child has been carried forward as part of the wider development of a public information and communications strategy on 'what to do if you have a concern about a child'. This delay will enable new service developments to be implemented and key agency restructures to have been agreed and clarified, so that the Board can actively support the clear communication of changes to how the public and practitioners can raise a concern about a child or their family.

### Enable children and young people, their families, carers and professionals to contribute to making Staffordshire a safe place to live

The SSCB have worked hard to develop a performance management framework to strengthen the way in which the Board monitors the effectiveness of local safeguarding children arrangements. The framework incorporates a range of ways in which multi-agency information can be collated and analysed to help gain a better understanding of how safe children are in their communities and in services in Staffordshire. This framework is aimed at both strategic partnerships and managers; and also individual agencies. To view this framework please go to:

<http://www.staffsscb.org.uk/professionals/Publications/>

The development of a joint participation strategy with the Children's Trust was placed on hold as a result of the current Government's view that local authorities were no longer required to have local Children's Trust arrangements in place. In Staffordshire the work of the Children's Trust was streamlined and plans are currently being made to develop a new Staffordshire Health and Wellbeing Board which will begin to function in autumn 2011.

The Board has made good progress in disseminating information on the lessons learnt from learning reviews, serious case reviews and child deaths. Multi-agency workshops and training on lessons to be learnt from serious case reviews have been delivered to raise awareness of national and local key trends, themes and lessons to managers and frontline practitioners. This important role of the Board will

continue to be carried forward into 2011-2012 to help to widely disseminate findings across both the children's and adult workforce.

The relationship between the SSCB and the Adult Safeguarding Partnership for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent has been strengthened, with improved liaison between the chairs of the two Boards and also improved synergy and information sharing between the manager of the Adult Safeguarding Partnership and the SSCB Manager. There are plans to in place to strengthen this relationship further during 2011-2012 to improve the way in which we work together and to reflect Staffordshire County Council's vision for safeguarding people.

### Future SSCB Priorities for 2011-2012

- To review and evaluate the current structure and governance arrangements of the SSCB;
- To develop a robust SSCB performance management framework to help monitor the effectiveness of local safeguarding children arrangements;
- Develop a strategy of engagement to improve links between the SSCB, children, young people, their parents and carers;
- To coordinate and deliver a multi-agency SSCB training programme to promote a safe, trained and effective workforce;

- To influence operational and strategic practice with lessons learnt from local serious cases;
- To influence operational and strategic practice with lessons learnt from local child deaths;
- To work towards the development of a multi-agency strategy to reduce suicides and self-harming in adolescents;
- To align SSCB Inter-agency Policies and Procedures with Stoke-on-Trent SCB's policies and procedures;
- To be a responsive LSCB to national statutory developments and local safeguarding children trends and themes;
- To engage in activity which is targeted at groups of children and young people who have been identified as being vulnerable or where safeguarding issues have been raised, with a particular focus on;
  - The development of a Hidden Harm Strategy;
  - The development of a Domestic Violence Strategy.
  - Developing practice guidance and greater awareness about

working with highly resistant families;

- Safeguarding children in Mosques and Madrassahs;
- Safeguarding children who are at risk of sexual exploitation.

***Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board – working together to help to keep children safe.***

#### **Further Information**

A full copy of the SSCB Annual Report 2011-2012 can be found at:

[www.staffsscb.org.uk/professionals/publications/](http://www.staffsscb.org.uk/professionals/publications/)

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