

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

20th March 2009

Safeguarding children and young people in North Yorkshire

Purpose of Report

1.0 The Committee is requested to note the information within this report and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board Report attached at annex A

Background

2.0 Safeguarding Children remains at the heart of both the Children Act 1989 and 2004, Every Child Matters and is a central priority in North Yorkshires' Children and Young Peoples Plan. Since the conception of the Every Child Matters and the 2004 Act Local Authorities have been required to establish Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCB) which oversee the direction of interagency safeguarding strategy and policy to safeguard children. Critically the concept of *safeguarding* widens the scope of service delivery to include key preventative services as well as reactive child protection services.

The North Yorkshire LSCB is now established with a series of 5 sub groups supporting its work. The LSCB works through 4 Locality Forums - in Selby, Harrogate, Scarborough and Hambleton / Richmondshire – and these inter agency groups work to implement the LSCB Business plan.

Since the crisis in Haringey over the death of Baby 'P' there has been a significant rise (40%) in child protection referrals nationally, and CAF/CASS reported in December 2008 the highest ever recorded number of applications to the Family Court for care proceedings, a rise in that month of 66%.

Members will recall that the issue of Safeguarding was again raised at the last meeting of the committee in January and your Chairman advised members that this very important matter would form part of the agenda for the March meeting.

A Progress Report has been received from the Local Safeguarding Board which is attached at annex A for your information.

Recommendation

3.0 The Committee is asked to note the information within this report and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board Report attached at Annex A.

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Background documents: None

Appendices: Annex A Local Safeguarding Children's Report



NORTH YORKSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD

Report to Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

20th March 2009

Report and Update from The Local Safeguarding Children's Board

The purpose of this report is to:

- 1) inform the committee about progress against the LSCB Business Plan and
- 2) update the committee on any significant events or changes that have taken place since the last report

Background

1. NYSCB New Structure:

The new structures of the North Yorkshire's Safeguarding Children's Board (NYSCB) are now in place with most of the sub/task groups and forums having met and agreed work plans. Representation is appropriate and there has been a good response from partner agencies. A revised constitution has been agreed and with a more robust executive group, the NYSCB is well placed to take forward the Business Plan.

The Board has started recruitment of an Independent Chairperson.

2. Actions following the Baby P case in Haringey:

The Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) undertook a further Section 11 audit and an audit against the Haringey Joint Area Review as requested by Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCFS) in early December 2008. Responses were received from the key agencies involved in child protection and safeguarding with agencies highlighting areas of safeguarding that needed development.

These areas included:

- involvement with young people and families,
- development of audit and evaluation of effectiveness,
- safer recruitment and
- improved communication of the safeguarding agenda.

It is intended that the audit will now address the gaps highlighted by agencies and all the issues raised in agency responses will be considered.

4. Multi Agency Audit:

A multi agency audit was undertaken by the LSCB in response to the decrease in number of children subject to a child protection plan between

2006-8 (from 25 to 10 per 10K). The report considered child protection conferences and was unable to identify one single factor to account for the decrease. There was a large audit sample (the cases of 134 children were considered) and recommendations were made to improve systems.

Phase two of the audit is about to start and will consider children's cases as they are referred to Social Care. Again numbers of children fell during the period and the audit will attempt to look at the reasons for the change.

At the present time the numbers of children with a protection plan have increased to 15 per 10K.

5. Serious Case Reviews: Update

NYSCB has been involved with three SCRs, one of which was lead by North Yorkshire, the others by Hull and Camden. Ofsted have judged the reports as "adequate" in all cases and two of the Executive Summaries are now posted on the NYSCB website.

Action plans from all three reviews are being implemented by agencies in the county and briefing sessions are planned for staff to disseminate the lessons learned.

Ofsted require changes to be made of the SCR process with an independent chair appointed for each SCR that is undertaken. This is in addition to the independent overview report writer. NYSCB will retain the SCR Panel as presently constituted as this allows for continuity.

6. Annual Conference

The Annual Conference will be held on 13th May at Cedar Court Hotel, Harrogate with the theme of Serious Case Reviews.

7. Serious Childcare Incidents: Update

The NYSCB is required to establish a Serious Childcare Incident Sub Group to look into incidents where children have been harmed but which do not warrant a serious case review. Cases that attract media attention for example would be included.

8. Shielding Children's Data on Contact Point:

The NYSCB is now responsible for running the Contact Point Shielding Panel. This panel will decide on matters of shielding data of individual children based on a clear criterion. The pilot local authorities for Contact Point go live on 13th

March and so children who may then be at increased risk must be shielded before this date.

9. Work in Progress:

Key pieces of work in progress for the NYSCB include:

- Review of the NYSCB procedures
- Development of the Integrated Data Set with reporting from April 2009
- Review of the Allegations Management system – an external review is commissioned
- Implementation of the Training Strategy from April 2009
- Communication of the work of the NYSCB and engagement of young people in safeguarding strategies
- E Safety Strategy
- Strategy for children who are missing from home and car

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For Ann McMorris, NYSCB Manager.