



PLYMOUTH SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD (PSCB)
PSCB INDEPENDENT CHAIR'S REPORT TO THE
PLYMOUTH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S TRUST
MEETING - 9 MARCH 2012

I. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This is the ninth report from the Independent Chair of the Plymouth Safeguarding Children Board intended to inform the Plymouth and Young People's Trust Board of national and local developments in safeguarding and areas for further developmental work by the Trust in order to enhance the safety of children and young people.

2. PROGRESS ON CHALLENGES SINCE THE LAST REPORT

- 2.1 My previous reports identified challenges for partners of the Trust and I have included the following updates on progress to meet these challenges:
- 2.2 **Organisational changes within partner organisations and financial constraints.**
- 2.2.1 These changes continue to evolve with some associated change in personnel and structures. The new Social Enterprise Company for Community Health, Plymouth Community Healthcare CiC (PCH) has nominated Liz Cooney, a Director of the Company with overall responsibility for safeguarding to be their nominated representative on the PSCB. The Safeguarding Business Manager and I met with Liz recently for an induction and we are pleased to have a senior representative from the new organisation as a member.
- 2.2.2 As in my previous report the recruitment of a Designated Doctor for Child Protection has not yet been successful but assurance has been given that contingency arrangements are in place to provide cover, and that a permanent appointment is still the aim.
- 2.2.3 Consultation on the new proposals for safeguarding arrangements within the Police Service has been extended. I recently met the Assistant Chief Constable responsible for the service, Mr. Ross Middleton and with Detective Chief Superintendent Michelle Slevin along with my fellow Chairs from Devon and Torbay. We were given assurances that

there would be full discussion with stakeholders prior to any changes being made and reassured that safeguarding will remain a Force priority.

2.3 Young Witness Support Scheme

- 2.3.1 In my September report to the CTB, I drew attention to the fact that the NSPCC were withdrawing from this scheme and the Trust Board established a task and finish group to address this loss of provision. The proposed linking nationally with the Victim Support Scheme has now been confirmed. Chairs of LSCBs have received a joint letter from the NSPCC and Victim Support giving advanced notice of the intention to jointly develop a new support service for young witnesses across England and Wales. The hope is for the service to be delivered by Victim Support in 12 months time. I am sure the CTB will be concerned with this timescale given that the scheme which has operated locally has now come to an end. The issue was discussed at the meeting with the Police Service mentioned above and the Police are keen for the service to be reinstated utilising the existing trained volunteers. They are in ongoing discussions with the NSPCC, but there appears to be an issue about provision of support, supervision and guidance for the volunteers.

3. NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- 3.1 In my last report I noted that the Government, in response to the Munro Report had stated that the current arrangements for Serious Case Reviews would continue for the foreseeable future, including full publication and Ofsted evaluations. Ofsted have now published their new interim approach to Serious Case Reviews .From January 2012 evaluations will be “more streamlined” with a greater focus on “identifying and embedding learning”. Evaluations will no longer be graded. Findings of evaluations will be set out in an Evaluative Letter which will focus on judging the effectiveness and impact of learning from practice. These arrangements will continue until July 2012. The Minister had previously stated that the SCIE (Social Care Institute for Excellence) systems model of reviews was “not perfect” and needed further testing before it could be considered for a prescribed model. I am attending one of the National feedback sessions on where the SCIE model has been tested on 9th March and so have had to give my apologies for today’s meeting.
- 3.2 Ofsted have also published their interim inspection framework for the inspection of child protection in local authority areas. The intention is for there to be a joint inspection framework “during 2013/2014” which will involve Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission, HMI Constabulary and HMI Probation undertaking joint inspections. The interim framework will consider how effectively the local authority leads partnership working and how effectively local services contribute to the protection of children and

young people. All inspections will be unannounced and the inspection team comprised of 4 inspectors with social care experience and one with education experience.

- 3.3 The new Ofsted framework for the inspection of schools has also been published and was introduced in January 2012. Safeguarding is no longer a “Limiting Judgement” for the overall Ofsted judgement of a school. There are now four key judgements in an Ofsted inspection of schools around “achievement”, “quality of teaching”, behaviour and safety” and “leadership and management”. The school’s commitment to safeguarding will be inspected within the judgements for “behaviour and safety” and “leadership and management”. Ofsted has a clear statement that the requirement to evaluate the school’s compliance with statutory requirements on safeguarding remains.

4. LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS

- 4.1 Safer Internet Day was celebrated locally through a joint PSCB/Plymouth University event . The day was a practical fun day for children and young people, parents and carers and practitioners to explore the Internet and to consider how to stay safe. Participants included nearly 300 children from the City, drawn from early years settings, primary and secondary schools. Volunteers drawn from social care and educational courses at the University and from ICT programmes assisted, as did school staff and representatives from other PSCB member agencies including the Police, Youth Service, Fire and Rescue Service and Social Care.
- 4.2 Along with representatives from the PSCB, I met with the Vice Chancellor of the University and members of her senior team to explore other ways we can jointly work on safeguarding issues. The University has kindly offered their premises to host this years annual PSCB Conference which is to be held on Thursday 28th June 2012.

5. AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT TO DRAW TO THE TRUST BOARD’S ATTENTION

- 5.1 As I have mentioned in previous reports organisational changes, changes of personnel, subsequent loss of expertise combined with financial constraints remain a continuing cause for concern. It is therefore essential that all agencies maintain their stated commitment to keeping safeguarding as the highest priority. It places an even greater responsibility on the PSCB to monitor and highlight these issues and bring them to the attention of the CTB and the developing Health and Wellbeing Board. As I raised in my last report it will be important to define the relationship and reporting processes between the PSCB, CTB and the Health and Wellbeing Board and I will look forward to being involved in that process.

- 5.2 I have again highlighted the concern at the loss of the Young Witness Support Scheme and would urge the CTB to continue its efforts to resolve this problem locally.
- 5.3 I would also like to use this opportunity to record my thanks to the Chief Executive of Plymouth City Council, Mr Barry Keel, who has announced his intention to retire. As many of you will know Barry chaired the PSCB prior to the recruitment of an Independent Chair. I have greatly valued his support in my role and would like to thank him for his genuine commitment to safeguarding.

Jim Gould
Independent Chair of the Plymouth Safeguarding Children Board
March 2012