



PLYMOUTH SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD (PSCB)
PSCB INDEPENDENT CHAIR'S REPORT TO THE
PLYMOUTH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S TRUST
MEETING – 15 JUNE 2012

I. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This is the tenth report from the Independent Chair of the Plymouth Safeguarding Children Board intended to inform the Plymouth Children and Young People's Trust Board (CTB) 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 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.

- 2.2.2 As part of the consultation on the new proposals for safeguarding arrangements within the Police Service they have produced a set of nine design principles and are meeting with a number of focus groups throughout the Peninsula to discuss the framework of the review. Along with representatives from the PSCB I met with Police representatives from the Public Protection Unit on May 28th to discuss the rational and design principles for the review.

2.3 Young Witness Support Scheme

- 2.3.1 In my September and March reports 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. In my March report I also highlighted that the aim of the NSPCC to link nationally with the Victim Support Service had been confirmed and that Chairs of LSCBs had 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 March 2013. I shared with the CTB my concerns with this timescale given that the scheme that has operated locally has now come to an end. There were local discussions between the Police and the NSPCC taking place but I am unaware of any progress being made and would again urge the CTB to explore if any resolution to this issue can be found.

2.3.2 Health and Wellbeing Board

In my last report I mentioned that it would be important to define the relationships between the PSCB, the CTB and the Health and Wellbeing Board. The PSCB is due to have a presentation about the Health and Wellbeing Board at the June 22 Full Board meeting.

3 NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- 3.1 The consultation draft on the new Working Together document in response to the Munro Review was expected at the end of March but has not yet been published. Indications are that when it is finally published the guidance will be much shorter than the current version.
- 3.2 Ofsted has published their inspection framework for the inspection of child protection in local authority areas. This will be in place from May 2012. There is still an intention for there to eventually be a joint inspection framework which will involve Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission, HMI Constabulary and HMI Probation undertaking joint inspections. The newly published 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.
- 3.3 Ofsted has recently clarified its position in relation to the requirement for a three year rolling programme of Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks for school or college staff, stating that it is not necessary to have three yearly CRB checks carried out on staff who have unbroken service (no break of service of 3 months or more). It is however still recommended for agency staff.

3.4 The PSCB Business Manager and I have met with the Assistant Director of HR and Organisational Development from Plymouth City Council and representatives from the Human Resources Team to discuss their ideas on how best to advise schools and colleges so that safer employment practices can best be maintained given this very clear statement from Ofsted.

4. LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS

4.1 At the 22nd June PSCB Full Board meeting, Plymouth City Council will be presented with the Safer Employment Quality Standard Kitemark Award in recognition of the work that has been completed in this important area of safeguarding practice. Employment policies, procedures and working practices in Plymouth have been externally assessed and moderated by the PSCB Chair.

4.2 The Peninsula LSCB Chair's Group are exploring the possibility of a uniform data set of performance indicators for the four LSCBs to use. This would be of particular benefit to those agencies who provide a service across the whole Peninsula. The PSCB will examine the draft proposals and decide whether to adopt or otherwise.

4.3 The results of the staff surveys carried out as part of the Section 11 Audit process have now been evaluated and Chief Executives of all the agencies have been sent copies with evaluations that have been carried out as part of the process. Individual agencies will be expected to take account of the auditors areas of consideration and ideas for improvements that have been identified by their own staff. This years' Section 11 Audit will commence in November 2012, the Peninsula LSCB Chair's Group are currently exploring various options for the best method to use, including an option for peer assessments as an alternative to completion of the Section 11 paper audit.

4.4 At the request of the Peninsula LSCB Chair's Group, the other 3 LSCB's (i.e. Cornwall and Isles of Scilly, Devon and Torbay) have joined with the PSCB E-Safety Group. This is in recognition of the success the PSCB has had in this important area of safeguarding. The new Peninsula E-Safety Group will continue to be chaired and led by Plymouth.

4.5 The number of sub groups operating as part of the PSCB has reduced from six to four in order to maximise the best use of resources and avoid duplication/overlap of work streams.

- 4.6 The groups now remaining are:
- Learning and Professional Practice
 - Policy, Procedures and Safer Employment Practice
 - Serious Case Review
 - Child Death Overview Panel
- 4.7 The 2012/13 Business Plan is due to be agreed at the June PSCB meeting and work is underway on the PSCB Annual Safeguarding Report.
- 4.8 The 2012 PSCB conference is due to be held on June 28th, the subject being 'Safeguarding Disabled Children and children with complex needs'.

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

- 5.1 Previous reports have highlighted that organisational changes, changes in personnel with loss of expertise combined with financial constraints remain a continuing cause for concern. This report again raises the importance of defining the relationship and reporting processes between the PSCB, CTB and the Health and Wellbeing Board. The PSCB will look forward to being involved at an early stage in this process.
- 5.2 There continues to be a concern at the loss of the Young Witness Support Scheme and the CTB is urged to continue its efforts to resolve this problem locally.

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