



PLYMOUTH SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD (PSCB)
PSCB INDEPENDENT CHAIR'S REPORT TO THE
PLYMOUTH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S TRUST
MEETING – 14 SEPTEMBER 2012

I. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This is the eleventh report from the Independent Chair of the Plymouth Safeguarding Children Board, intended to inform the Plymouth 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 reports 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 have met with a number of focus groups throughout the Peninsula to discuss the matter. A meeting giving feedback to stakeholders is set for September 7th. I shall be attending along with other members of the LSCB and should be in a position to update the CTB on the 14th September.
- 2.3 **Young Witness Support Scheme**
- 2.3.1 In my September, March and June 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 drew attention that the NSPCC's intention to link nationally with the Victim Support Scheme had been confirmed and that Chairs of LSCBs had received a joint letter from the NSPCC and Victim Support giving advanced notice of their 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 previously operating 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.

2.4 Health and Wellbeing Board

In my previous reports I mentioned that it would be important to define the relationships between the PSCB, the CTB and the Health and Wellbeing Board. The PSCB received a presentation about the Health and Wellbeing Board at the June 22 meeting. It is clear that more work will be needed to clarify these roles, responsibilities and relationships and I will look forward to being involved in these discussions on behalf of the PSCB.

3. NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- 3.1 The PSCB has submitted a response to the consultation draft of the new Working Together document which was published as a result of the Munro Review. While largely welcoming the document, the PSCB do have some reservations especially around the move to more local policies and procedures which could possibly present difficulties for agencies which work across LSCB boundaries. Concern was also expressed about the lack of guidance about managing allegations made against people who work with children. The PSCB response also called for the publication of the NHS accountability framework for safeguarding children which is especially needed with the ending of the PCT and the development of the Clinical Commissioning Groups. It is also important given the increased number of health providers being created within social enterprises and the private sector. The PSCB felt that the 2010 Working Together document contained some very valuable guidance which has not been replicated in the new guidance. One of the key changes in the new guidance relates to the process of carrying out Serious Case Reviews using the systems approach methodology. There will be a need for a national programme of training to create a pool of suitably qualified reviewers to undertake this new approach. There will also be a need to train staff generally in this new approach, as frontline staff and managers are very much at the heart of the systems approach to Serious Case Reviews.

3.2 Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) have published consultation documents on arrangements for the inspection of services for children looked after and care leavers. In addition Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission, HMI Constabulary , HMI Probation, HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate and HM Inspectorate of Prisons have published their proposals for undertaking joint inspections of multi-agency arrangements for the protection of children. The PSCB are coordinating a Board response to these proposals.

4. LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS

4.1 At the 22nd June PSCB meeting, the Board received the annual report of the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) 2011/12. Concerns were expressed by PSCB members about the lack of paediatric pathologists in the peninsula. It was agreed that this should be taken up with the Strategic Health Authority and I have discussed this matter with other Independent Chairs in order to co-ordinate a joint approach.

4.2 The CDOP arrangements are commissioned by all four LSCBs in the peninsula and the service to be delivered from April 2013 is currently out to tender .The PSCB Business Manager and a senior manager from Children's Social Care in Plymouth, together with other LSCB colleagues in the peninsula will be involved in evaluating the tender bids. The CDOP arrangements remain a statutory duty for LSCBs within the new Working Together.

4.3 This years Section 11 Audit will commence in November 2012. I mentioned in my last report that the Peninsula group were exploring various options for the best method to use. The future proposals were agreed by the PSCB at the June meeting and are as follows:-

1. The web based on-line staff safeguarding survey will be completed in future every 2 years, commencing in 2014.
2. For the years between the survey, we will aim to move agencies towards an annual written declaration of compliance against the Section 11 standards. As part of this declaration, agencies can include reports and action plans from unannounced inspections, peer reviews etc during the reporting year.
3. If agencies choose not to complete a declaration as in (2) above, they must undertake a Peer Safeguarding Review or a full Section 11 Audit.
4. It is expected that all agencies will submit a declaration by 2016.

4.4 The PSCB Annual Report will be published by the end of September and will set out a number of challenges and issues for the CTB and the Health and Well Being Board to consider.

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

5.1 As I have mentioned in previous reports organisational changes, changes in personnel with loss of expertise combined with financial constraints remain a continuing cause for concern. As I raised in this and previous reports it will be important to define the relationship and reporting processes between the PSCB, CTB and the Health and Wellbeing Board and the PSCB 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 have drawn attention to the lack of a paediatric pathologist service. This can cause distressing delays for parents in discovering the cause of their child's death. It can also cause delays in care cases and criminal investigations. I would ask that the CTB support the PSCB in attempting to have this issue addressed.

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