



PLYMOUTH SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD (PSCB)

PSCB INDEPENDENT CHAIR'S REPORT TO THE PLYMOUTH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S TRUST

MEETING – 14 December 2012

I. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This is the twelfth 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 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 outlined in my last report there has been consultation on the new proposals for safeguarding arrangements within the Police Service. The South West Peninsula LSCB Chair's Group were updated on progress at our meeting on November 21st and this will also be presented to the PSCB at our meeting on December 7th. A Report is expected in December with final design reported in February 2013.
- 2.2.3 At the last PSCB meeting in September, Paul O Sullivan gave the Board a very helpful update on changes within Health Commissioning and Provision within the area. The PSCB will receive regular updates on implementation of the changes and any variations to the proposals.

2.3 Young Witness Support Scheme

2.3.1 In my last four 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 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. I understand there were local discussions between the Police (witness support) 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. I would ask that the Trust determine exactly what support is available locally to children and young people, when they are required to give evidence in cases.

2.4 Paediatric Pathology Service

2.4.1 In my last report I highlighted the limitations in provision of this service. The matter was further discussed at a Child Death Overview Panel Development day and the local Coroner has agreed to pursue. The four Independent Chairs from the south west peninsula have drafted a letter to be sent to the Strategic Health Authority and the Chief Coroner.

3. NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

3.1 The publication of the new Working Together guidance is awaited following the consultation previously reported.

3.2 I am attending the Annual National Conference of Independent Chairs of LSCBs on November 27th. Keynote Speakers are Edward Timpson MP the Children's Minister, Jackie Tiotto from Ofsted and Colin Hilton, Director of the Children's Improvement Board. I would hope therefore to update the CTB on current developments at the meeting on December 14th.

4. LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS

4.1 The PSCB has published the Annual Safeguarding Report. As required, copies have been sent to Chair of the CTB, the Chair of the Shadow Health and Well Being Board, the Chief Executive of Plymouth City Council, the Leader of the Council, the Chief Constable and the Chief Executive of the PCT Cluster/ Acting Chief Executive of the Local Area Team of the National Commissioning Board. Copies have also been given to the Executive Group of the CTB and discussed with them at their last meeting.

4.2 There are a number of challenges for the CTB set out in the Report. The LSCB has tried to identify local challenges in the recognition that there is considerable work already underway in the continuing challenges around domestic violence and substance misuse. The further challenges facing the CTB partners are listed on page 74 and 75 of the report. They list issues related to the following areas;

Section 11 Audit

Early Years Audit of Day Care Provision

Road Casualties

Multi Agency Child Protection

Audit of support to Child Minders

Child Sexual Exploitation

Issues identified in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

Children of Prisoners

4.3 This year's Section 11 Audit will commence in November 2012. The next online staff survey will be carried out in June 2013 with the aim of enabling the survey results to be used by agencies with their planning for 2014. The survey will also provide assurance to LSCBs around frontline staff and their managers safeguarding practice. It will provide feedback to individual organisations in respect of the views of their frontline staff and managers safeguarding practice and help to identify issues that need addressing. It is further proposed that this method be adopted by Safeguarding Adults Board for use with staff working with vulnerable adults. The survey will be available on line for completion during June 2013. Reports will be collated during July and August and the results distributed during September and October 2013. Agencies are asked to make all front line staff and managers aware of the importance of completing the survey.

- 4.4 The PSCB is embarking on a series of multi agency case audits which will involve frontline staff in facilitated discussion aimed at identifying good practice and areas for development. Agency senior managers are urged to mandate their staff to engage with this process. Two cases each month will be audited using this method.
- 4.5 The UK Border Agency (UKBA) has responded to a letter sent on behalf of the PSCB which expressed concern that some Language Schools were placing foreign language students with host families without necessary CRB vetting having been carried out. We enquired about vetting arrangements/requirements placed on these schools by the Home Office/UKBA and what quality assurance processes were in operation. It appears that there are different categories of Language Schools, but those who sponsor students to study in the UK are subject to requirements by the UKBA, who in turn assure compliance. However, the UKBA point out that not all language schools are registered sponsors and as such are not subject to these checks. The PSCB and the private fostering team are considering how best to enhance links with local language schools to explore safeguarding arrangements with them.
- 4.6 The PSCB is also exploring methods of improving contacts with private and independent schools in the City regarding safeguarding arrangements and advice.
- 4.7 Appointments have been made to the role of Lay Members on the PSCB and the two individuals appointed will now begin their induction process and work with their individual mentors drawn from existing PSCB members.
- 4.8 I have mentioned previously that the PSCB Safeguarding Business Manager, PCC Website Manager and I have been working with a group of young people on redesigning the PSCB website. This work is nearing completion and it is the intention that the new website will be operational by the end of December 2012.

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

- 5.1 I have drawn attention to the challenges outlined in the PSCB Annual Report and would welcome a report on progress against the challenges at each PSCB full board meeting.
- 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 and ascertain what support is currently available to children and young people.

- 5.3 It would be very helpful if CTB members could make it clear to staff within their organisations that engagement with the multi agency case audit process and with the Section 11 staff questionnaire are key elements in helping to improve safeguarding in the City.

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

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