

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, ADULT & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

TO:	HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD		
DATE:	13 December 2013	AGENDA ITEM:	9
TITLE:	Reading Safeguarding Children Board; Presentation of Annual Report		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR JAN GAVIN	PORTFOLIO:	CHILDREN'S SERVICES
SERVICE:	CHILDREN'S SERVICES	WARDS:	All
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. The Reading Local Safeguarding Children Board is the key statutory mechanism for coordinating how all the relevant organisations co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Reading and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do (Working Together To Safeguard Children 2013).
- 1.2. This Annual Report is being presented to Board to ensure members are fully informed about safeguarding children issues. The Annual Report has a wide distribution; it is sent to key stakeholders and partners so that they can be informed about the work and use the information for planning within their own organisations to keep children and young people safe.
- 1.3. Partnership working is a vital ingredient for an effective LSCB and this report contains information on some of the activities and achievements which have taken place that provide evidence of how this is achieved. Board members both champion and lead the safeguarding agenda within their agency and bring to the LSCB issues regarding safeguarding that relate primarily to their own agency, but which have implications for the co-operation between agencies and the scrutiny and monitoring role of the Board.
- 1.4. Appendices: Reading Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2012 - 2013

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 To receive the report

2. POLICY CONTEXT

- 2.1. The Reading Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is the key statutory mechanism for coordinating how the relevant organisations will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Reading and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do as outlined in statutory guidance Working Together To Safeguard Children 2013. This guidance presents a framework for children protection work with a renewed emphasis on the role of the LSCB in scrutinising and challenging local practice.

- 2.2. The annual report presents a mixed picture as all public sector agencies are facing reduced funding and many are implementing new structures with a loss of key posts and experienced post holders. New commissioning arrangements are in place in many service areas and the Board is aware that any period of major organisational change presents additional risks - there is however, a commitment among all agencies to prioritise safeguarding and to ensure the LSCB is an effective body.
- 2.3. There were five main key themes identified and agreed for 2012 - 2013; these were Child Sexual Exploitation, Vulnerable Children, Effective Early Help, Turn Around Families project and Welfare Changes.
- 2.4. Children's Services and to a lesser extent the Board, was subject to an Ofsted Inspection in early 2012 which highlighted the need for work on improving the health of looked after children. This issue has been prioritised and the latest assessment is that services have improved.
- 2.5. Reading's LSCB has continued to meet regularly over the past year and its key achievements in 2012-2013 are:
- A successful conference in 2012 focussing on neglect and it's effects on children and adults
 - Multi-agency audits completed with action plans and reports being produced as a result
 - Prioritisation of work on domestic violence, early intervention and ensuring robust and effective board functioning
 - Introducing a more robust Quality Assurance framework which ensures monitoring reports are presented regularly on key issues
 - The Board received a presentation on how drugs and alcohol services work to ensure that children of parents who misuse substances are safeguarded
 - Review of work on bullying with an audit designed by a secondary school pupils
 - The board received regular reports from agencies, as outlined below.
- 2.6. The Board maintained oversight of a range of safeguarding issues through regular updates and the presentation of detailed reports. These included
- Child Sexual Exploitation
 - IRO reports about children in care
 - Health of children looked after
 - LADO up-dates
 - Child Protection Conferences
 - Prisoners and their families
 - Missing Children
 - Private Fostering
 - Family Nurse Partnership
 - Domestic Abuse
 - Turn Around Families
 - Peri-natal Mental Health Service
 - E-safety
- 2.7. The Board has identified a number of challenges for 2013 / 14:

- Preparing for a potential Ofsted Review of the LSCB
- Reviewing the application of threshold criteria in practice
- Establishing effective arrangements to enable children and young people to participate in meaningful ways to the protection planning processes
- Monitoring of inappropriate referrals to Children's Services
- Scrutinising the provision of health services to children looked after who are in placements outside of the borough
- Identifying and monitoring agency rapid responses following the death of a child
- Developing the Designated Doctor service
- Agreeing a protocol with local Sexual Abuse Referral Centres and commissioners
- Monitoring police attendance at Child Protection Conferences
- Scrutinising improvements to services for children with disabilities
- Monitoring service development and delivery of Early Help
- Monitoring how Royal Berkshire Hospital Foundation Trust implements the new national standards on emergency paediatric care

- 2.8. The work of the LSCB in promoting the wellbeing of children and young people contributes to safer communities and improved health; it contributes to the council strategy to promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all.

3. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. As noted above the Reading LSCB is the key statutory mechanism for establishing how the relevant organisations will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Reading and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do (Working Together To Safeguard Children 2013.)
- 3.2. It is the responsibility of Reading Borough Council to establish an LSCB, to ensure its functioning and to provide an annual report

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. The Annual Report appended outlines the budget for the Board and how this is allocated.

5. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 5.1. None.