



Health and Wellbeing Board

7 January 2015

Report title	Safeguarding Children's Board Report 2013-14 Report of the Independent Chair	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Sandra Samuels Health and Wellbeing	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Linda Sanders, Community	
Originating service	Children's Safeguarding	
Report to be/has been considered by	Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children's Board	11 December 2014

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to:

1. Provide assurance to Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children Board that the respective agencies represented on the Health and Wellbeing Committee report annually to their respective boards on children's safeguarding;
2. Ensure all agencies represented at the Board have internal assurance mechanisms that can demonstrate their role and performance in relation to safeguarding arrangements for children and young people.
3. Note the report

1.0 Purpose

1.1 The Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children Board and the Health and Wellbeing Committee represent the aspects of the partnership agenda of the City and have a responsibility to hold one another to account. This is represented by a formal agreement recently signed by the Chairs of both Boards and is included in the schedule of background papers. The annual report of the Safeguarding Children Board offers a formal opportunity to ensure that this relationship in practice operates in accordance with the protocol. From the perspective of the Children's Safeguarding Board it provides an arena for challenge and an opportunity to seek assurances from members of the Health and Wellbeing Board that their constituent organisations discuss and review safeguarding at their respective Boards and, where relevant, scrutiny committees.

2.0 Background

2.1 Safeguarding Children's Boards are statutorily required to publish an annual report on the effectiveness of children's safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the local area. The Board is a broad partnership of key agencies who have a collective responsibility for safeguarding children and providing mutual assurance that the practice of safeguarding reflects jointly agreed policies and protocols. The board meets four times a year with much of its business conducted through a range of committees that report into the Board. It is expected that annual reports are presented to the Chief Executive (Managing Director in Wolverhampton's case), the Leader of the Council, the chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board and the local Police and Crime Commissioner. The annual report describes the combined activities made in respect of children safeguarded at a local level.

2.2 This report relates to the year 2013-14. It was signed off by the Safeguarding Children Board in December. There has been far less delay in the production of this report but it is intended that in future we shall be setting a deadline of the September of the reporting year concerned. Report to the Health and Wellbeing Committee would then follow accordingly.

3.0 Progress since last report

3.1 Board and membership and priorities have been reviewed and a revised Business Plan produced. An Executive of the Board has been established to help ownership of each priority and ensure the full Board is quickly appraised of any emerging risks and challenges in meeting our targets. The four key priorities are led and owned by different Board members. They are:

- Governance – Emma Bennett – Assistant Director Children's Services – Wolverhampton Council
- Front Line Delivery and Impact – Manjeet Garcha – Director of Nursing – Wolverhampton CCG
- Safeguards for particularly vulnerable children and young people – Supt Angela Whittaker – West Midlands Police – supported by Inspector Michaela Kerr

- Communication and Engagement – Stephen Dodd – Youth Opportunities Wolverhampton (YOW)
- 3.2** Although a list of key achievements is contained on Page 23 of the report I want to draw attention to the following areas of progress which will impact on our joint capability for keeping people safe:
- 3.2.1 There is now an established programme of multi-agency case file audits linked with briefing papers on lessons learned sent to local staff.;
 - 3.2.2 There are clearer lines of communication with maintained schools through the establishment of Schools and Safeguarding Group with representation from the learning communities of Wolverhampton Schools Improvement Partnership. This ensures more schools and their staff can raise concerns about any safeguarding issues relating to the wider partnership and head teacher representatives on the Board are better able to communicate with the institutions they represent.
 - 3.2.3 The Board, through the CCG is requiring an improved contribution from GPs to children's safeguarding and has taken steps to improve this;
 - 3.2.4 Children are better protected by operational and strategic partnerships that oversee strategies and organise actions to prevent, disrupt and intervene in cases of child sexual exploitation. This has been achieved through a reconstituted and improved committee to oversee this area of work;
 - 3.2.5 There continues to be a well-established multi-agency training programme which equips a range of staff to better identify the signs of possible abuse and respond appropriately to them. Take up of training is high and improvements to evaluate effectiveness of training are planned; and
 - 3.2.6 Through the *BeSafe* initiative we have started a programme to engage young people directly in order to determine what causes them to feel unsafe and to determine when professionals have formally intervened they feel safer as a consequence.
- 3.3** Although new governance and board arrangements have established a firmer platform for safeguarding children I consider more could have been achieved last year but for the significant levels of turmoil within many partner organisations. At a time of significant public sector budget reductions many organisations have undergone significant change. Not only has the Board had to respond to new and updated national guidance on safeguarding Children –in *Working Together 2013* it has had to do so when Board membership has changed significantly. Nationally the Probation Service has been completely restructured and divided in two. Similarly the NHS has changed both locally – with the introduction of Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) but also regionally. West Midlands Police have completely restructured its safeguarding arrangements both for children and adults. Wolverhampton Council has also changed aspects of its management arrangements and both the West Midlands Fire and Ambulance Services have changed the way they organise themselves in relation to safeguarding. In each case this has led to a change of Board representation and in the case of the Police service more than once. This has been a challenge both in terms of continuity but also in terms of identifying how to do more with less. I am now more confident in the stability of membership and am working with colleague chairs in neighbouring safeguarding board to see how we can form alliances that recognise

we need to be smarter in how we tackle similar problems and issues together rather than separately.

4.0 Financial implications

- 4.1 By the end of the reporting period the Board was becoming increasingly aware that funding to deliver the Board's priorities was a challenge. In the short-term member the CCG has agreed to increase financial support while a review of how we meet our priorities going forward and the resources required to do so is undertaken.

5.0 Legal implications

- 5.1 Health and Wellbeing Boards (HWBB) were established by the Health and Social Care Act 2012. They are intended to be a forum where key leaders from the health and care system work together to improve the health and Wellbeing of their local population and reduce health inequalities.
- 5.2 The Children Act 2004 required each local authority to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). It is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in each local area will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to ensure that these agencies are effective. It operates under guidelines known as 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'; the latest version came into effect from 15th April 2013.
- 5.3 Outlined in Working Together is the responsibility of the Chair to publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the local area. As stipulated in the related guidance, the annual report will be submitted to the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council, the local police and crime commissioner and is presented here for the attention of members of the health and wellbeing board.
- 5.4 Following discussions between the Independent Chair of both Wolverhampton Safeguarding Adults and Children Boards, and the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board, it was agreed that there should be a formal agreement outlining this relationship.
- 5.5 The attached protocol sets out the distinct roles and responsibilities of the Boards, the interrelationships between them in terms of safeguarding, and wellbeing and the means to ensure effective co-ordination between the all Boards.

6.0 Equalities implications

- 6.1 Within this report covering the period 2013 -14, there are no specific equality implications. However the Board's work programme for the current year includes a significant focus on ensuring we obtain greater assurance about the level of understanding of safeguarding children among the multiplicity of organised religious groups in the City

7.0 Environmental implications

- 7.1 There are no specific environmental implications.

10.0 Schedule of background papers

- 10.1 Annual Report of the Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children Board 2013-14