

**PRESENTATION OF DEVON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD (DSCB)  
ANNUAL REPORT**

**Report of the Chief Officer for Childrens Services**

*Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.*

**Recommendation:** That the Cabinet receive the report noting the progress made in safeguarding children in the County and plans to further develop that work.

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**1. Background/Introduction**

It is a statutory requirement for each Local Safeguarding Children Board to prepare an annual report. The annual report (appendix 1) has to set out the work of the Board and offer an analysis of that work across the partnership. Further, it is a statutory requirement that the Annual report is formally presented to Members.

**2. Main Text/Proposal**

**During 2016-2017 the Devon Safeguarding Childrens Board (DSCB) has:**

- Published the Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy, and worked with the DSVVA Alliance and Safer Devon Partnership to oversee implementation of the strategy and delivery plan
- Published the Neglect Strategy and established a neglect working group to oversee the implementation of the strategy and delivery plan
- Established a group focusing on child sexual abuse (CSE)
- Continued to focus on work around CSE and missing, including developing a Seldom Heard group to develop CSE awareness amongst disabled children and the LGBT+ community
- Changed the way DSCB is structured and governed to improve decision making and accountability
- Introduced and delivered inter-agency walkabouts to add value to our quality assurance work
- Delivered a very successful conference to 200 practitioners with Professor Marian Brandon as keynote speaker, with a focus on adolescents and risk
- Responded to and evidenced progress in relation to the Ofsted recommendations following the inspection in July 2015
- Worked with partners to develop a new model of partnership working in light of the Wood Review
- Undertaken multi agency audits on harmful sexual behaviour, domestic abuse where MARAC is a feature, adolescence and neglect and youth offending

- Developed a series of 'Best Practice Masterclasses' across the County
- Improved engagement and attendance at DSCB multi-agency training
- Overseen and promoted a new approach to Child Protection conferencing
- Quality assured safeguarding arrangements for Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers placed in emergency accommodation in Devon following the closure of the Calais Camp
- Self-assessed ourselves as having made good progress in all areas save for inclusion of young people and early help both of which are being progressed within our new partnership structure

The DSCB developed a challenge log in October 2016. **26** challenges were formally recorded during October 2016-March 2017. The challenges include:

- challenge to partners with regards to their level of involvement in the work of the Board, such as attendance at meetings and involvement in audits
- partner data being made available to the DSCB executive and sub groups for scrutiny
- assurance from the Devon Football Association regarding its response to the recent disclosure of child sexual abuse within football
- accreditation and safeguarding arrangements in language schools in Devon
- the number of children in custody in Devon
- staff training in acute trusts

The Board had been judged 'inadequate' by Ofsted, and there was a recognition that change was needed, so we redeveloped the Board with a new Executive and some added sub groups.

During 2016-17, the Chair of the Board sought to engage with and understand the broad safeguarding system across the County. The Chair has met regularly with the Council's Chief Executive, Chief Officer for Childrens Services, Lead Member and other key managers including senior colleagues in health and Police, colleagues in with both secondary and primary heads associations, colleagues in the independent reviewing unit. The Chair has also visited all the social work offices, a special school, the Atkinson Secure Unit, a MACSE meeting, all the sub groups of the Board and a number of the Best Practice Masterclasses.

More latterly Devon and its partners has moved to become an 'early adopter' of the core findings from the [Wood Review](#) (which critically examined the role of LSCBs, Serious Case Reviews and the Child Death Overview functions. The review made a number of recommendations including the need to 'replace the existing arrangements for LSCBs with a new, more effective statutory framework that sets out the strategic multi-agency arrangements for child protection').

Devon saw an opportunity to try and develop an innovative way of partnership working, which would lead to a more effective service delivery to children and their families. Over the last year a new unified model has been developed that seeks to change the partnership culture and separates out more clearly commissioning and challenge functions under the leadership of 3 key partners; namely the Local Authority, Health and Police.

A key component of the new model is the integration of the statutory LSCB functions into the new partnership arrangements ensuring that its statutory responsibilities continue to be fulfilled and an independent scrutiny function is not only retained but

enhanced and made more effective. The new arrangements will be in place from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017.

We now need to:

- Formalise the new partnership arrangements with the Children, Young People and Families Alliance
- Develop and Deliver the new Quality Assurance Framework for the Partnership including formalising links with the four Localities; develop the new data set; engage practitioners and users in quality assurance work and collectively develop the role of the independent chair within these new arrangements.
- Ensure all existing LSCB duties continue to be met across the Partnership
- Respond to emerging Government legislation issued in the light of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

### **Financial Considerations**

The DSCB is funded via a series of contributions from the partners. The budget for the Board is set out in the annual report.

### **Equality Considerations**

By definition, the work of the DSCB is focused on the most vulnerable children in the County, those who require the input of a variety of agencies, ordinarily led by Children's Social Care, to ensure their safety.

### **Legal Considerations**

There are no specific legal considerations in this report.

### **Risk Management Considerations**

This policy/proposal has been assessed and all necessary safeguards or actions have been taken/ included to safeguard the Council's position. No risks have been identified.

### **Electoral Divisions: All**

Cabinet Member for Children Services and Schools: Councillor James McInnes

Chief Officer for Childrens Services: Jo Olsson

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972: LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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