

Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire

Safeguarding Children Board (SSSCB)

Terms of Reference

In this document, a child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. 'Children' therefore means 'children and young people throughout'. (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018: p6)

Introduction

The Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board is responsible for the progress of the Board business priorities through the business plan and the production of an Annual Report.

It will authorise the policy process, strategy and guidance required to support Board priorities and effective safeguarding. It will scrutinise, challenge and maintain an overview of the effectiveness of children's safeguarding in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire. This will be undertaken through quality assurance activity, learning and development programmes and commissioning and overseeing Rapid Reviews / Learning Reviews as required.

The Board will be responsible for setting the strategic direction of travel and will task the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership to co-ordinate the activity to deliver on the new arrangements and identified priorities.

Strong leadership is critical for the new arrangements to be effective in bringing together the various organisations and agencies. It is important therefore, that the lead representative from each of the three safeguarding partners plays an active role. The lead representatives for safeguarding partners are: the Local Authority, the accountable officer of a Clinical Commissioning Group and the Chief Officer of Police (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018: Chapter 3).

Purpose:

The purpose of the SSSCB is to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire.

The SSSCB is the key mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in those areas will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do.

Key Principles

- *Effective Partnership Working* – we are committed to effective collaborative partnership working which will deliver the best possible protection of children and young people in the area
- *Focus on the Family* – our work will support families to enable their children to flourish and learn in preparation for a long, productive happy life
- *Committed to Early Help* - we recognise that those with economic, health and other disadvantages will need additional support to achieve the same outcomes as their peers. The recognition and consideration of adverse childhood experiences (ACES) will inform the decision making process enabling the right services to be facilitated to the right children at the right time.
- *Promotion of a Learning Culture* – we will operate as a learning system; open and ambitious to improve

Scope and Remit

The Scope of the SSSCB is based upon 3 broad areas of activity. We will:

- Be proactive to target particular groups of children and young people who may be vulnerable or in need and facilitate prevention / intervention at the earliest opportunity
- Lead in robust activities which aim to prevent maltreatment, or impairment of health or development, and to ensure that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care
- Be reactive in work to protect children who are suffering and/or at risk of suffering abuse

Aims

The SSSCB will focus on children and young people who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm and on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of these children. In doing so, the Board will promote activities that protect children and young people from actual significant harm and the continuing risk of harm that minimise the impact of harm and promote factors that enhance protection.

The SSSCB will work to raise awareness within the wider community, taking into account differing backgrounds and needs, and among statutory, voluntary and independent agencies, about how everybody can contribute to the wider safeguarding agenda.

Overall Objectives:

To improve the outcomes for children, young people and their families we will:

- Listen to the voice of the child and their family and utilise these voices in order to shape service provision and bring about effective change to frontline practice
- Encourage and support the development of effective working relationships between different services and professional groups, parents, carers and young people based on trust and mutual understanding

- Monitor the effectiveness of Early Help work and evaluate how this prevention / intervention is helping to bring about positive outcomes through a robust Performance Framework
- Evaluate how well local services work together to safeguard children, ensuring that any actions arising from inspections of safeguarding services are effectively implemented and that their impact is evaluated and evidenced.
- Improve the quality of frontline practice through the facilitation of high quality multi-agency training and development. Furthermore, that this training informs better practice and improves outcomes for children and young people
- Ensure that there is a level of agreement and understanding across agencies about operational definitions and thresholds for intervention.
- Improve local ways of working in light of knowledge gained through national and local experience and research, and to make sure that any lessons learnt or shared, are understood and acted upon.
- Raise awareness within the wider community of the need to safeguard children and promote their welfare, and to explain how the wider community can contribute to these objectives

Local Safeguarding Children Board Meetings

The SSSCB will meet in March, June, September and December each year.

The chairing of the meetings will rotate every six months between the four statutory safeguarding partners

The Agenda and papers for each meeting will be distributed seven days in advance of that meeting. All core members will ensure that they are fully prepared for each meeting, complete action/s as designated, and submit any written reports for meetings to the Board Manager when requested, approximately twelve days prior to that meeting.

Each key partner agency will have an agreed nominated deputy. Any nominated deputies will be similarly prepared and have full delegated authority.

All members will be asked to make any declarations of interest at the beginning of each meeting.

The notes and action plan from each meeting will be distributed within one month of the Board meeting Board taking place.

Formal links are established with other key strategic partnerships

The Local Safeguarding Children Board will develop, implement and evaluate an Annual Report which will incorporate the annual work programmes.

Membership of the SSSCB

The SSCB is the key decision making forum and will consist of:

- Staffordshire Police represented by an Assistant Chief Constable

- Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Commissioning Groups represented by the Executive Director of Nursing and Quality
- Stoke-on-Trent City Council represented by the Director of Children's Services
- Staffordshire County Council represented by the Director of Children's Services
- Stoke-on-Trent Lead Member for Children's Services (Non-voting)
- Staffordshire Lead Member for Children's Services (Non-voting)
- Chair of Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Group (Non-voting)

Invitations will be extended to Partners to present reports and other guests and when required to present information which is relevant to the Annual Business Plan and priorities and in keeping with children safe in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire.

Lay Members will operate as full members of the SSSCB, participating on the Board by providing an independent voice on behalf of their community. They may also take part in the work of relevant task and finish groups. In particular, Lay Members should help to make links between the SSSCB and community groups, support stronger public engagement in local child safety issues and help to promote an improved public understanding of the SSSCB's work.

Funding of the SSSCB

The SSSCB will be funded by contributions from the Local Authorities, Staffordshire Police and the CCG.

Accountability and Reporting

In order to bring transparency for children, families and all practitioners about the activity undertaken, the safeguarding partners will publish a report at least once in every 12 month period. The report will set out what we have done as a result of the new arrangements, including child safeguarding practice reviews and how effective these arrangements have been.

Sub-groups

The SSSCB will be supported to deliver its core objectives by a number of key groups. Regular reports from these groups will be submitted to the SSSCB to provide assurance and to escalate matters requiring intervention or the support of the SSSCB. In addition to those formal arenas established to support the Board, there may, from time to time, be a requirement to establish a working group to lead a specific piece of work and in such cases the accountability arrangements for these groups will be detailed upon establishment.

Dispute Resolution

Safeguarding partners and relevant agencies must act in accordance with the arrangements for their area and will be expected to work together to resolve any disputes locally. Where progress is insufficient, the SSSCBs agreed Escalation Policy must be followed and may also

include a formal notice which will be served on the organisation setting out required changes, time scales and consequences of non-compliance

Public bodies that fail to comply with their obligations under law are held to account through a variety of regulatory and inspection activity.

In extremes, any non-compliance will be referred to the Secretary of State.

Frequency of Meetings and Quoracy:

The meeting is only quorate if there is representation from the three key partner agencies.

In the event that the nominated agency representative is unable to attend the meeting, then it is acceptable for the nominated deputy to attend

In the event that quoracy is not met the meeting will still go ahead and the actions and decisions from the meeting will be ratified by the SSSCB.

Attendance will be monitored by the Board Manager

Review Date: xxx