

Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board

Report for Somerset Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB)

SSCB – Annual Report 2016-17

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	Seen by:	Name	Date
Report Sign off	Relevant Senior Manager /Lead Office (Director Level)	Mark Barratt	15.11.17
	Cabinet Member / Portfolio Holder (if applicable)	Frances Nicholson	15.11.17
	Monitoring Officer (Somerset County Council)	Julian Gale	20.12.17
Summary:	<p>The SSCB Independent Chair must publish an Annual Report (shown at Appendix A) on the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the local area; this is a statutory requirement under section 14A of the Children Act 2004.</p> <p>The purpose of the annual report is to provide a transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local services, identifying where improvements are required.</p> <p>Progress against the Board's four priorities (Early Help, multi-agency safeguarding, neglect, child sexual exploitation and children missing) is detailed.</p> <p>The report summarises key learning points from serious case reviews and other learning and quality assurance activity undertaken by the Board.</p> <p>The report concludes that overall, the way the SSCB and its partners have worked together to keep children safe in Somerset has improved over the past year. Many children and families are receiving more effective services, often at an earlier stage than previously. The Board is better sighted on the quality and effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements. However, there is still work to do to improve the quality and consistency of services, to strengthen early help arrangements, and to promote improvement in key areas such as neglect and the exploitation of children.</p> <p>In line with the Somerset Working Together Protocol for the Strategic Partnership Boards in Somerset, the sharing of this Annual Report by the SSCB with the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) aims to support effective joint working across the partnerships.</p>		

Recommendations:	<p>That the Health and Wellbeing Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notes the assessment of safeguarding and performance as outlined in the SSCB Annual Report for 2016/17; • supports the SSCB to promote learning from reviews across agencies and the wider community; (HWBB P1) • considers whether there is further guidance or support might be required to strengthen Early Help and support to practitioners across all agencies; (HWBB P1; P2) • considers whether there is further guidance or support would help practitioners identify risk to children where hidden harm may be a feature within the family; (HWBB P2) • supports partner engagement in delivery of the SSCB neglect strategy, action plan and practice guidance. (HWBB P2)
Reasons for Recommendations:	To continue helping strengthen arrangements for safeguarding children in Somerset and promoting children’s wellbeing.
Links to Somerset Health and Wellbeing Strategy:	<p>Theme 1: People, families and communities take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Theme 2: Families and communities are thriving and resilient.</p>
Financial, Legal and HR Implications:	None identified
Equalities Implications:	Children within vulnerable families, where multiple vulnerabilities may feature and children may be subject to abuse or neglect through hidden harm.
Risk Assessment:	NA

1. Background

1.1. What the SSCB Annual Report covers

The report provides information on the governance, structure and activities of the Board and an overview of progress against the Board’s business priorities for 2016/17:

- Early Help
- Multi-agency safeguarding
- Neglect
- Child Sexual Exploitation/Children Missing

The report is structured in such a way to highlight progress against the priorities and to demonstrate impact of this work. It describes:

- What was done

- What the impact was
- Next steps to be taken

The report also provides an overview of statutory Board activities and functions, including:

- Management of allegations of abuse made against people who work with children
- Communicating and raising awareness of how all parties can best safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Somerset
- Developing and supporting the workforce through training, development of safeguarding policies, procedures and other guidance
- Monitoring and evaluating the work of partners and local services
- Reviewing serious cases where children have been seriously harmed.

1.2. Key themes and lessons learnt this year

One Serious Case Review was published in 2016/17. This concerned *two* children, '**Child J and Child L**', who suffered serious harm as a result of non-accidental injury.

The annual report also:

- details the progress of two further Serious Case Reviews during 16/17: '**Child Sam**' suffered serious harm as a result of non-accidental injury; and '**Operation Fenestra**,' focuses upon a number of children who suffered serious harm as a result of being sexually exploited;
- outlines how the Board has conducted a number of **multi-agency practitioner learning events** in response serious incident notifications where clear opportunities for improving multi-agency practice were identified, particularly in cases where **hidden harm** were a key feature.

These reviews have helped the Board to highlight good practice and to identify where improvements were required, including:

- increasing workforce understanding of the vulnerability of unborn and new born babies;
- identifying and responding to risk to children in the wider family context, especially where families experience multiple vulnerabilities;
- sharing information with and across agencies more effectively to safeguard children.

In addition, the annual report outlines how learning identified from the Serious Case Review (SCR) '**Fenestra**', is beginning to assist the Board in strengthening its response to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Somerset.

Many of the key lessons identified will require all partners to:

- Support the workforce in their knowledge and understanding around issues of sexual consent and adolescent sexual activity
- Help the workforce develop skills for working with parents around issues or risk 'outside' of the family
- Develop education provision around relationships and raise awareness of CSE for both children, their families and the wider community
- Understand the need for children who may be at risk from or experiencing CSE to have sufficient and experienced support for their emotional and mental health problems
- Recognise that this is a complex area of work and strong multi-agency

collaboration across all partners is essential.

1.3. Other themes of note to highlight to the HWBB for this year include:

Positive progress has been made with **embedding Early Help** practice with children and families work across agencies, and SSCB acknowledges the HWBB's work in supporting this. The SSCB seeks continued support from the HWBB to continue to strengthen this area, particularly in helping the workforce across all agencies to identify risk within families where hidden harm factors or multiple vulnerabilities might be a concern.

Neglect will continue to be a priority focus in 2017/18 and the Board will continue to seek engagement from all partners with the Neglect Strategy and action plan, so that practitioners are able to identify and respond to neglect as early as possible. The SSCB seek assistance from the HWBB to ensure engagement from all agencies to address this priority.

Learning from reviews has also highlighted the need to support practitioners in their use of **escalation and resolving professional differences** and improve the quality of **information sharing** with and between agencies. The SSCB seeks assistance from the HWBB to support the workforce in continuing to addressing these issues.

2. Options considered and reasons for rejecting them

2.1. N/A

3. Consultations undertaken

3.1. N/A

4. Financial, Legal, HR and Risk Implications

4.1. N/A

5. Background papers

5.1. Somerset Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2016/17 (Appendix A)