

## Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership New Arrangements and Annual Report (2018-2019)

Lead Officer: Julian Wooster / Director of Children's Services

Author: Caroline Dowson / SSCP Business Manager

Contact Details: 07970108212

<p><b>Summary:</b></p>	<p>This report summarises the progress in implementing the new safeguarding arrangements for children in Somerset, as required by the Children and Social Work Act (2017) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018). This includes the merger of the safeguarding children arrangements with the Children's Trust Board, and the future role of the Health and Wellbeing Board.</p> <p>It also sets out key areas of progress and of future focus from the final Somerset Safeguarding Children Board annual report (2018-2019) for information and scrutiny by the Health and Wellbeing Board.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p>	<p><b>That the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. notes the new arrangements for safeguarding children in Somerset</b></li> <li><b>2. endorses the final annual report of the Somerset Safeguarding Children Board</b></li> <li><b>3. members share information on the new safeguarding arrangements with their organisations.</b></li> </ol>
<p><b>Reasons for recommendations:</b></p>	<p>The changes to the safeguarding arrangements for children in Somerset are the result of the changes in legislation in 2017 and 2018. The three statutory safeguarding partners for children (Somerset County Council, Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group, and Avon and Somerset Constabulary) have agreed that the Health and Wellbeing Board is the most appropriate group to provide high-level scrutiny of the twelve-monthly report under the new arrangements. This is one of a range of quality assurance and scrutiny arrangements under the Quality Assurance Framework for the SSCP.</p> <p>The annual report has been a statutory requirement under the legislation governing the previous Safeguarding Children Board.</p>

	<p>The Health and Wellbeing Board has received an update annually on this report for information and to ensure alignment with the Board’s priorities.</p>								
<p><b>Links to The Improving Lives Strategy</b></p>	<p>Please tick the Improving Lives priorities influenced by the delivery of this work</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="544 389 1465 770"> <tr> <td data-bbox="544 389 1289 517">A County infrastructure that drives productivity, supports economic prosperity and sustainable public services</td> <td data-bbox="1289 389 1465 517"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="544 517 1289 600">Safe, vibrant and well-balanced communities able to enjoy and benefit from the natural environment</td> <td data-bbox="1289 517 1465 600">x</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="544 600 1289 683">Fairer life chances and opportunity for all</td> <td data-bbox="1289 600 1465 683">x</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="544 683 1289 770">Improved health and wellbeing and more people living healthy and independent lives for longer</td> <td data-bbox="1289 683 1465 770">x</td> </tr> </table> <p>The merger of the Children’s Trust arrangements with the new Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership is a strategic partnership development, which links to the County Vision of partnership working for the benefit of children and families, with a focus on those most in need of safeguarding to promote the best possible outcomes for children.</p> <p>The partnership now has ownership of the revised Children and Young People’s Plan (2019-2022) via the Partnership Business Group, which met in its new form at the end of November 2019, and which is be comprised of chairs of the SSCP subgroups, as well as the Corporate Parenting Board and Early Help Strategic Commissioning Board. The Partnership Business Group will also strengthen links to other relevant strategic partnerships that have a role in promoting the well-being and safeguarding of children and young people, such as the Safer Somerset Partnership.</p> <p>The new arrangements for safeguarding children support better integration with health partners in line with the Somerset Four Year Efficiency Plan (Partnership and Integration) and strengthen the role of the Health Safeguarding Children Partnership subgroup. They also promote stronger communities by taking an overarching strategic approach to working with children and families (Think Family) to promote overall wellbeing.</p>	A County infrastructure that drives productivity, supports economic prosperity and sustainable public services		Safe, vibrant and well-balanced communities able to enjoy and benefit from the natural environment	x	Fairer life chances and opportunity for all	x	Improved health and wellbeing and more people living healthy and independent lives for longer	x
A County infrastructure that drives productivity, supports economic prosperity and sustainable public services									
Safe, vibrant and well-balanced communities able to enjoy and benefit from the natural environment	x								
Fairer life chances and opportunity for all	x								
Improved health and wellbeing and more people living healthy and independent lives for longer	x								
<p><b>Financial, Legal, HR, Social value and partnership Implications:</b></p>	<p>The current budget has been retained for the year 2019-2020. Together the three key safeguarding partners will identify efficiencies and are currently setting a budget for 2020-2021 (December 2019).</p>								

<p><b>Equalities Implications:</b></p>	<p>An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required as there are no service implications to the proposed merger of governance arrangements.</p> <p>However, in all communications and policies/procedures, due regard will be given to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of plain English</li> <li>• Any need for translation or interpretation services</li> <li>• Accessibility</li> <li>• Vulnerable Groups</li> </ul> <p>The SSCP Community (lay) members will also provide appropriate support and challenge regarding equalities implications.</p>
<p><b>Risk Assessment:</b></p>	<p>Risks to effective safeguarding of children by the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership will be managed through a refreshed Quality Assurance Framework which will incorporate high-level scrutiny activity (e.g. by the appointment of an Independent Scrutineer, starting in early January 2020, and future twelve-monthly reports) through to 'line of sight' activity involving practitioners, parents/carers and children and young people. The three key safeguarding partners will also use their own agency scrutiny functions to assure themselves of the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.</p>

## 1. Background

### 1.1.

Under the new arrangements, the Health and Wellbeing Board will continue to take oversight of the annual report from the Somerset safeguarding Children Partnership. The tenure of the Independent Chair for the Somerset Safeguarding Children Board, required under the previous legislation, ended on 30 September 2019. In December 2019, the three key safeguarding partners appointed an Independent Scrutineer to provide external scrutiny of the effectiveness of Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership's multi-agency arrangements in safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all children in Somerset. This post will be taken up in January 2020, and the role will include scrutiny of arrangements in place to identify and review Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews which replace Serious Case Reviews under the new legislation. In addition, a local quality assurance framework is being refreshed which sets the direction of overall scrutiny and quality assurance activity. In future, there may be opportunities to align more closely with other strategic boards (e.g Safer Somerset Partnership) and in the short-term the delivery groups are ensuring that appropriate links are made (e.g with adult services represented on the Child Exploitation group which has an extended remit up to the age of 25).

The final annual report for the Somerset Safeguarding Children Board (2018-2019) has been published, detailing progress and outcomes against the four key priority areas: early help, multiagency safeguarding, child exploitation, and neglect.

**1.2.** The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to note the final report of the Somerset Safeguarding Children Board for 2018-2019. During the year, SSCB has focused on four priority areas:

- 1) Early Help
- 2) Multi-agency Safeguarding
- 3) Neglect
- 4) Child Exploitation/Children Missing

Ofsted inspected Children's Services in early 2019, reporting from a multi-agency perspective that:

*'Appropriate and timely action is taken when children need immediate protection including outside normal office hours. Strategy discussions are convened at the right time for children in almost all cases. Professionals who know the family best are included and contribute their knowledge effectively. The risks to each child are routinely considered when there is more than one child in the family.'*

Embedding **early help** consistently across the partnership has remained a priority for the Board, both strategically and operationally, to ensure that the right services are offered to children and families at the right time. The Partnership will take oversight of multi-agency ways of working, such as Early Help Assessment, Team Around the Child (TAC) activity, and effective planning. Whilst progress has been made, there is still work to do so that responses to child and family needs at a non-statutory level are proportionate and consistent across the workforce, and take account of the lived experience of children.

**Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements** are more robust. The quality and consistency of multi-agency work is improving, resulting in better outcomes for children.

**Neglect** has been a priority for the Board for some time and continues to be so because of the serious impact it can have on the long-term chances for children. Training has been developed and delivered for large numbers of practitioners on identifying and addressing neglect. Resources to assist identification have been developed, piloted and made available. Serious case reviews have highlighted the importance of identifying neglect early and intervening effectively, therefore this remains a priority in Somerset.

**Child exploitation and children missing** has merited a subgroup of the Board

to work on improving the system for children at risk of all forms of exploitation; children missing from home, care or education, those at risk of child sexual exploitation, trafficking, county lines, or modern slavery or female genital mutilation. Additionally, there has been a focus on contextual factors outside the home which increase vulnerability, particularly for teenagers.

**Serious case reviews:** Two serious case reviews were undertaken in the period 2018 to 2019: one was published in autumn 2018 (Family A), and one will be published in early 2020 (Family B) highlighting the need for further work to identify vulnerabilities in parents, protect unborn babies and very young children and to act on neglect earlier. Two thematic reviews were also undertaken: one regarding suicides of young people in Somerset, which showed no rising trend and no factors which would make Somerset an outlier; and another reviewing the management of sex offenders against children. The learning continues to be embedded across the partnership in terms of the identification and intervention where there is long-term neglect, and the protection of unborn and very young children, and the importance of information-sharing.

Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board are also asked to share information about the new arrangements with all staff in their organisations, referring any questions back to the SSCP Business Unit as appropriate.

## **2. Improving Lives Priorities and Outcomes**

- 2.1.** The new arrangements address safeguarding activity for children will promote safety and wellbeing regardless of geographical differences to promote a safe community for children. (Priority 2).

With the strengthened links to the Somerset Plan for Children, Young People and their Families in Somerset (CYPP), Priority 3 will be addressed through a focus on early help and ensuring that children, young people and their families receive the right help at the right time. This includes a 'Think Family' approach supporting parents, which is a priority identified by children and young people, as well as supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people.

The new safeguarding partnership arrangements will develop and look to integrate further with other strategic groups, alongside oversight of the Somerset Plan for Children, Young People and their Families to promote healthy and independent lives (Priority 4) e.g through positive activities (Priority 4 CYPP).

### **3. Consultations undertaken**

- 3.1.** Following multi-agency consultation, the new safeguarding children arrangements were agreed through the governance arrangements for the Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group, Somerset County Council Cabinet and by Avon and Somerset Constabulary. There was also consultation with partners with responsibilities under Section 11 of the Children Act (2004) as well as wider partners who come into contact with children, and with children and families themselves.

Through consultation on the Somerset Plan for Children, Young People and Families, children and young people indicated that they wished to hold partners to account for safeguarding in Somerset via an annual face-to-face meeting, which will be facilitated by Somerset County Council Participation Workers.

### **4. Request of the Board and Board members**

- 4.1.** The Board and Board Members are asked to note the new arrangements for safeguarding children in Somerset, and to endorse the final annual report of the Somerset Safeguarding Children Board.

### **5. Background papers**

- 5.1.** The new safeguarding children arrangements were published on 26 June 2019 and they were deemed to be compliant with legislation by the Department for Education. They took effect in line on 29 September 2019 in line with nationally prescribed timescales.

The link to the new arrangements published in June 2019, and the September 2019 update can be found below, in conjunction with a structure chart:

- <https://sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Details-of-new-safeguarding-arrangements.pdf>
- Somerset Safeguarding Children structure chart  
<https://sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Safeguarding-arrangements-structure-chart.pdf>

A link to the 2018-2019 annual report can be found below:

- Annual report 2018-2019  
<https://sscb.safeguardingsomerset.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/SSCB-Annual-Report-2018-2019.pdf>

### **6. Report Sign-Off**

6.1 •

	<b>Seen by:</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Report Sign off</b>	Relevant Senior Manager / Lead Officer (Director Level)	Trudi Grant	23/12/19
	Cabinet Member / Portfolio Holder (if applicable)	Christine Lawrence	19/12/19
	Monitoring Officer (Somerset County Council)	Scott Wooldridge	Click or tap to enter a date.