

Children and Young People's Services Select Committee
19th June 2019
West Sussex Local Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements
Report by Independent Chair of the West Sussex Safeguarding Children Board

Summary

The Department for Education commissioned a Review of the role and functions of Local Safeguarding Children Boards. The review findings led to legislative reform in which three lead agencies: the health partnership, police and local authorities would work together to shape bespoke arrangements which responded to local need. This provides a newly formed partnership with the opportunity to implement the necessary changes identified.

In West Sussex, the recently revised legislative provisions are being used as a catalyst to reshape the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. WSCC recognises that the West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSSCP) needs to continue to improve our services to children, young people and their families.

The vision for the new Local Safeguarding Children Partnership is to develop "an assured Safeguarding Partnership, which collectively engages with children and their families, enabling them to thrive." This report sets out the changes.

The focus for scrutiny

The Committee is asked to note the changes to Multi-Agency arrangements to safeguard children in local authority areas and to comment on when further scrutiny of the new arrangements is required.

Proposal

1. Background and Context

1.1. This paper concerns revisions to statutory legislation which will result in the cessation of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs):

- Local authority areas are required to develop a new framework to safeguard children. Every area must publish their revised arrangements no later than 29th June 2019 and implement these arrangements within 3 months of their publication date.
- Under the new legislation, the local authority is no longer the lead child safeguarding agency. There will be three lead local safeguarding partners who hold equal and joint responsibility: clinical commissioning group, police and the local authority. The LSCB will be replaced by Local Safeguarding Children Partners, with local priorities driven by the three lead partners; they

must work with key agencies to form the most appropriate arrangements to meet local need in their area.

1.2 The Children and Social Work Act 2017 received Royal assent on 27th April 2017, amending the Children's Act 2004 to reflect the new Local Partnership arrangements described in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (WT 2018).

The Department for Education, (as central government policy lead) has made it clear that it expects local authority areas to use these revisions to statutory guidance to be a catalyst for change and innovation.

The change in legalisation arose from the Wood Report which the Department for Education published in 2016. The report looked at the role and functions of local safeguarding children boards and identified weaknesses in effective partnership working. The report recommended the abolition of LSCBs and their replacement by a stronger statutory partnership. This would enable local partnerships to move away from the highly prescribed model for delivering multi-agency arrangements and determine what worked best in their own local authority area.

2. Proposal

2.1 Implementation of the new arrangements includes the following key changes:

- The local authority is no longer the lead child safeguarding agency. There will be three lead local safeguarding partners who hold equal and joint responsibility: clinical commissioning group, police and the local authority. The Local Safeguarding Children Board will be replaced by Local Safeguarding Children Partners, with local priorities driven by the three lead partners; they must work with key agencies to form the most appropriate arrangements to meet local need in their area.
- Revisions to the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) which require West Sussex to work across an increased geographical footprint to achieve the required data analysis which will better enable a national learning landscape. A Pan Sussex steering group has been set up to deliver this.
- Changes to how the Partnership learns from incidents in which a child dies or is seriously harmed include the set-up of a new National Review Panel of experts to oversee rapid reviews of such incidents and undertake learning reviews which they deem to be of national significance.
- Independent Scrutiny: WT 2018 guidance enables development of new arrangements for ensuring robust scrutiny of local partnership work.
- Funding arrangements to cover partnership costs, including e.g. local learning reviews and the business support unit are to be agreed by the local partnership.

The new arrangements recognise the need to enable partners to optimise resources dedicated to partnership activities, both locally and Pan Sussex.

3. Resources

3.1 Multi-agency funding to support functions of the WSSCP business support unit and local practice reviews is expected to remain at current levels for the financial year 2019-20. The lead partners agreed that the local authority will continue to host the WSSCP business support team and is therefore responsible for the WSSCP business support team's budgetary expenditure and financial compliance. Moving forward the Partnership leads will agree funding with partner agencies for local and Pan Sussex multi-agency arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Factors taken into account

4. Issues for consideration by the Select Committee

4.1 We intend to publish our WSSCP Arrangements during week commencing 24th June 2019 on the WSSCP website. We will simultaneously share our proposed arrangements with the Department for Education. Our first Steering Group meeting will take place in early September 2019. This is in line with the requirement to transition to our new child safeguarding partnership arrangements within three months of the WSSCP arrangements publication date.

4.2 Sign off of WSSCP business plan priorities will take place in early August 2019 to inform the Partnership's work until March 2021.

4.3 The finalisation and sign off of a collaborative working agreement between the Health and Wellbeing Board, Safeguarding Adults Board, WSSCP and the Safer West Sussex Partnership to ensure effective multi-agency collaboration is close to completion with a joint partnership workshop planned for October 2019.

5. Consultation

5.1 There has been extensive consultation with the lead partners to develop our local arrangements; Board members have had an opportunity over the past year to feed into these arrangements. Current Board members have had an opportunity to read and comment upon the draft West Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements document.

6. Risk Management Implications

6.1 WSSCP provided legal advice around the WSSCP's financial and governance arrangements. The lead partners will regularly review the performance of the new partnership arrangements. The Chief Executive in conjunction with the lead partners will continue to manage the performance of the Independent Chair of the WSSCP.

7. Other Options Considered

7.1 The lead partners have looked at a number of potential options when determining the WSSCP arrangements, including the most appropriate way to ensure robust and constructive independent scrutiny of the arrangements. In view of the WSSCP's need to continue to strengthen its immediate and wider partnership relationships the lead partners decided in the short term to continue to deploy an Independent Chair to fulfil the scrutineer role.

7.2 The Independent Chair is also a member of the WSCC CSC Improvement Board. This linkage is essential; to ensure that identified multi-agency work requiring further development is underpinned by an aligned approach to improvement delivery.

8. Equality Duty

8.1 The WSSCP arrangements are compliant with partner agencies' responsibilities under the Equality Duty; the arrangements will remain under annual review as a minimum requirement and will be updated when appropriate.

9. Social Value

9.1 The WSSCP will provide a retrospective annual report in 2020, covering September 2019 to March 2020, which will describe and evidences the Social Value of partner's activity throughout the county.

10. Crime and Disorder Implications

10.1 None

11. Human Rights Implications

11.1 None

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Appendix 1: WSSCP arrangements document.

Background Papers (documents which are referred to in the report):

[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#)