



Report of the Director of Children's Services

South Leeds (Outer) Area Committee

Date: Monday 30th November 2009

Subject: Safeguarding and Integrated Working

Electoral Wards Affected:

All

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Council
Function

Delegated Executive
Function available
for Call In

Delegated Executive
Function not available for
Call In Details set out in the
report

Executive Summary

This cover report introduces a short presentation about two key priorities of the Leeds Children and Young People Plan – safeguarding and integrated working. Both of these were highlighted in the recent unannounced inspection of Children's Services. We now need to advance at pace changes in integrated working and the strengthening of safeguarding arrangements in the city.

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1. In the light of an announcement in November 2009 on the inspection of Children's Services, the content of the presentation attached to this report has been agreed with the Executive Member for Learning, for Children's Services, and the Elected Member Children's Champions. The presentation is intended to provide an opportunity for members of the Area Committee to comment on multi-agency service development and to consider how we should take this work forward with the Area Committee and the Children's Champion.

2. Background

2.1. Reports to Area Committees in December 2008 outlined a proposal to revise locality children's trust arrangements and proposed the development of an elected member Children's Champion for Area Committees. These developments have rapidly progressed with now five Children's Services teams in place at a Wedge level across the city supporting the development of some thirty Extended Service Clusters in delivering priorities locally.

2.2. Against the new OfSTED framework, the Local Authority must demonstrate evidence of leadership by elected members to safeguard and promote the well-being of

children and young people. Ten Children's Champions have been nominated and two members (one Champion from the inner and one Champion from the outer area committee) have joined each of the five local children's services partnerships at that wedge level.

3. **Main Issues**

3.1 The unannounced inspection of the Authority by OFSTED on July 21/22 2009 found that -

- **The response to child protection referrals does not meet statutory guidance and does not ensure that children are adequately safeguarded**
- **During the initial reading of records, children were identified as having been left at potential risk of serious harm**
- **Inconsistent assessments by Children and Young People's Social Care**
- **Inconsistent referrals from agencies**

3.2 The priority actions that were identified in response to these findings relate to social care practice and earlier intervention and prevention to reduce the number of referrals into social care. The findings have served to reinforce the direction of travel that has emerged from the papers in December 2008 and the need to implement these changes quickly across the city building on the progress in the past year. The local actions being taken to address the priorities for immediate action are articulated in the presentation.

4. **Implications for Council Policy and Governance**

The role of elected members in extended services clusters and area children services groups are being considered within emerging proposals about locality governance arrangements.

5. **Legal and Resource Implications**

Actions identified in the presentation are being undertaken through the remodeling of existing staff.

6. **Recommendations**

The Area Committee is requested to-

1. Consider and comment on the content of the presentation
2. Explore how they may wish to take forward any issues with their Area Committee Children's Champion

Background Papers:

1. Revised Children's trust arrangements for improved locality working, Shaid Mahmood, December 2008
2. Local Children and Young People's priorities, Shaid Mahmood, December 2008
3. Annual unannounced inspection of contact referral and assessment arrangements within Leeds City Council's Children's Services, OfSTED, 19 August 2009

Appendices: South Safeguarding and Integrated Working Presentation