



Sandwell Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB)

2016/17 Annual Report

Audrey Williamson - Independent Chair



A Board in Challenging Circumstances



- Aug 2016: John Harris, the previous Independent Chair left
- Oct 2016: Direction to the Council to set up a Trust
- Jun 2017: Audrey Williamson commences role as Chair
- Deputy Chair, Claire Parker, covered the post on behalf of the Board in the intervening period.
- Unprecedented pressures on public finances
- A period of national policy changes including to the focus and remit of safeguarding boards



What's working well?



- A Peer Review of the SSCB undertaken by the LGA found that the Board was meeting its statutory duties
- Interface with the schools sector has improved with the Designated Safeguarding Practitioners (DSP) forum becoming more embedded and robust
- Sandwell LSCB successfully led the regionalisation of safeguarding procedures with eight other Local Authority areas – <http://westmidlands.procedures.org.uk/>
- Improved performance data
- Work commenced to improve engagement with faith, culture and emerging communities



What are we concerned about?

- Impact of the Board's work on frontline practice and how this is evidenced
- Pace of progress with community engagement and acting on the voice of the child
- Increased referrals to Childrens Social Care with the presenting need of *neglect* (a theme also reflected in recent SCRs and significant incidents)
- Supporting the transition to a Childrens Trust
- Ensuring the partnership delivers high quality "core business"



Learning from SCRs

- The voice of the child needs to be *actively* listened to
- The long term impact of neglect needs to be acknowledged and recognised
- Communication between agencies needs to be strengthened
- Culture and relationships need to be respected
- There is a need to strengthen the multi-agency response to CSE
- Care planning, placements and transition for vulnerable young people needs to be more robust



Learning from Audit

Four multi-agency audits in respect of Neglect; CSE & Missing, Domestic Abuse and Early Help and the role of Lead professional were coordinated during the year. Learning notes for each audit were disseminated to the partnership and made available on the SSCB website.

The key learning points from the four audits were:

- Understanding Cultural and identity Issues
- Case recording
- Coordinating Services Effectively
- Considering Family History
- Referrals to other services
- Training



SSCB Strategic Priorities



2017 - 2018

Strategic Priority 1

SSCB **communicates effectively** to ensure that the work of the Board is well publicised, that learning is disseminated and that the voice of children, young people, practitioners and the wider community (including minority groups and faith groups) are able to influence the Board's work

Strategic Priority 2

SSCB is assured that **effective arrangements are in place** for responding to key safeguarding risks including early help, child sexual exploitation (abuse), neglect, domestic abuse, mental health of children and young people and that there is consistently good practice across safeguarding services

Strategic Priority 3

SSCB has a **clear understanding of the effectiveness of the safeguarding system** in Sandwell and can evidence how this is used to influence the Boards priorities



What Happens Next

10-Point Action Plan



Action	Priority	Due Date
1. Deliver a community engagement event to work more closely with Sandwell's diverse communities	Priority 1	Dec 2017
2. Develop a Safeguarding Board Communications Strategy	Priority 1	Mar 2018
3. Board members to undertake a 'Walk the Floor' exercise to raise the visibility and influence of SSCB	Priority 1	Mar 2018
4. Be assured of the effectiveness of Sandwell's refreshed Early Help strategy	Priority 2	Mar 2018
5. Establish a time-limited neglect working group to improve how the partnership work with families who experience neglect	Priority 2	Mar 2018
6. Refresh the Safeguarding Board's threshold document	Priority 2	Dec 2017
7. Robustly scrutinise performance information relating to Initial Child Protection Conferences and Core Group meetings (following a recent SCR)	Priority 3	Mar 2018
8. Undertake a comprehensive Section 11 audit with returns being rigorously analysed and challenged	Priority 3	Dec 2017
9. Develop a plan to establish new safeguarding arrangements in preparation for the replacement of LSCBs	Priority 3	Mar 2017
10. Undertake purposeful consultation with children and young people in order to directly hear their voice (this will include a 'takeover session' of the Board; working with the SHAPE Forum to understand the experiences of children who use services; eliciting the child's experience through the Board's audit work).	Priority 1 & 3	Mar 2018