

**Minutes of the Children's Services and Education
Scrutiny Board**

**13th November, 2017 at 5.00 pm
at the Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

Present: Councillor Underhill (Chair);
Councillors Allen, Ashman, Preece and Rouf,
Shaeen, White.

Apologies: Councillors Hickey, Phillips, and Reverend P
French.

21/17 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 11th
September, 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.

22/17 **Improved careers guidance in schools**

The Post 16 Manager advised that the representative from Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy (OSCA) was unable to attend the meeting due to ill health and the presentation relating to Quality in Schools Award would be deferred to a future meeting.

The Post 16 Manager provided an update relating to careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) strategy. He advised that two secondary schools in Sandwell had been awarded the Gold standard award, six had received other awards, 12 were registered for awards and that a further three schools were interested in taking awards forward. He confirmed that a further report would be provided to the Board in March 2018 when there would be more to report about progress and how the service was organised and managed.

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Resolved that an update and presentation relating to Quality in Schools Award for the quality of careers advice be requested the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board in March 2018.

23/17 **Sandwell Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) Annual Report**

The Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Sandwell Children's Board provided a presentation of the Sandwell Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2016-17.

The presentation outlined the following:

- Key milestones and challenges leading to the present position;
- What was working well;
- What were the concerns;
- What had been learned;
- The 2017-18 strategic priorities
- What happens next – the 10-point strategic plan.

The Safeguarding Board Chair advised that she had been in post since June 2017 and that the next 12 months would bring change to the safeguarding arrangements. She advised that the Local Authority, Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the Police would be tasked to develop a safeguarding plan and that the Safeguarding Board would no longer exist under plans by the Department for Education (DfE). She clarified that once the new arrangements were published there would be 18 months to implement them and that this would probably come into effect in Sandwell in 2019.

In response to questions the Safeguarding Board Chair advised that the current Ofsted re-inspection did not include Safeguarding Board but that she would be interviewed by Ofsted as part of their process. She advised that Sandwell Safeguarding Team had led on regionalisation of safeguarding procedures with eight other Local Authorities to progress improved performance.

In response to questions about engaging with churches and community organisations to reach out to hard to reach communities the Safeguarding Board Chair advised that there was a Community Engagement Group led by the senior police officer on the Safeguarding Board to facilitate the faith partnerships, but progress has been slow but an event is planned to engage more fully with

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groups across Sandwell. . She advised that she would attend this event in December 2017.

The Independent Chair advised that in a twelve-month period there had been a lot of training and multiagency work to make improvements. The Chair agreed to share the structure and guidance note on the structure and purpose of the Safeguarding Board with the Scrutiny Board Members.

The Scrutiny Board Chair highlighted a previous request from the Scrutiny Board to receive evidence of actions and learning from serious case reviews (SCR). The Independent Chair agreed it would be useful to share learning with the Scrutiny Board and that a recent case had detailed good practice and learning as part of the review. The Chair agreed to bring this detail to the 8 January 2018 Scrutiny Board meeting.

In response to questions about levels of deprivation and instances of the safeguarding cases the Independent Chair clarified that there was not always clear correlation of deprivation and safeguarding cases. She confirmed that there would be more information available to Scrutiny Board in the Sandwell refreshed Early Help Strategy and advised that there was a vibrant voluntary sector engaged in early help in Sandwell. The Chair requested that the Early Help Strategy be circulated to the Scrutiny Board.

Resolved

- 1) That the Scrutiny Board receive the 2016-17 Sandwell Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report.
- 2) That learning from Serious Case Reviews be presented to the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board on 8 January 2018.
- 3) That the Sandwell Early Help Strategy be circulated to the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board.

24/17

Vice-Chairs Updates

The Board was advised that the Fostering Work Group had met to agree the scope of the work to be undertaken when evidence gathering and the content of a survey to 174 foster carers.

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The Board highlighted the need to consider statistical information, the way Sandwell recruits foster carers and the support of foster carers in their role. It was acknowledged that the Council does not offer the same as private foster care agencies and that the difference in payment and private foster carers offer should be considered as part of the work groups review.

25/17 **Update on the Children's Trust**

The item was withdrawn from the agenda due to presenting officers being delayed in an Ofsted meeting.

(Meeting ended 5.55 pm)

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