

Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Thursday 04 January 2024

Staffordshire Safeguarding Annual Report (SSCB) 2022-2023

Recommendation

I recommend that the Committee:

- a. Members are asked to receive the report to understand what the safeguarding partners of the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board (hereafter referred to as the SSCB) have done as a result of the arrangements, including on child safeguarding practice reviews, and how effective these arrangements have been in practice. Members are asked to consider or comment on the progress that the Board has made since the last annual report was presented to the committee in December 2021. This SSCB Annual Report sets out the progress made by the partnership during 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023.

Local Member Interest:

N/A

Report of: Mr Ian Vinall, Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board Independent Chair and Scrutineer.

Summary

What is the Overview and Scrutiny Committee being asked to do and why?

1. The SSCB are required to report annually on the progress made by the 3 statutory safeguarding partners to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to enable robust Member scrutiny of its statutory functions. SSCB Annual Reports provide a transparent, public account of the work of the partnership during 2022-2023.

Report

2. The SSCB works together in partnership to safeguard and promote the welfare of children across areas of safeguarding activity that consider the need to promote equality of opportunity and to meet the diverse needs of all children living in our communities. Specifically:

- a. Engage partner agencies to set the strategic direction for safeguarding all children;
 - b. Identify and prevent harm and impairment of health or development and help ensure that all children are provided with safe and effective care as they are growing up;
 - c. Lead and coordinate on proactive work to target vulnerable groups;
 - d. Lead and coordinate on responsive work to protect children suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm;
 - e. Lead and coordinate statutory rapid reviews and child safeguarding practice reviews; and
 - f. Lead and coordinate the development and delivery of multi-agency safeguarding training.
3. The objectives of the Board are pursued through core statutory functions which are set out within the Children Act 2004 and the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (soon to be revised). These core functions are achieved through the work of the Board's subgroup structure. Each subgroup is responsible for measuring its performance against an annual work plan, which is derived from the SSCB Business Plan. Members of the Board and Scrutiny and Assurance group monitor the effectiveness of the work completed.
4. Membership of the SSCB is set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and the SSCB published arrangements document. Organisations that include local authority, police, and health (specifically the Integrated Care Board) are required to cooperate with the local authority in the establishment and operation of the Board and have shared responsibility for the effective discharge of its functions. The Staffordshire County Council Cabinet Member for Children and Young People also attends the Board as a participating observer.
5. The governance arrangements of the SSCB have been the subject of significant review since 2019 and are in line with the current statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. The Board is confident that it is fully compliant with the statutory function requirements for local safeguarding children partnerships. The statutory guidance is under review following publication of the government's plans, outlined in Stable Homes, built on love with a commitment to transform children's social care. This will bring about significant changes to the local arrangements and the safeguarding partners will be afforded greater clarity about what is required of them individually and how they need to work in partnership with each other to deliver effective services. It is anticipated that Working Together 2023 will be published in the autumn of 2023.

6. Since the last report to the Committee the SSCB continues to make steady progress on a wide range of objectives through effective local partnership working, despite the legacy challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic, the economic climate, and agency restructures. This includes engaging in activity which is targeted at groups of children and young people who have been identified as being vulnerable due to criminal exploitation, and neglect. The information provided in the annual report highlights some of the most noticeable achievements in respect of the priority areas and work undertaken with partner agencies.

Link to Strategic Plan

7. The work of the SSCB contributes to and supports the values and principles detailed in the Staffordshire County Council's Strategic plan.

Link to Other Overview and Scrutiny Activity

8. The work of the SSCB links to Committee's overview of the local authority's Children's Social Care arrangements.

Community Impact

9. Not required, as there is no changes to be made to policy, decision or function that would substantially impact staff, service users, the economy, the environment, climate change, health and care or a community.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2022/23

Contact Details

Director for Children and Families: Neelam Bhardwaja (**LA Statutory Safeguarding Partner**)

Report Author: Lynne Milligan (on behalf of the SSCB)
Job Title: Children and Families Partnership Boards manager
Telephone No.: 01785 854572
E-Mail Address: lynne.milligan@staffordshire.gov.uk