

Solihull Local Safeguarding Children Board Change Project Newsletter November 2018



Welcome to the first edition of the Solihull LSCB Change Project newsletter. Please do contact us if you have any queries or questions.

Introduction

Significant changes to local multi-agency children's safeguarding arrangements have recently been established through the Children and Social Work Act 2017. The Act creates new duties for the local authority, clinical commissioning groups and police to make arrangements locally to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area. These changes are now reflected in the new 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' statutory guidance published in July 2018.

The three **safeguarding partners** are now required to set out their arrangements for how they will work with each other and with any **relevant agencies** whose involvement they consider may be required to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in particular cases. These arrangements must be published by June 2019 and implemented by September 2019.

The local impact of the proposed changes to multi-agency arrangements was considered by Solihull Local Safeguarding Children Board members at a development session held on 16 January 2018, which focused on how Solihull partners might respond to these changes and the opportunities they may present to improve on the effectiveness of the current Board arrangements. This was done by considering the range of current Solihull LSCB activities, and their effectiveness in supporting the delivery of efficient and effective child safeguarding arrangements.

A decision was taken very early by the Solihull Local Safeguarding Children Board that all partners who are currently members of the Board will be considered as a 'relevant agency' and remain part of the new arrangements. This is in recognition of the current strength of partnership working in Solihull, and the important contribution all Board members make to keeping children safe within the borough.

Our Vision

Our vision for these new arrangements is that they will deliver local children's safeguarding partnership arrangements in Solihull which supports and enables local agencies to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. We shall achieve this by ensuring that we create a system where:

- Excellent practice is the norm
- Partner agencies hold one another to account effectively
- There is early identification of 'new' safeguarding issues
 - Learning is promoted and embedded
 - Information is shared effectively
- The public can feel confident that children are protected from harm

Our Plan

Following those early discussions in January 2018 a proposal for the future safeguarding children partnership arrangements in Solihull was presented to Board members. This proposal was for a model based on continuous learning, with a greater focus on the partnership priorities and addressing identified areas of improvement, and therefore a more effective use of partners' time and resources.

Within this proposal the activities of the Board were grouped into two distinct categories, the first being 'assurance and review', and the second being 'delivery and response'. The 'assurance and review' activities will incorporate the very strong aspects of current arrangements such as the multi-agency audit activity, together with the statutory responsibilities such as Section 11 audits and learning from safeguarding reviews, whilst the 'delivery and response' activities will ensure that assurance and review activity translates into improved services and better outcomes for children and young people. The proposed model is therefore intended to promote a more dynamic and flexible approach to continuous improvement to safeguarding arrangements.

All of the above will be overseen by a Local Safeguarding Children Partnership meeting at a strategic level. This will replace the current Local Safeguarding Children Board.

The Project Steering Group

To oversee the development and implementation of these new arrangements, a Project Steering Group has been formed. This group is accountable to the Local Safeguarding Children Board. It met for the first time on 11 October 2018, and next meets on 6 November.

The Project Steering Group comprises of representatives from each of the Safeguarding Partners as well as representatives from a number of Relevant Agencies.

Early Adopters

Although all areas must have their new safeguarding arrangements published by the end of June 2019 and in place by the end of September 2019, Solihull is aiming to have our arrangements finalised by 31 March 2019 and functioning by June.

This ambitious timescale has allowed us to apply to the Department of Education for inclusion in their 'Early Adopter' programme. This programme offered funding to support areas that were willing to move to their new arrangements well before the required date of September 2019, on the understanding that the activity would be monitored by the Department of Education and any learning shared more widely as guidance for change in other areas. We were successful in our bid and are now working with Department of Education representatives in developing our new arrangements.

Applicants were asked to specify the particular element(s) of the new requirements on which they would be focusing. Solihull have identified addressing local practice challenges, working with schools and other educational providers and arrangements for independent scrutiny as the three areas where our proposed model is likely to offer national learning. These have been accepted by the Department of Education, who have commissioned the National Children's Bureau (NCB) to work with the local 'Early Adopter' areas on their behalf.

Next Steps

All work within the 'Early Adopter' programme must be completed by 30 November 2018, so by necessity there is much to do. Key tasks for the coming month are;

1. Consult with other Solihull partnerships on the implications of change to them, and how we can ensure our close working relationships continue under the new arrangements.
2. Develop and agree the terms of reference and membership for the new groups that will be at the centre of driving activity in the new model.
3. Develop and agree a model for independent scrutiny of the new arrangements.
4. Develop and agree a framework to ensure that schools, colleges and early years settings continue to be fully involved in multi-agency arrangements for children and young people in Solihull.

Your views

We would very much welcome any views, suggestions or other feedback from anyone who feels they can contribute to developing these new arrangements. We would be particularly interested to hear from practitioners across agencies working with children and young people on how you think these proposals could be shaped or improved.

If you do have any comments or suggestions, or would like more information on the change programme, please do get in touch with us at lscb@solihull.gov.uk.