

By: Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education

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To: Kent County Council – 18<sup>th</sup> October 2018

Subject: Kent Safeguarding Children Board – 2017/18 Annual Report

Classification: Unrestricted

**Summary:** This attached annual report from Kent Safeguarding Children Board describes the progress made in improving the safeguarding services provided to Kent's children and young people from April 2017 until March 2018, and outlines the challenges ahead over the next year.

**Recommendation:** County Council is asked to COMMENT on the progress made and NOTE the 2017/18 Annual Report attached.

## 1. Introduction

(1) This report presents the 2017/18 Annual Report produced by Gill Rigg, the Independent Chair of Kent Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB) and is endorsed by members of that Board. Current Government statutory guidance contained in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015, (superseded by Working Together 2018) issued by the Department for Education, sets out the requirement for Local Safeguarding Children Boards to produce and publish an Annual Report. This Report provides a rigorous and transparent assessment of the effectiveness of local multi-agency child safeguarding arrangements and has been designed for circulation to all stakeholders interested in the safeguarding of Kent's children and young people.

(2) Through its review of last year's key priorities, this Report identifies progress across Kent in the improvement of child safeguarding practice. It also identifies areas of vulnerabilities and what action is being taken to address challenges where they remain.

(3) The Annual Report includes the Board's response to the recommendations from the Ofsted Review of KSCB which was undertaken in March 2017 and lessons learned from Serious Case Reviews (SCR), multi-agency audits and child death reviews within the reporting period.

(4) Working Together 2015 (and 2018), specifies that once the Report is published, it should be submitted to the Chief Executive (where one is in situ), the Leader of the Council, the local Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chair of the Health and

Wellbeing Board. Within Kent, it has been the practice to present this Report to a meeting of the full Council.

## **2. The 2017/18 Annual Report**

(1) The Report outlines the activities undertaken by agencies to ensure that children in Kent are as safe as they can be.

(2) The Independent Chair of KSCB has continued to build on the work of the Board, its Business Group and sub groups. This report highlights the work of each of the Board's Sub Groups, exploring their achievements, challenges and next steps. The report acknowledges the significant improvement steps made throughout the year and recognises the challenges ahead.

(3) One of the key challenges for the period covered by this report has been the multi-agency response to the nationally and locally identified impact of Gangs on children and young people. This has resulted in the publication of a multi-agency, Kent and Medway Gangs Strategy and associated action plan. This is being overseen by the joint KSCB, Medway Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB) and Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board's Risks Threats and Vulnerabilities Group (RTV).

(4) Having identified a significant increase in teenage suicides in Kent, the Board's Child Death Overview Panel and Case Review Group have commissioned a thematic review of teenage suicides. This involves working with children and young people's mental health service providers, schools and public health. This work will be fed in to national research being undertaken by the National Association of Independent Safeguarding Board Chairs as this is an issue that has been identified in other LSCB areas.

(5) In recognition of the demands being made on partner agencies in supporting the work of the LSCB (and other multi-agency Boards), KSCB are leading in the rationalisation of Board sub groups. Many of the Boards' workstreams are cross cutting and over the last year, more joined up working has been introduced. Examples being: the RTV Group, which draws together the issues from the perspective of adults and children in areas such as Gangs, Exploitation (not just sexual exploitation), Modern Slavery, Online Safeguarding and Extremism; the KSCB and MSCB joint Policy and Procedures Group; and the KSCB and MSCB Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation Group (MASE). The Chairs of these groups report in to the respective Boards. Ongoing rationalisation work is also looking at the Health Safeguarding Group, the District Council Safeguarding Leads' Group and the Learning and Development Group.

(6) The Board's multi-agency Training Programme has continued to develop, with new training introduced on Adolescent to Parent Violence, Allegations Management, Level 3 Neglect and Information Sharing and Data Protection. Last year, over 11,000 E-Learning courses were completed and over 2,300 members of staff attended our multi-agency face to face training. Of special note is that KSCB Programme

Development Office was awarded the BASPCAN/NSPCC's inaugural 'Child Protection Trainer of the Year'

(7) With regard to the question: 'how safe are children in Kent?' the Report indicates, that during 2017/18, approximately 9,800 families (around 20,500 children and young people) were supported by Early Help Units (EHU). At the end of March 2017, there were 2,344 cases open to EHU. This equates to nearly 5,300 children and young people. In March 2018, 82.5% of EH cases were closed with outcomes achieved, up from 79.6% in March 2017.

(8) At year end, 2017/18, there were 2,393 children with Children In Need (CIN) plans in place. This is an increase of 86.

(9) As at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017, the number of children with a Child Protection Plan (CPP), was 1,491, an increase of 306 on last year. KSCB will continue to monitor this to see if this continues to be in line with those of our statistical neighbours. KSCB will make sure that the focus remains on ensuring that all agencies have a common understanding of thresholds for child protection intervention.

(10) The number of Children in Care, (CiC), excluding Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC), at year end was 1,655, a reduction of 238 from year end 2016-17. This is the second year of significant reductions. Excluding UASC, there were 1,274 CiC placed in Kent by other Local Authorities, a reduction of 45 on the previous year.

(10) At 31st March 2017, there were 233 UASC Children in Care in Kent. This is a decrease of 248, from 31st March 2015. This second year of reductions highlights the impact of the introduction of the National Transfer Scheme. The number of UASC transferred from Kent to other Local Authorities in 2017/18 was 139.

(11) KSCB is committed to publishing the findings from all Serious Case Reviews, (SCR). In 2017/18, the Board published 3 SCRs (Child B, Child C and Child E). In addition, work has continued on 3 SCRs (Child D, subsequently published in May 2018, and Child G, which will be published in the Autumn of 2018). The Board has commissioned one new SCR. The lessons from these and from other National SCRs have been embedded in the KSCB's multi-agency learning and development strategy and training programme. The Board has delivered a number of multi-agency SCR Workshops where the learning has been shared with frontline staff. The ongoing cascading of learning from SCRs remains one of the Board's key focus areas for 2018/19).

(11) In order to understand what is happening across different frontline settings in protecting children, during this reporting period, KSCB has undertaken 5 multi-agency audits, (Section 11, Neglect, Early Help, children who go missing and harmful sexual behaviour). An enhanced multi-agency audit programme has been implemented with the Quality and Effectiveness Group having a greater focus on topics identified as themes from previous audits and SCRs. The outcomes of these audits have been used to inform the KSCB training programme to ensure that learning is shared with frontline operational staff.

The annual report includes an annual report on a page, which is appended to this report.

### **3. Conclusions**

(1) The Board has continued with its scrutiny and challenge role through the Business Group and the stricter governance and lines of accountability.

(2) Following the activity and achievements of the Board and its Sub Groups throughout the year, the Board is undertaking a review of its Strategic Priorities and Business Plan 2017/20. It plans to focus on fewer key priorities and provide wider evidence of the impact of its activity on frontline practice and safeguarding children and young people.

(3) With the publication of Working Together 2018 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017, which includes the abolitions of LSCB's, the Board is supporting the move towards the new arrangements of the Safeguarding Partners in the preparation for the smooth transition of the oversight of the County's safeguarding of children and young people from the LSCB to the new Safeguarding Partnership and the supporting Safeguarding Arrangements. Work is under way with strategic leads from the Local Authority, Police and Health Partners to provide details of the new arrangements ahead of the deadline of June 2019.

### **4. Recommendations**

(1) County Council is asked to:

- (a) COMMENT on the progress and improvements made during 2017/18, as detailed in the Annual Report from Kent Safeguarding Children Board
- (b) NOTE the 2017/18 Annual Report attached.

### **5. Background Documents**

None

### **6. Contact details**

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