

Kent Safeguarding Children Board

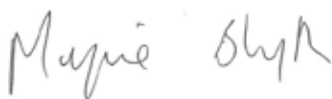
Annual Report 2011 -2012



Foreword by the Independent Chair

I am pleased to introduce the annual report for Kent Safeguarding Children Board 2011/12. I took up post as Independent Chair of the partnership that has oversight of child protection arrangements in Kent during this year and have been impressed by the determination and enthusiasm of all key partners to improve services for the most vulnerable children and young people in Kent. As this report indicates although there is improvement in the quality of information being shared by practitioners across different sectors such as social work, policing, schools and health care, we still have some way to go in ensuring that all children get the right help at the right time.

Furthermore, we must persevere in efforts to learn lessons from cases when things do go wrong and where children are the subject of neglect, harm or abuse from their carers or other adults around them. I am pleased that Kent agencies are committed to transparency and openness in publically sharing the recommendations arising from Serious Case Reviews and the progress against actions taken. I hope we can demonstrate over the following years continuing improvement and clarity over the complex challenges that will remain in ensuring we properly safeguard our children in Kent.



Maggie Blyth,
Independent Chair, KSCB

Foreword by the Leader of Kent County Council, Paul Carter

I very much welcome the format of the new KSCB annual report and the open, direct and frank way that the document addresses the difficult and challenging issues that children's safeguarding entails.

Clearly we are making very good progress, and it is enormously pleasing to see the primary indicators going in the right direction - caseloads are continuing to reduce, inappropriate referrals are coming sharply down and the number of children with a child protection plan is now below average to our statistical neighbours (very different to eighteen months ago). Transforming Children's Services remains our top priority and we have delivered on our promise that the necessary financial investment will be made to turn the services around, with some £23m of additional resources put into the service last year.

Our cabinet member, Jenny Whittle is right in highlighting the need to focus on getting all agencies that have a role in safeguarding to work together as a collective. Our ambition in future months is to deliver much greater coherence in the plethora of support services working with vulnerable families, bringing practitioners to work together in teams around the family and likewise integrated support teams for vulnerable adolescents.

This will be a major focus for the agencies involved, particularly so with health providers using the opportunities the health reform agenda will bring - with the aim to deliver a whole new range of community health and preventative services. The prospect of the national health service commissioning board investing in a whole new army of health visitors alongside community based Children's Centres brings new valuable opportunities. Kent having been chosen by national government as one of the 16 pilot authorities in the Troubled Families initiative will bring urgency and the need for innovation to the fore. This new integrated,

coherent, preventative agenda will play an increasingly vital part in being able to manage back down the number of children into care.

As we move forward, we must have renewed focus on the quality of services provided to looked after children. Our qualitative measures of performance will be centred on engaging with and listening to the children and young people and their carers, who are at the heart of what we do. Elected members have a key role to play as corporate parents and KCC's increasing shift to a localist approach will bring significant new opportunities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Carter', with a horizontal line underneath.

Paul Carter,
Leader of Kent County Council

Introduction

In May 2011 an independent review was completed into the child protection system across the whole of the country. In response, the government has stated that Local Safeguarding Children Boards have a “unique, system-wide, role to play in protecting children and young people”.

In Kent we have worked hard over the past year to improve the ability of all of Kent’s statutory agencies and local communities to protect and promote the wellbeing of children in the county.

Local Safeguarding Children Boards have a “unique, system-wide, role to play in protecting children and young people”

Kent’s 2010 Ofsted inspection report of safeguarding and looked after children raised concerns about the effectiveness of the statutory partnership to protect children in Kent. It was critical of KSCB for not holding agencies to account.

There has been significant progress over the last 12 months in consolidating the safeguarding partnership, through three key areas – clarifying the KSCB’s governance arrangements; ensuring that all professionals working with children understand what are known as thresholds, eligibility and assessment processes for child protection support; and the development of a new quality assurance framework. We are now much better placed to know what works well in protecting children in Kent and the areas that still need improving.

“The KCSB has improved immeasurably in bringing partners around the table and having focused agendas. Going forward there needs to be a tighter focus on holding partners to account”

Councillor Jenny Whittle

There has been substantial activity to establish a robust partnership framework for child protection in Kent to ensure overall scrutiny of performance during 2011/12.

However over the year we have realised that further challenge is required if all agencies working with children are able to evidence how they protect all children all of the time.

On a positive note work because of improved multi-agency work across the partnership, Kent has reduced its previous high numbers of children with a child protection plan to a level below the average of our statistical neighbours. However, we also know from audits we have undertaken looking at referrals into Specialist Children’s Services that different professionals working with children have different expectations about what constitutes a child at risk. As a result of our analysis of different approaches in Kent we think that sometimes agencies are slow to share information about children at risk. This means it is not always possible to consider what would be the best support for a child, young person and their family/carers at any given time. This is an area which KSCB will be retaining a focus on over the coming months.

Chapter 1

How safe are our children and young people in Kent?

There are just over 310,000 children and young people living in Kent, making up 22% of the population.

It is impossible to offer a complete picture of the children whose safety is at risk in Kent because some abuse or neglect may be hidden, despite the best efforts of local services to identify, step in and support children who are being harmed. In Kent, trafficked children who arrive in British ports to be transported throughout the country are vulnerable because their traffickers work hard to keep them 'invisible'. In other cases, families themselves mask abuse or neglect and neighbours may turn a blind eye to a child's need for protection.

That is why the Department for Education 'Working Together' guidance (2010) emphasises the shared responsibility we all have in keeping children safe:

"All organisations need to listen and be responsive to the diverse needs of children, young people and their families and to recognise that safeguarding children and young people from harm must be everyone's business."

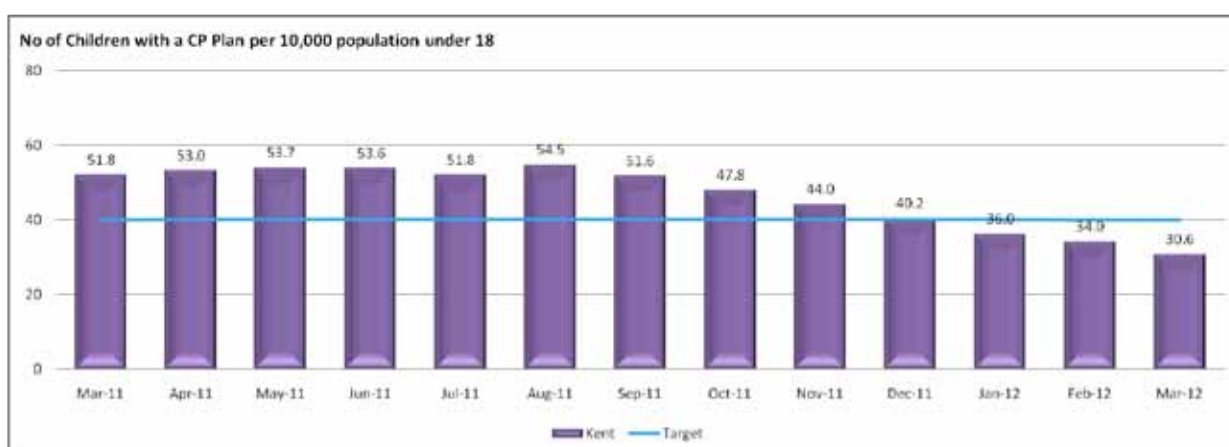
It might be helpful to start by looking at the categories of children and young people in Kent who have been identified by the Local Authority and other agencies as in need of protection:

Children with a Child Protection Plan (CPP)

Children who have a child protection plan are considered to be in need of protection from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. The CPP details the main areas of concern, what action will be taken to reduce those concerns, how the child will be kept safe, and how we will know when progress is being made.

Approximately 86% (as at 31/03/12) of all child protection plans in Kent are categorised as emotional abuse or neglect. Evidence nationally shows that children who grow up in families where there is domestic violence, mental illness and/or parental substance misuse are most likely to be at risk of serious harm. There continue to be low levels of children with plans relating to sexual abuse both nationally and in Kent.

Graph showing the rate of young people in Kent with a child protection plan



Data provided by Management Information, SCS Monthly Report, subject to change following DfE publication in October 2012

The previous graph shows a steady reduction in the past twelve months of the number of children in Kent with a child protection plan, a continuing decline from the year before. As at end of March 2012, there are 30.6 per 10,000 of the population under 18 in Kent on a child protection plan, meaning Kent have now achieved and exceeded the target of 40.1, the average for Kent's comparable statistical neighbours in 2010-11.

The reduction has largely been achieved during the course of this year because of a sustained focus on ensuring that the right children have plans at the right time. One of the factors that assisted the reduction was de-planning children who were in the care of the local authority where a child protection plan was no longer needed. These children are known as 'Looked After Children' (LAC). Meanwhile, greater scrutiny of existing plans to ensure that only those children who really need to be are

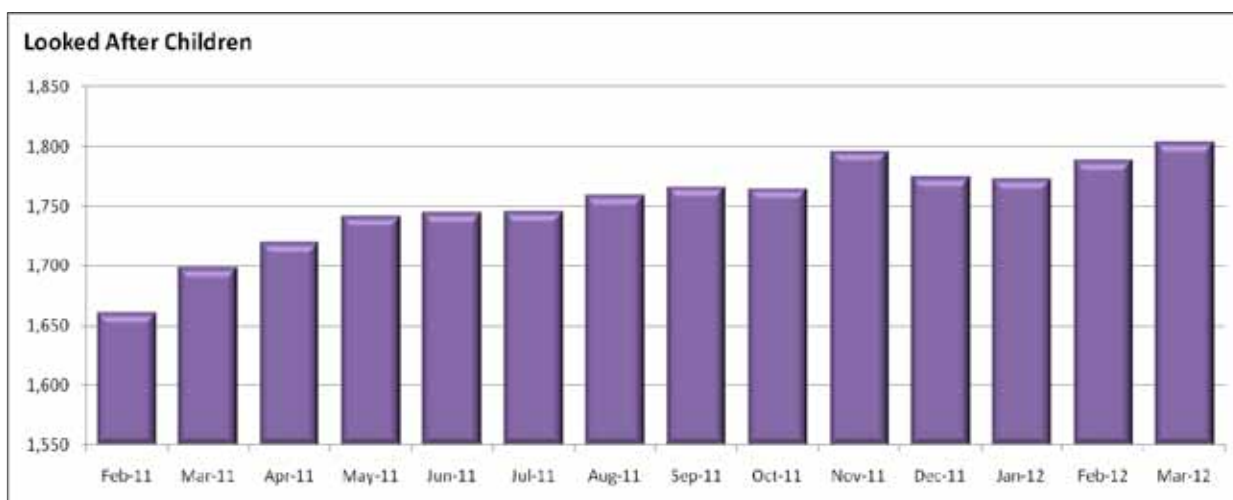
referred to specialist children's services has also contributed to the reduction.

Children who are 'Looked After'

To also understand how safe children are in Kent we can look at the number of LAC children. There are currently 1,804 LAC children in Kent, (included in this figure are 186 UASC – Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children). Kent also has 1,248* LAC from other local authorities placed within its boundaries. (data true as at 31 March 2012)

Only after exploring every possibility of protecting a child at home will the local authority seek a court decision to move a child away from his or her family. Such decisions, while incredibly difficult, are made when it is the best possible option to ensure the child's safety and wellbeing. Such a move can be the best way to support the family.

Graph showing the number of Looked After young people in Kent



Data provided by Management Information, SCS Quarterly report

The above graph shows that the number of LAC continues to be a challenge in Kent, with a gradual increase over the course of the year (although the numbers do appear to have stabilised overall). This is partly because many of the plans and strategies that aim to reduce these numbers are only just beginning. KSCB will monitor this action during the coming year.

Kent has a high number of children placed in the county by other local authority areas in England. During 2011/12 there were 1,248* children looked after in Kent who are not

normally resident in the County. In addition, during 2011/12 there were 136 unaccompanied asylum seeking children who arrived at Kent ports and for whom agencies in Kent provided a service.

* This information has a Confidence Rating of 60-65%. The data behind these figures is completely reliant on Other Local Authorities keeping KCC informed of which children are placed within Kent. The Management Information Unit (MIU) regularly contact these OLAs for up to date information, but replies are sometimes not forthcoming. The above rating is based upon the percentage of children in this current cohort where the OLA have satisfactorily responded to recent MIU requests. If further information is required with regard to the accuracy of specific figures.

Children who are 'Looked After' by Other Local Authorities

For many years Kent County Council has been calling on councils to place children in care closer to home to minimise the disruption following what is probably the most traumatic thing that can happen to a child. As of the end of April 2012, there were over 1260 children placed in Kent by other local authorities, with two thirds of them placed by London councils. The high number of other local authority looked after children placed in Kent has been consistent for many years – despite various measures introduced to try to reduce this (e.g. the sufficiency duty under Volume 2 of the Children Act 1989). Not all of these children are notified to Kent by their local authority and the Management Information Unit (MIU) in Kent (who are responsible for the collation of this data) reported in April 2012 that they have received notifications from other local authorities on 943 children only – only around 75% of the actual number of other local authority looked after children the County Council has identified as having been placed in Kent.

The Leader of Kent County Council, Paul Carter has written to the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, to arrange a summit of London councils and representatives from Kent. The aim is to discuss how the 32 councils can work together to find foster carers and residential children's home placements in the capital.

He has also written to Children's Commissioner Maggie Atkinson, to highlight the need for all councils to place children closer to home, unless by exception. Placements can include family-and-friend foster carers, adoptive placements, and specialist residential accommodation to meet complex needs.

The work of supporting Kent's 1,804 looked after children (including 186 unaccompanied asylum seeking children), as well as the 1,248 looked after children placed by other local authorities in the county, is placing massive pressures on public agencies responsible for supporting vulnerable children in Kent, including children's social services, schools, police, and health services.

There are 63 privately registered children's homes and 32 independent fostering providers in the county, catering for 803 children placed by London councils and other authorities as far away as Manchester. While a small independent sector is welcome, to support local authorities in providing the right mix of placements, the size of this sector in Kent reflects the high number of children placed in the county by other councils.

Paul Carter, Jenny Whittle, KCC Cabinet Member for Specialist Children's Services and Maggie Blyth, Chair of Kent's Safeguarding Children Board met with the Children's Minister Tim Loughton in June 2012 calling on the government to introduce legislation that would:

- place a statutory obligation for local authorities to place children no more than 15 miles away from their home or school unless by exception
- require all councils to provide an annual statement to their Local Safeguarding Children Board detailing how many children are placed outside their local authority boundary and more than 15 miles away, and what safeguards have been put in place to protect these children from harm.
- require all 32 London councils to jointly commission fostering placements and residential children home placements in London. This would allow vulnerable children and young people to remain in their schools, with their friends, and reduce the extraordinary pressures on Kent's public agencies supporting 1,248 children from other local authorities

There are very good reasons why authorities place some children far away from home – with prospective adopters, with relatives, in specialist residential provision, catering for acute need or disability, which is not available closer. However, there are far too many vulnerable children and young people placed in Children's homes and with non-related foster carers miles away from home. It is extremely difficult to be an effective 'corporate parent'

and look after children placed so far away from home.

Following the conviction of nine members of a sex-grooming network in Rochdale, all councils must make sure they can properly safeguard teenagers placed in residential children's homes, particularly those placed many miles from home, which increases their sense of vulnerability. These are young people at particular risk of being exploited by sex-grooming networks and it is extremely difficult for London boroughs, as the corporate parents, to properly safeguard these young people when they are placed so many miles away. KSCB will want assurance from local agencies that Kent children placed in some areas of the county are appropriately safeguarded.

Trafficked children and asylum seekers

Some of the most vulnerable children in Kent arrive in Dover each year seeking entry into the UK. Most turn up seeking asylum whilst others have been trafficked for exploitation. Where the UK Border Agency identifies unaccompanied children, they pass responsibility for these children to Kent County Council.

There are significant child protection implications in how the local Immigration Team in Kent organizes the processing arrangement for these children, and also for the police and the local authority in how they deal with or receive these highly vulnerable children.

Support for these young people is delivered by the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) Service, but in a complex operational environment. The issue of asylum seekers receives high profile media and political attention prompting frequent legislative changes that affect Kent's protection arrangements for these children.

Moreover, there is an ongoing issue of some children and young people going missing. Some have run away for short periods of time and are found or return by themselves, others go missing and are never found.

Between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012, 17 UASC (under 18 yr olds) went missing and have not returned - a slight increase from 2010-2011. This is a serious concern as these children are especially vulnerable to exploitation. It is an area that KSCB must monitor closely. In October 2011, KSCB established its first Child Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation Sub Group to monitor progress across agencies in tackling this problem. This key priority will continue into 2012/13.

Disengaged and troubled teenagers

Kent Youth Offending Service was involved in the supervision of 130 LAC at 5th April 2012, 42.3% of whom had been placed in Kent by other Local Authorities. Out of a caseload of 551 during 2011/12; 12% of cases had "Child in Need" status, 3.8% were subject to a CP Plan, 6.9% of the LAC currently supervised by Kent YOS are serving a custodial sentence, Kent LAC account for 19.6% of the total number of young people in this cohort who are in custody.

Those in custody / leaving custody can frequently have profound safeguarding needs which may have been unmet.

The YOS data reflects a consistent picture with almost a quarter of the overall youth justice caseload in the county having a known vulnerability, also the importance of the youth offending teams – particularly in East Kent – being able to work in close co-operation with other local authorities.

The downturn in the economy has had a marked effect on young school leavers looking for work, leading to an increase in the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) in Kent.

We have seen a rise in young people 16–18 NEET during the key counting points (Nov, Dec and Jan) this year rising up to 6.83% in November, the highest the figures have been throughout the contracting period 2011/12. During this period, the average NEET figure for Kent was 6.6%, compared to the South East which was 5.5%. At the same time "not knowns" have significantly reduced from

2.51% in December to 1.76% in January. This reduction is impressive when compared with the South East average of 9.1%.

In Kent, the typical NEET young person who needs our support now is; 18 years old, looking for training; has qualifications at Level 2 or lower but has no English or Maths; wishes to progress to level 3 but cannot due to having no English and Maths and cannot undertake another level 2 qualification as there is insufficient funding or a level 2 Apprenticeship as they have already achieved to this level. The challenge now is to meet the needs of older NEETs whilst maintaining our provision and support for 16 year olds.

Children with disabilities

During 2011/12 KSCB introduced new guidance for professionals working with children with disabilities. Following concerns that this group of children were not having their safeguarding needs met, in particular special schools in Kent, KSCB has commissioned The Children's Society to organise a training event in the September 2012 to share knowledge and experience of good practice in safeguarding disabled children and young people.

Children who are privately fostered

Last year KSCB identified that the low notification of private fostering arrangements for children under 10 years was a concern. Over 2011/12 a cross-partner analysis was undertaken to get a better picture of what is happening in Kent. The analysis demonstrated the need for further action and information to raise awareness amongst health and education staff.

Children exposed to domestic abuse

Evidence from analyses of serious case reviews nationally in 2011¹ revealed that domestic violence was present in almost three-quarters of families whose children died or sustained serious injury due to maltreatment. Children are likely to suffer damaging effects on their health and development if they live in households where there is domestic violence.

¹ Biennial analysis SCRs, DfE 2011

Who is responsible for protecting Kent's children and young people?

Everybody has a part to play in protecting children. Local communities can help by identifying what is happening in their areas. Safeguarding is everybody's business.

But ultimately when there remain serious concerns about harm to a child a referral is made to Specialist Children's Services. Most contacts and referrals into Specialist Children's Services come from all sorts of other professionals such as police officers, teachers, health visitors, midwives, nurses, GPs, mental health professionals or other specialist services. Specialist Children's Services, to make their decisions, need lots of information from the person making the referral. All professionals have a responsibility to ensure that accurate information is provided swiftly and shared promptly.

A part of this is developing a common understanding of the levels of need in Kent – or what is sometimes known as agreement over “thresholds”. Occasionally professionals have a different understanding of the criteria that should be met before making a referral to Specialist Children's Services.

During 2011/12 KSCB launched new guidance for all professionals working in Kent on ‘thresholds’ and provided training to all staff in establishing a common understanding of levels of need in Kent.

In November 2011 an audit was undertaken to check professional's understanding of thresholds following this training. We discovered that problems still remain.

- 46% of cases in the East of Kent were re-referrals.
- 25% of cases were considered to be inappropriate referrals.

This suggests that much more inter agency collaboration could have taken place before the referral was made to satisfy the referrer of the best course of action to take before a specialist intervention from Specialist Children's Services was considered essential.

It is also likely that agencies remain unconfident about the response they receive when having made a referral to social care, and therefore continue to re-refer. KSCB has highlighted this to statutory agencies in Kent to help inform a more effective prevention strategy to offer 'early help' to families, where this may be necessary.

In January 2012 Kent Specialist Children's Services, Kent Police and different health professionals in Kent opened Kent's first Central Referral Unit, where front line professionals are now working together to improve communication over how best to respond to children in need in the County.



Chapter 2

What is the Kent Safeguarding Children Board?

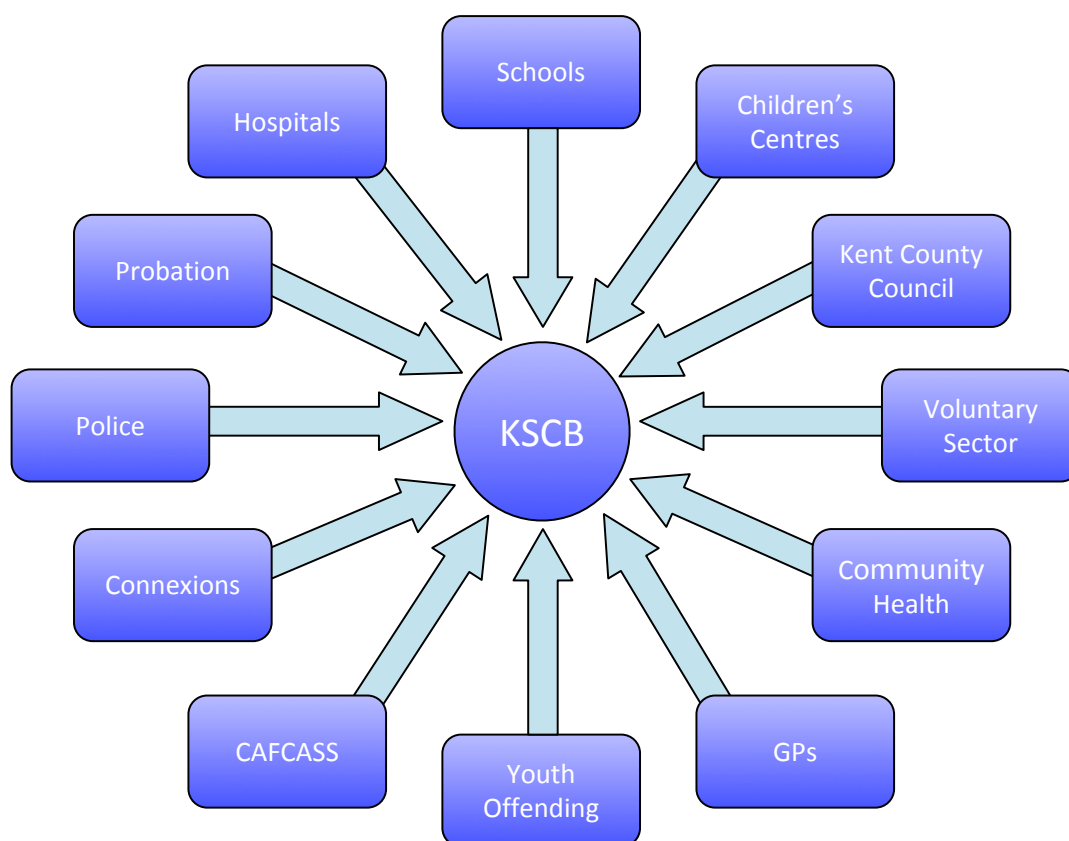
The Kent Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB) is the partnership body responsible for coordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of Kent services to protect and promote the welfare of children and young people. The Board is made up of senior representatives from all the main agencies and organisations in Kent concerned with child welfare.

What is the purpose of the KSCB?

The Kent Safeguarding Children Board was created on 1st April 2006 in line with the Children Act of 2004, which introduced Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) for England and Wales.

LSCBs were set up to strengthen the ability of local authorities to effectively protect children and young people by promoting shared accountability, generating learning from practice, and monitoring the effectiveness of work with children and their families (DFES, 2007; DFE, 2011).

The Kent Safeguarding Children Board provides a vital link in the chain between various organisational efforts, both statutory and voluntary, to protect children and young people in Kent. Our aim is to ensure that all these efforts **work effectively in coordination** so that children and their families experience a harmonious and 'joined up' service.



The diagram to the left shows the range of organisations that participate and are represented within the KSCB.

A major undertaking of the KCSB is that it expects all statutory agencies, from the police to schools and hospitals, to be on the same page when it comes to looking after the safety and wellbeing of children in Kent. This is what we mean when we say the KSCB promotes a 'multi-agency' approach.

At the same time, the KSCB is responsible for scrutinizing the work of its partners to make certain that the services provided for children and young people in Kent are effective and actually **make a difference**. The effectiveness of KSCB relies upon its ability to champion the safeguarding agenda through exercising an independent voice.

KSCB is also responsible for **raising awareness** of child protection issues in Kent so that everybody in the community can play a role in making our county a safer place for children and young people to grow up. Our message is that protecting children from harm really is everyone's business.

"Kent police remain committed to working closely with our partner agencies to ensure that children are effectively safeguarded. We have established a multi-agency Central Referral Unit, based in Ashford, to promote the welfare of children and a "think family" approach. Each referral to the unit is considered from a joint perspective with action taken and support provided according to a tight timescale. The unit will continue to develop its effectiveness by the inclusion of additional partners so that a holistic approach to the safeguarding of children is assured."

Public Protection Unit, Kent Police

The objectives of a LSCB as set out in the Children Act 2004 are:

- a) To co-ordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the authority by which it is established; and
- b) To ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each person or body for these purposes.

(Children Act 2004 s14)



What are the main roles for the Kent Safeguarding Children Board?

The roles for the KSCB are set out in its constitution, which was revised in June 2011 and include the following:

- Developing policies, standards, and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;
- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of what is done by KCC, Kent Police, Kent NHS, Kent Probation Trust and Kent schools both collectively and individually;
- Recommending areas and priorities for the commissioning of children's services;
- Raising awareness of, and communicating, child protection issues to individuals and organisations;
- Establishing and carrying out a review in cases where a child has died or has been seriously harmed in order to advise on lessons that can be learned (known as Serious Case Reviews);
- Ensuring the provision of single agency and multi-agency training on safeguarding to correspond with local needs.

See Chapter 3 for more information on KSCB's work in each of these areas.

A changing landscape: What the Munro Review means for KSCB

The Munro Review was an independent examination of national safeguarding arrangements that took place in early 2011. The government response to the review in July 2011 made it clear that reformed LSCBs will still hold a unique position within local child protection structures. They will retain discretion over how they carry out their functions, so that priorities can be decided in light of local circumstances.

KSCB is still expected to monitor how professionals and services are working together, and to identify any problems that emerge.

KSCB is still expected to help front line practitioners learn from practice, respond to shortfalls and improve services.

Most importantly, KSCB must now assess the effectiveness of the work being done to protect children and support families in Kent. This will require a shift towards asking whether the right services are being commissioned and children are getting the right support at the right time.

An emphasis on impact is part of the move towards an outcome-focused approach for safeguarding boards.

Membership and structure of KSCB

Having explained the main priorities for safeguarding children in Kent, this section contains information about who is involved on the board and how it is organised.

KSCB has three tiers of activity:

1. Main Board

This is made up of representatives of the member agencies, as outlined in statutory government guidance. Board members must be sufficiently senior so as to ensure they are able to speak confidently and sign up to agreements on behalf of their agency and make sure that their agency abides by the policies, procedures and recommendations of KSCB.

[A full list of KSCB's membership for 2011-12 is available in Appendix A.](#)

2. The Executive Board

The Executive body is made up of senior representatives from the key member agencies. The Executive has strategic oversight of all Board activity and takes the lead on developing and driving the implementation of the Board's main activities and 'Business Plan'. It is also the body responsible for holding to account the work of sub-groups and their chairs.

3. Subgroups

The purpose of KSCB subgroups is to tackle the various areas of concern to the KSCB on a more targeted and thematic basis. The subgroups report to the executive board and are ultimately accountable to the main Kent Safeguarding Children Board.

[A diagram of the structure of KSCB – including information on the 8 subgroups - is available in Appendix B.](#)

Key roles

Independent Chair

All LSCBs appoint an Independent Chair who can bring expertise and a clear guiding hand to the Board, to make sure that the LSCB fulfils its roles effectively. The Independent Chair also frees up the board members to participate on an equal footing, without any single agency having the added influence of chairing the Board.

Maggie Blyth was recruited to this position in April 2011 and she is employed by KSCB for 3 days a month. The Chair is subject to an annual appraisal, to ensure the role is undertaken competently and that the post holder retains the confidence of the KSCB members.

Director of Children's Services

The Families and Social Care Corporate Director in Kent is required to sit on the main Board of KSCB as this is a pivotal role in the provision of education and children's social care within the Local Authority. This post is held by Andrew Ireland and he has a responsibility to make sure that the KSCB functions effectively and liaises closely with the Independent Chair who keeps him updated on progress.

Leader of Kent County Council

The ultimate responsibility for the effectiveness of the KSCB rests with the leader of Kent County Council, Paul Carter. The Families and Social Care Corporate Director is answerable to the leader, who forms the final link in this chain of accountability.

Lead Members

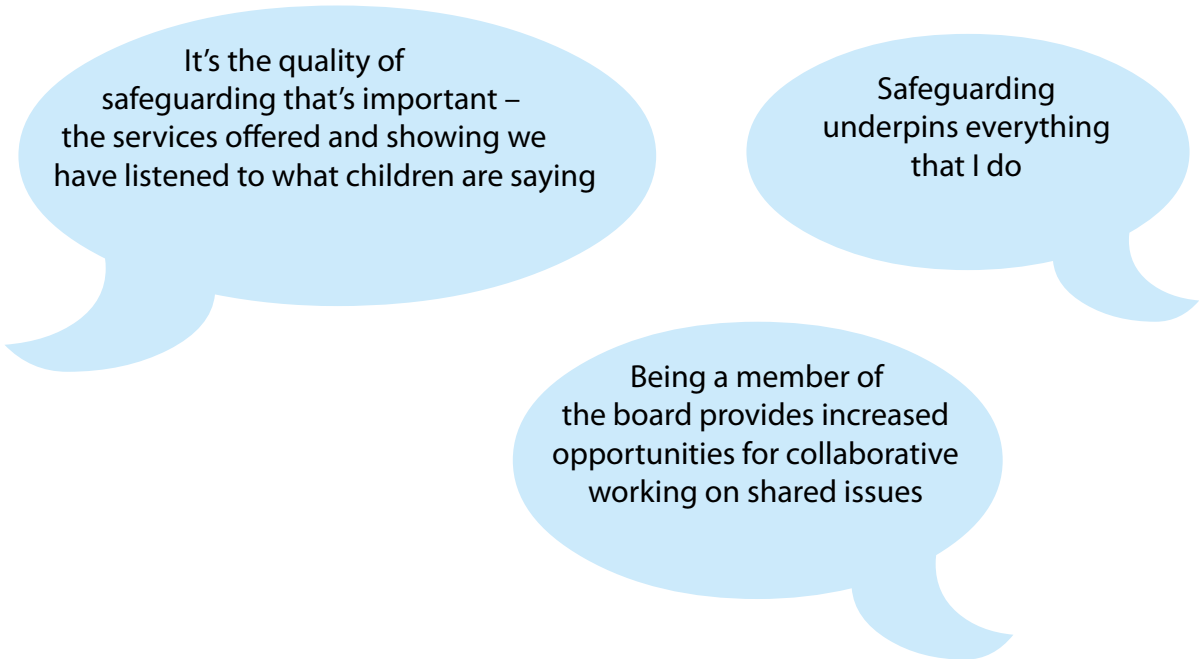
The Lead Member for Specialist Children's Services is the name given to the councillor elected locally with responsibility for making sure that the local authority fulfils its legal responsibilities to safeguard children and young people.

In Kent, Cabinet Member Jenny Whittle holds this position. Councillor Whittle contributes to the KSCB as a 'participating observer'. This means that she takes part in the discussion, asks questions and seeks clarity, but is not part of the decision-making process.

Lay Members

During 2011/12 KSCB appointed two lay members – that is local residents – to get the perspective of the community heard when it comes to child protection issues. In Kent, Roger Sykes and Mike Stevens play this role and have been active contributors to the board's discussions, keeping the wider community in focus and supporting stronger public engagement in local child safety issues.

Members' views



It's the quality of safeguarding that's important – the services offered and showing we have listened to what children are saying

Safeguarding underpins everything that I do

Being a member of the board provides increased opportunities for collaborative working on shared issues

Interview with Lead Member [Jenny Whittle]

“Safeguarding children underpins nearly everything I do as Lead Member. I have overseen delivery of the Improvement Plan following the issuing of the Improvement Notice in January 2011. This includes making sure there are appropriate resources and that these resources are allocated to ensure that children are properly safeguarded.

This has centred on allocating a social worker to all referred children in good time and undertaking initial and core assessments in a timely manner. However, whilst we have got on top of the timeliness, we must now focus on delivering a high quality system of care for our most vulnerable children, preventing drift in care planning and instilling a sense of urgency in all professionals working to support these children. Safeguarding children also requires a fully staffed social workforce which is now in place, although we need to increase the percentage of permanently qualified staff and rely less on agency workers. We also need to do more to gain children’s feedback and use this information to improve service delivery to safeguard all vulnerable children and young people.

The greatest challenges to KSCB in the year ahead is to bring agencies responsible for safeguarding to work in partnership and be prepared to be scrutinised for their role in safeguarding. The greatest challenge is the potential for agencies to pull up the drawbridge on the pretext of dwindling resources. Alongside this, is the take-up of CAF and delivering qualitative improvements.

Young people on the Children in Care Council have complained about the turnover of social workers and have mixed experiences in foster care. Whilst children feel “safe”, the quality of support offered ranges hugely and we must focus on improving the quality of services that all agencies provide for children in care.”

Interview with Lay Member [Roger Sykes]

“I wanted to become a Lay Member because the role offers a unique opportunity for outside scrutiny of the work done by various agencies involving the safeguarding of children and to offer them critical support. I also believed that I would be able to be an effective member of the board in that role.

There is a real commitment among the various agencies represented on the board to work together effectively to safeguard children. The challenges presented by the issues of trafficked and sexually exploited children are now being addressed and this subgroup has been very busy.

As every local safeguarding board has to deal with broadly similar issues, there should be scope for formulating commonality of practice and procedures and identifying and implementing good practice and I am interested in exploring the possibility of establishing a regional grouping of lay members in the South East.

It is important for the board to set up a young people’s subgroup to form links between the board and the communities in Kent and work is underway to identify how this might best be organised. There are lots of current issues affecting young people such as internet bullying and the board has to listen to their views and to hear what they expect from the professionals who work for the agencies responsible for safeguarding.”

Key relationships

Children and Young People's Joint Commissioning Board (formerly Kent's Children's Trust)

New arrangements commenced in Kent during 2011 for commissioning services for Kent's children. The KSCB reports annually to this body on the matters facing children and young people at risk in Kent and we hold them to account to ensure they commission the services that are needed based on the recommendations we make.

A focus for multi-agency working at district level to identify support for vulnerable children has been provided by District Child Protection Partnerships.

The Health and Wellbeing Board

The Health and Wellbeing Board is a new structure, which will come into being in April 2012, subject to the formal approval of new legislation by Government. This Board will be concerned with services for both adults and children and will be responsible for co-ordinating the efforts of the local authority and the NHS for the whole population.

At this stage the relationship between the KSCB and the new Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) is still emerging, and it is certain that there will need to be a clear and well-defined relationship.

As the HWB will be interested in the services to the whole population including adults and the elderly, KSCB must ensure that the needs of vulnerable children are kept in focus.

The Director of Specialist Children's Services and the Lead Member for Specialist Children's Services are members of this Board

Member agencies' management boards

KSCB Board members are senior officers within their own agencies providing a direct link between KSCB and the various agencies' management boards.

During 2011/12 Kent agencies have been subject to major public sector reform –

particularly the NHS – and communication lines sometimes change. It's essential that the management Boards of each statutory agency in Kent cement a close connection with the Safeguarding Children Board and invest in its work.

Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)

During 2011/12 the arrangements in Kent for new GP commissioning were developed. KSCB was involved in talking directly to groups of GPs from Ashford and has provided wider training to GPs to ensure that the needs of children are taken into account as the new CCGs emerge across the County.

CCGs will be important contributors to the KSCB in the coming year as the landscape of health services changes under the direction of central government. The KSCB will hold partners to account in engaging with the CCGs.



Financial arrangements

During 2011/12 contributions from partners remained steady at £305,827. The variable income available to the Board this year was £592,363 which included residual funds of £457,173 brought forward from 2010/11. With a total income of £898,190 and expenditure of £444,253 this ensured the overall costs of running KSCB were met as they could not have been covered solely by the contributing partners.

KSCB has continued developing its support and sub group arrangements over the last year by bringing in external expertise to develop local capacity and specifically to respond to the Safeguarding and Looked After Children improvement notice issued by the Department for Education following the inadequate Ofsted Inspection in 2010.

Some of the costs associated with immersive learning which the Board is keen to introduce will be offset by the grant awarded to LSCBs from the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) as part of the government's response to the Munro Review.

As a result of the changes to KSCB responsibilities during 2011/12 a financial review was instigated to look at partnership funding contributions and to make sure that the KSCB support functions are based on sound programme management. As KSCB has not been reviewed since its inception in 2006 any new plans are timely and will ensure that KSCB provides better value for money in the future.

A copy of KSCB's budget for the financial year 2011-12 is available in Appendix C

Chapter 3

Progress in key strategic areas 2011/2012

Focus on Child Protection

What did we do? How well did we do it?

During 2011/12 KSCB identified inconsistent understanding among member agencies about what constitutes the appropriate 'thresholds' for a child to be referred into specialist children's services.

There was a clear need to reinforce common thresholds so that children across Kent receive a consistent service. KSCB recognises that children and their families can be harmed rather than helped if they are subjected unnecessarily to formal child protection processes.

Mitigating undue harm is also about ensuring families, children and families have a common understanding about the referral process.

In 2011-2012, KSCB has taken steps to clarify understanding of thresholds across the partnership and in the community. Key achievements included:

- Revised and agreed clear thresholds for universal, targeted and specialist services introduced in May 2011 to make sure children at risk of harm receive appropriate care.
- Delivery of over 30 multi-agency localised workshops between May and July 2011 to make sure agencies understand the new thresholds and assessment processes.
- Playing a key role in supporting a new Central Referral Unit for Duty and Initial Assessment Teams which went live in January 2011, a multi-agency hub for processing all referrals into Specialist Children's Services leading to a steady reduction in the number of inappropriate referrals.

- Improved child protection processes so that families, children and professionals leave the conference clear about what happens next and what their part is in the change process.
- Requiring agencies to develop an Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy to ensure that all vulnerable children are provided with an 'early offer' of help
- Shared learning from 4 case reviews
- Completing 2 audits looking at multi-agency practice in relation to the use of thresholds and the child protection conference process.

All data included in this report is correct at the time of going to print. The data is subject to frequent updates as professionals log changes in their case files.

After production of this report the DfE will publish final data in October 2012 that will include further changes to some data items that will not be reflected in this document

Progress made in improving child protection arrangements... in numbers

- The number of referrals to Specialist Children's Services has sharply decreased to 16,824 compared to March 2011, when it was 23,091. The work in reducing referrals occurred as a result of practice changes in Specialist Children's Services, which included work on thresholds, setting up the central duty team and putting qualified social workers in the team to make thresholds decisions and manage referrals.
- The % of re-referrals within 12 months has not seen such a significant improvement. It is currently at 30.4% against a target of 23%. This suggests there may still be inconsistency in understanding across partnerships on what constitutes a child at risk.
- 76.2% of **initial assessments** were completed within 7 working days indicating that better performance management practices are now the norm. Clearly, this still does not reflect any quality of assessments.
- Overall, 69% of **core assessments** are completed within 35 days, against a target of 80.4%. Across the Districts some are performing better than others. During planned Deep Dive sessions (in-depth analysis within Specialist Children's Services), it was found that this is because the volume of Core Assessments being undertaken generally in Kent is still too high.
- At the beginning of April 2011 there were 562 cases which had not been allocated to a qualified social worker for more than 28 days. By the end of May 2011 this had reduced to 71, and from August reduced to single figures. At the end of March 2012 there were 8 cases that were not allocated to a qualified social worker for more than 28 days. These were all Children in Need cases, none were LAC or Child Protection cases. These reductions demonstrate the focus given to ensuring cases are appropriately allocated, and the introduction of exception reporting ensures that Senior Managers are kept informed on a weekly basis.
- Total **caseloads** have continued to reduce as more cases continue to be closed than the number of new cases being opened. The average caseload of social workers in fieldwork teams was 20.6 per person as at 25 March 2012, compared to 25.1 per person as at 27 March 2011.
- The number of children with a **Child Protection Plan** has fallen from 1,621 in March 2011 to 959 in March 2012, this can be attributed to ongoing work in the districts to appropriately close plans that no longer need that level of intervention.
- Kent's end of year figure for % of children and young people with a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time in 2011/12 of 16.4% is above our target set of 13.7%. Comparison will need to be made both nationally and against our statistical neighbours following the national publication of 2011/12's figures to ascertain if the rise in performance is a national trend. The statistical neighbour average for 2010/11 was 13.4% with a national average of 13.3%. By analysing the re-registrations for 2011/12, it is apparent that a large number of sibling groups accounts for a proportion of this co-hort.
- There are 1,804 **children looked after** in Kent, of this figure 186 are UASC. This figure continues to rise proving to be an ongoing challenge for Kent.
- Kent has an additional 1,248* children placed in Kent by other authority areas. (* See Page 7)
- Against a target of 58.9 **Common Assessment Frameworks** being completed per 10,000 of the population in 2011/12, Kent had achieved 68.5 by the end of March 2012. This exceeds the target set and provides a good base for future improvements.

The challenges ahead

Despite the progress made over the past 12 months, as mentioned in Chapter 1, Kent continues to have comparatively high numbers of children with a child protection plan, including children with a plan lasting two years or more. This is inconsistent with the volumes experienced by Kent's statistical neighbours and nationally.

It is vital that we build on the progress made to improve the protection arrangements for children and young people. Ensuring member agencies understand and implement KSCB's recommended policies and procedures around thresholds, the Common Assessment Framework and early intervention remains our biggest challenge and is reflected in KSCB's three strategic priorities for 2012-13.

Increasing scrutiny, quality and effectiveness

What did we do? How well did we do it?

During 2011/12 the Quality and Effectiveness subgroup has been responsible for leading KSCB's work in this area, with the aim to drive the quality of service improvement and delivery of outcomes vigilantly, transparently and consistently across the partnership.

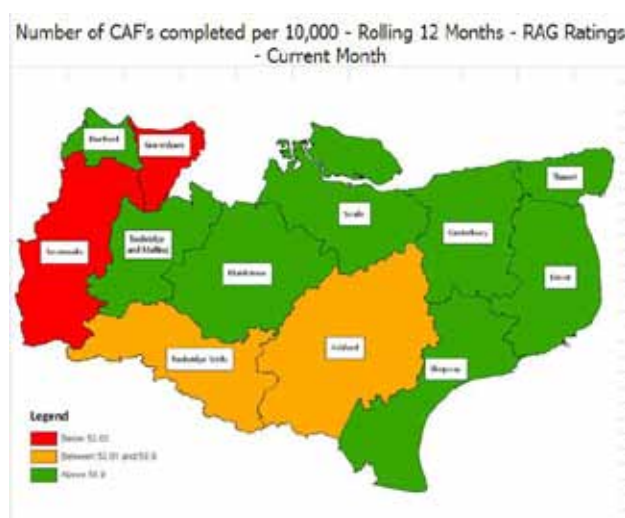
In October 2011, KSCB launched an extensive and comprehensive Quality and Effectiveness Framework to ensure clear analysis is reported by each agency to provide detailed and headline messages about individual safeguarding concerns in Kent. Key achievements included:

- The Quality and Effectiveness Framework has been accompanied by training for all agencies supported by C4EO in using the new dataset.
- A dedicated performance analyst post commenced employment in January 2012.

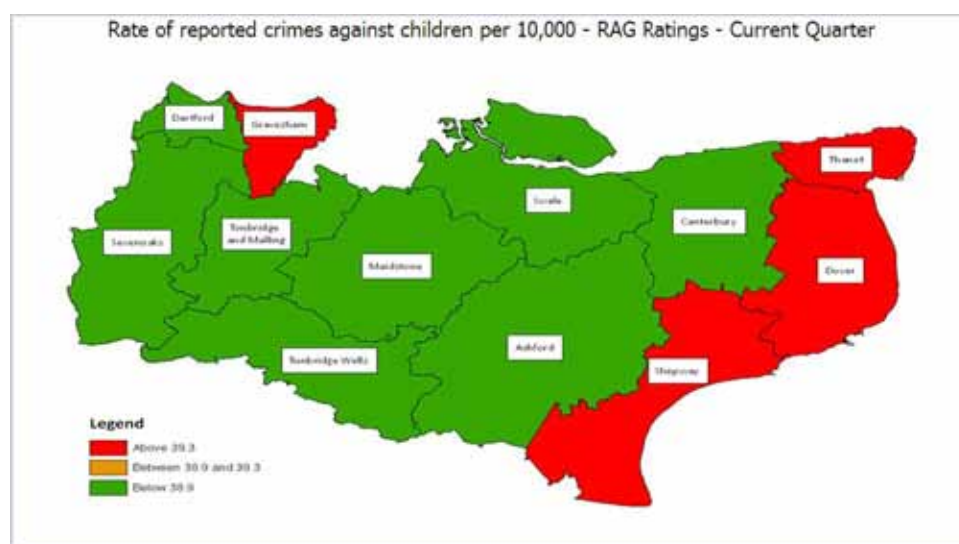
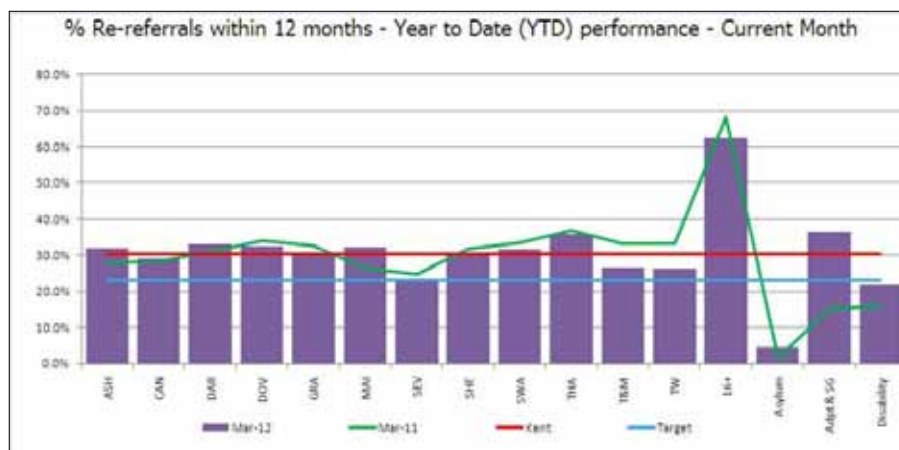
The challenges ahead

Continuing the work to improve KSCB's approach to performance management and quality assurance in a way that strengthens the scrutiny and challenge role of the Board is our main priority. Our success should be reflected in the outcomes for young people. The charts below show a snapshot of the key reporting areas on KSCB activity during 2011/12.

A quarterly report is produced for KSCB and the charts below are extracts from Quarter 4 – March 2011/12.

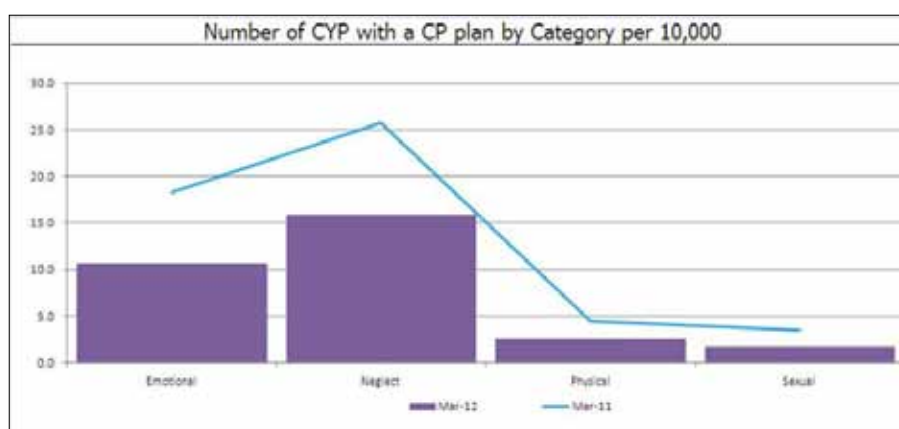


Performance by Kent Districts in March 2012 – % of re-referrals within twelve months. The Asylum and Disability teams, along with Sevenoaks District, are all achieving the target set. All other areas are performing below this target.



Performance by Districts in Kent for reported crimes against children in Quarter 4 of 2011/12

Comparison showing the rate of children and young people per 10,000 population subject to a child protection plan by category of abuse - March 2011 compared to March 2012



What did we do? How well did we do it?

KSCB has examined its constitution over the past year and put in place new governance arrangements following an independent review. This is part of its swift reply to the new expectations arising from Professor Munro's expectations and as a response to the Kent Improvement Plan.

Moreover, it has been necessary to take account of the changes that are currently taking place within the public sector more broadly. KSCB has monitored reforms to the health economy and criminal justice agencies to ensure safeguarding arrangements are not put at risk. Key achievements included:

- Appointment of strategic leads to act as Sub Group chairs with responsibility for implementing the high level priorities of KSCB through their sub group work plan.
- Establishment of a Child Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation Sub Group in November 2011 following discussion between the Children's Commissioner and KSCB Independent Chair.
- Clarification of statutory representation from the health and education sectors.
- The appointment of a voluntary sector representative.

The challenges ahead

During 2012/13 new Clinical Commissioning Groups will become the structures for ensuring that children are adequately safeguarded in Kent. How we liaise with these is not yet known. In addition a new Police and Crime Commissioner should be appointed later in 2012, a key role in deciding which public protection concerns should be prioritised. We are waiting to find out what impact this may have in safeguarding children.

What did we do? How well did we do it?

Key achievements included:

- Representation on the Board of the voluntary sector through Kent Children's Fund Network.
- Setting up an Education Advisory Group to ensure there is a good line of communication between KSCB and the education sector
- Representation of KSCB on the Children's and Young People's Joint Commissioning Board to ensure that agencies are working in partnership to jointly commission services for vulnerable children and families

The challenges ahead

While our new board member representing the voluntary sector is a step, KSCB still has a long way to go towards ensuring engagement across all community organisations so that these voices are better represented in the KSCB.

KSCB is mindful of the impact locally of the national education reforms and recognises the increasing challenge of sustaining and improving the engagement of all organisations in this sector.

Update on Multi-agency Training

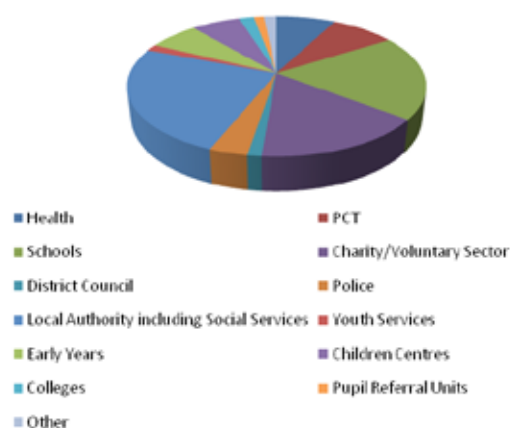
The KSCB has a statutory responsibility to ensure that appropriate child protection training is provided in Kent in order to meet local needs. This covers both the training provided by single agencies to their own staff and multi-agency training where staff from different agencies train together. The delivery of multi-agency basic awareness training by practitioners from all agencies through the KSCB College of Trainers has proved to be an effective model of collaborative working in Kent with 1558 staff receiving the basic awareness training.

During 2011-12, the Learning and Development sub group has been responsible for leading KSCB's work in this area, with the aim to strengthen the competency and confidence of Kent's workforce in child protection matters. The training programme delivered this year was developed based on emerging themes identified through recommendations from Serious Case Reviews, high profile local cases and from operational practitioners and managers. A total of 176 courses were delivered this year with 4887 staff attending.

Following the recommendations and action plan from the KCC Ofsted Report 2010, the Learning and Development sub group has developed and taken on additional safeguarding training throughout the year that was not planned or foreseen when the yearly training programme was originally published, e.g. the Eligibility and Threshold Criteria Workshops that were produced and delivered in May, June and July 2011. This accounted for 33 sessions attended by 1610 multi-agency staff. The 'before and after' evaluation undertaken as part of this training indicated that, almost without exception, staff felt more knowledgeable and confident around the thresholds and their practical application.

This year has also seen a greater involvement with the Voluntary Sector, in particular with Voluntary Action within Kent and the Kent Children Fund Network. These relationships have resulted in more members of the voluntary sector receiving child protection training than ever before, (67 courses with 1001 attendees).

The multi-agency breakdown of attendees on the KSCB programme (not including E-Learning) is outlined here:



In association with Kent and Medway NHS Trust, a Safeguarding Children conference was delivered to GP's in March 2011 from the County's General Practices with over 240 practices being represented. This is the first time such a County event has been held.

Following a multi-agency re-launch, the 13 safeguarding E-learning courses this year had 889 participants. This included a significant number of General Practice Health staff who previously had not received safeguarding training.

As mentioned above, the Learning and Development sub group has established a College of Trainers from across the agencies. Currently, the number of Trainers is 17. They have received specific training (provided by the NSPCC or Canterbury Christchurch University) to qualify them to deliver this training and there is a trainer support programme in place to ensure consistent quality and continued professional development. Additional trainers have been commissioned to assist in the delivery of the more specialist elements of the programme. This approach to multi-agency training is planned to continue.

Ongoing development of the training programme is being undertaken in response to recent Government reports (e.g. Munro 2011). The sub group is looking at more detailed evaluation of training and exploring the use of immersive learning. The aim of this is to ensure staff engage in more critical thinking and risk assessment and management, and ultimately become more reflective in their practice.

"It has enabled me to think differently about how I make assessments of children's needs and to listen to the information that families share"

Health Professional

"I really enjoyed the different perspectives and views from the other professionals attending the training day"

Police Officer

"The whole session was extremely useful and well delivered. Each topic was very useful so I gained a greater understanding in all areas"

Voluntary Sector Worker

Update on the KSCB Improvement Plan

Kent's 2010 OFSTED inspection report revealed concerns about the adequacy of the Kent Safeguarding Children Board and its partner agencies. It was identified that Kent had not been effective in challenging and improving child protection practice and affecting change across the partnership to improve outcomes for the County's most vulnerable children. This was in spite of previous audits and inspections identifying areas that needed to be improved and KSCB agreeing to take key recommendations forward.

Throughout 2011, Kent child protection arrangements have been under improvement notice from Central Government with a monthly improvement board composed of DFE officials and representatives from all the agencies across Kent to monitor and improve child protection arrangements.

The Improvement Plan endorsed by the Kent Improvement Board in April 2011 sets out the overall context, governance arrangements, and planned actions by partners in Kent to improve services to children and support looked after children.

There has been substantial progress made across all ten of the initial core tasks identified in the Plan during the first half of 2011, with focus on a further six areas in the second half of the year.

The response from the Children's Minister to Kent agencies in February 2012 stated that he would take a personal interest in how the Central Referral Unit developed and how front line staff share information on the children most at risk in Kent.

KSCB will continue to monitor the areas it has identified as weak in Kent, outlined in the next chapter particularly concerning a common understanding of thresholds across different professionals.

It will also undertake detailed examination of all actions arising from Serious Case Reviews since 2009 to ensure that appropriate challenge is

provided to all agencies working with children to improve policy and practice in Kent.

Strategic Priorities for 2012/13

The Kent Safeguarding Children Board has three priorities for the coming year, as agreed in its business plan endorsed by members in April 2012.

1) A focus on common understanding of thresholds across the partnership including a reduction in the number of case re-referrals to children's specialist services.

KSCB will continue work in 2012-13 to reduce the number of 'inappropriate' contacts and referrals to Specialist Children's Services. Guidance and policies have been issued to partner agencies and members across the KSCB, offering greater clarity on how to make use of the Common Assessment Framework.

We will know we have made a difference when thresholds for access to services for children in need are understood across all agencies and cases of 'inappropriate' contact and referrals, including re-referrals, are reduced. We will monitor this through a series of audits and through regular reporting of the Quality Assurance Framework.

2) Ensuring the right children are subject to child protection plans.

Over the next 12 months, KSCB will work hard to ensure child protection plans are only in place when there is a clear need for them. Particular scrutiny will be applied in cases where children are subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent year. The objective must be more effective and robust service support throughout Kent for children and families so that children do not remain with a child protection plan year on year. This will involve reinforcing the child protection planning and processes (including through a multi-agency training programme), effective multi-agency case conferences, strategy meetings and core groups and by strengthening the multi agency screening hub.

We will know we have made a difference when our audits shows that assessments are robust, responsive and facilitate multi-agency working. We will expect to see a reduction in the number of children in Kent with a child protection plan when compared to high performing areas and in the rate of re-referrals.

3) Increasing the number and quality of Common Assessments in the context of scrutiny of Kent's early intervention strategy.

Enhancing the competence and confidence of professionals across the whole system of safeguarding children to accept responsibility for, and work with partners to manage risk is the single biggest challenge we face. The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is designed to ensure professionals across the sector – be they teachers, GPs, police or health visitors – carry out precise and detailed assessments of risk in every child's case and work together with other agencies to help build as complete as possible a picture of a child's needs.

Part of this is working to ensure children's needs are met at the earliest opportunity and families get the support they need quickly. In the next year, KSCB will focus on improving the quality and consistency of CAFs so that they are used across the partnership to inform early intervention.

KSCB will work with partner agencies to increase their commitment to use the CAF, and the new Family CAF, and ensure this is reflected in all agencies' priorities and budgets. CAF assessment forms will be reviewed to be more user friendly and family focused and CAF targets will be agreed for partner agencies like health providers and education.

We will know we have made a difference when strategic plans and priorities of partner agencies reflect targets relating to CAF and when children and families are receiving the support they need in the community when they are closed to Specialist Children's Services.

Chapter 4

What happens when a child dies or is seriously harmed in Kent?

There are two processes for responding to a child death in Kent, depending on whether abuse or neglect is known or suspected to be a factor in the death.

The first is called a [Child Death Review Process](#). Since 2008, Child Death Reviews have been a statutory requirement for Local Safeguarding Children Boards who are expected to review the circumstances of all children's deaths (up to the age of 18).

In Kent the Child Death Overview Panel has oversight of the processes, ensuring that:

- reviews occur in a timely fashion;
- the information, support and investigation of each death is appropriate and compassionate;
- there is appropriate investigation or referral of any deaths where there are safeguarding or criminal issues;
- where issues or lessons emerge that have broader relevance, or public health implications, they are effectively disseminated;
- information is appropriately collated and reported to the Department for Education.

The second is known as a [Serious Case Review](#). LSCBs are required to consider holding a Serious Case Review (SCR) when abuse or neglect is known or suspected to be a factor in a child's death and there are concerns about how professionals may have worked together.

The purpose of a SCR is to:

- establish whether there are lessons to be learnt from the case about the way in which local professionals and organisations work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- identify clearly what those lessons are, how they will be acted upon and what is expected to change as a result; and
- as a consequence, improve multi-agency working when it comes to protecting children.

KSCB takes seriously its responsibilities to ensure that lessons learned when children die or are seriously harmed are swiftly embedded and messages are used to support improvement across agencies.

We are committed to publishing our Serious Case Reviews as part of our accountability to the wider community in Kent

Child Deaths Reviews in Kent 11/12

The Child Death Overview Panel has a statutory responsibility to review the death of all children who are resident within KSCB's geographical area from birth up to the age of 18 years.

In 2011/12 there have been 94 deaths, 40 of which were unexpected. This number has remained fairly constant over the 4 years that CDOP has been in operation.

This year the Panel, supported by its Expert Advisory Group, completed the review of 106 cases. This comprised of 48 deaths (13 unexpected) from 2011/12 and 58 deaths (19 unexpected) from 2010/11. In 2010/11 the Panel reviewed 51 cases. Due to improvements in efficiencies and better data collection the Panel were able to review more cases in the current year. These improvements have continued with an independent review of the CDOP procedures in order to further streamline the service that is offered.

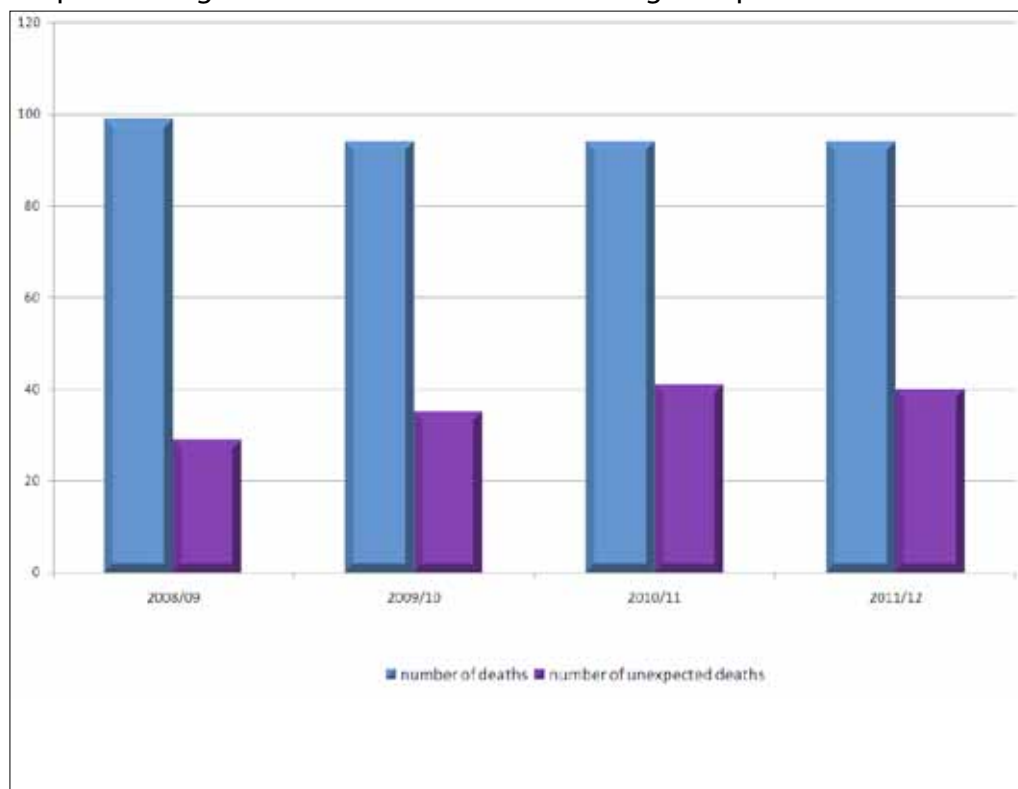
The CDOP procedures also looks at whether there were any modifiable factors which may help prevent similar deaths in the future, and seek to identify any lessons to be learnt from the death, or patterns of similar deaths in the area.

Of the 106 cases reviewed there were 14 where factors were identified which may have made a difference to the outcome. From the cases that the Panel has reviewed over the last four years, a key theme which affects child death relates to safe sleeping.

These issues include:

- Maternal smoking in pregnancy
- Parental smoking and alcohol use
- Co-sleeping (sharing a sleeping surface with an infant under 6 months)
- Environment being too hot or damp.

Graph showing number of child deaths including unexpected deaths



In response to this, a Safe Sleeping campaign was carried out, including additional advice around alcohol and smoking in the run up to Christmas. The feedback from this campaign has been positive from both parents and professionals, and this campaign will be developed over the coming months.

The Panel is required to categorise each death, and identify whether there were any modifiable factors in the circumstances around the death. This information is used to formulate any training or future campaigns to promote safeguarding practices. The deaths reviewed during the period have been identified as being in the following categories:

Table showing the categories of child death

Category of Death

	2010/11	2011/12
Deliberately inflicted injury, abuse or neglect	0	0
Suicide or deliberate self-inflicted harm	<5	<5
Trauma and other external factors	<5	5
Malignancy	<5	9
Acute medical or surgical condition	0	0
Chronic medical condition	0	<5
Chromosomal, genetic and congenital anomalies	5	7
Perinatal/neonatal event	34	20
Infection	<5	<5
Sudden unexpected, unexplained death	11	<5

Serious Case Reviews in Kent 11/12

KSCB commissioned two Serious Case Reviews (SCRs), one Root Cause Analysis (RCA) and one independent review during 2011/12.

Ashley's Story

Ashley was just 4 months old when he was taken to hospital. He had been shaken badly and he died. His mother had mental health problems and his father was known to be violent and drink heavily. Agencies did not share all the information they knew about the family.

Key recommendations from this case were to engage with and observe children as part of any child assessment process and to maintain an inquisitive nature about the impact of adult's behaviour on children around them. This will ensure there is ongoing evaluation of any risks to children from adults around them.

Antonio's Story

Antonio was taken to hospital, with multiple injuries. He was just a few weeks old. Neither Antonio nor his parents were known to any statutory agencies in Kent. Antonio recovered from his injuries and was placed with foster parents. The review of this case recognised the impressive speed and thoroughness of all the response from all agencies after the discovery of Antonio's injuries. They worked together to manage a distressing and difficult situation.

Rebecca's Story

Rebecca was found unconscious at home. She was 16 months old. When she arrived at hospital she was found to be badly injured. The family was well known to Kent Social Services, different health professionals and Kent Police. Rebecca and her brother had previously been the subject of a Child Protection Plan.

Concerns included domestic violence, lack of stimulation and neglect. The family did not want to work with any statutory agencies and tried to mislead professionals. They were hostile to support.

Key recommendations from this case were for all agencies to ensure they are aware of the implications of new partners joining the family and the importance of always sharing information with each other. There is also the challenge of not accepting everything at face value when working with families who on the surface seem to be very co-operative.

The challenges ahead

Actions from serious case reviews must be fully evidenced, with agencies routinely providing information to update action plans in a timely manner. KSCB remains concerned that actions arising from SCRs are not effectively monitored with sufficiently robust challenge given to any agency failing to evidence improvement.

Conclusion

Where next for child protection in Kent?

The national Munro Review completed in 2011 provides us all with a new focus on child protection. As we publish this annual report Professor Munro has provided her own analysis of how swiftly improvements are happening. Kent agencies have worked hard over the past year, in KSCB's view, to address key failings in protecting children across the County. However, when drilling down into the detail, it is clear that KSCB must continue to improve its own quality assurance of Kent agencies and be confident to provide challenge, when action is not taken swiftly to protect children. We need to get better at really knowing how good Kent is in protecting the most vulnerable children across the entire county.

Unless Kent Safeguarding Children Board is an effective partnership body that provides scrutiny of the 'front door' we won't be able to see what has really changed in Kent.

We hope this annual report has given you some flavour of what has improved in Kent during 2011/12 and what remains to be tackled.. We are confident that the priorities we have chosen for the coming year are clearly based on what we know are the safeguarding challenges for 2012/13.

KSCB takes its responsibility to safeguarding children and young people in Kent seriously and will report annually to the Leader of Kent County Council, the new Police and Crime Commissioner and the developing Clinical Commissioning Groups in Kent to inform them of how safe children are in the county. We will also publish information at least once a year so all those people living in Kent are informed of what's happening and what has changed to improve the services offered to the county's most vulnerable children and their families.

Finally and most importantly, the judgement for how well KSCB is doing will lie in its contribution to the outcomes for and experience of those children in the child protection system.

"I believe that Social Services are fair and clear"

Young Person, Child Protection Case Conference Audit

"I don't think I was let to get my point across even if most of the report that was given was incorrect"

Parent, Child Protection Case Conference Audit

"I think the meeting was handled very well, everyone got a fair say and all issues were aired"

Parent, Child Protection Case Conference Audit

"Listen don't speak over as if they aren't needed to be listened to"

Young Person, Child Protection Case Conference Audit

Messages for local politicians

- You can be the eyes and ears of vulnerable children and families in your Ward. Councillor Jenny Whittle, the Lead Member, is your route to making sure their voices are heard by KSCB.
- We are in the midst of recession. It's very likely that the services for children, young people and families in your Ward will be feeling the effects of this. This may have a knock on effect on the well being of the most vulnerable children and young people in your Ward too.
- When you scrutinise any plans for Kent, keep the protection of children at the front of your mind. Ask questions about how any plans will affect children and young people.

Messages for non-executive directors

- Non-executive directors (NEDs) in the health service have a key role in scrutinising the governance and planning across a range of organisations.
- NEDs are therefore well placed to examine each organisation's consideration of children and young people in their planning, ensuring this receives appropriate priority.

Messages for Chief Executives and Directors

- Ensure your workforce is able to contribute to the provision of KSCB safeguarding training and to attend training courses and learning events .
- Your agency's contribution to the work of KSCB must be categorised as of the highest priority .
- The KSCB needs to understand the impact of any organisational restructures on your capacity to safeguard children and young people in Kent.

Messages for children's workforce

- Ensure you are booked onto, and attend, all safeguarding courses and learning events required by KSCB for your role .
- Be familiar with, and use when necessary, KSCB's Escalation Policy to ensure an appropriate response to children and families .
- Use your representative on KSCB to make sure the voices of children and young people and front line practitioners are heard.

Messages for the community

- You are in the best place to look out for children and young people and to raise the alarm if something is going wrong for them .
- We all share responsibility for protecting children. If you are worried about a child, follow the steps on the KSCB website www.kscb.org.uk

Messages for the local media

- Communicating the message that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility is crucial to the KSCB and you are ideally positioned to help do this .
- The work of KSCB will be of great interest to your readers and listeners .
- Your contribution to safeguarding children and young people in Kent, through public awareness raising campaigns, is potentially very significant .

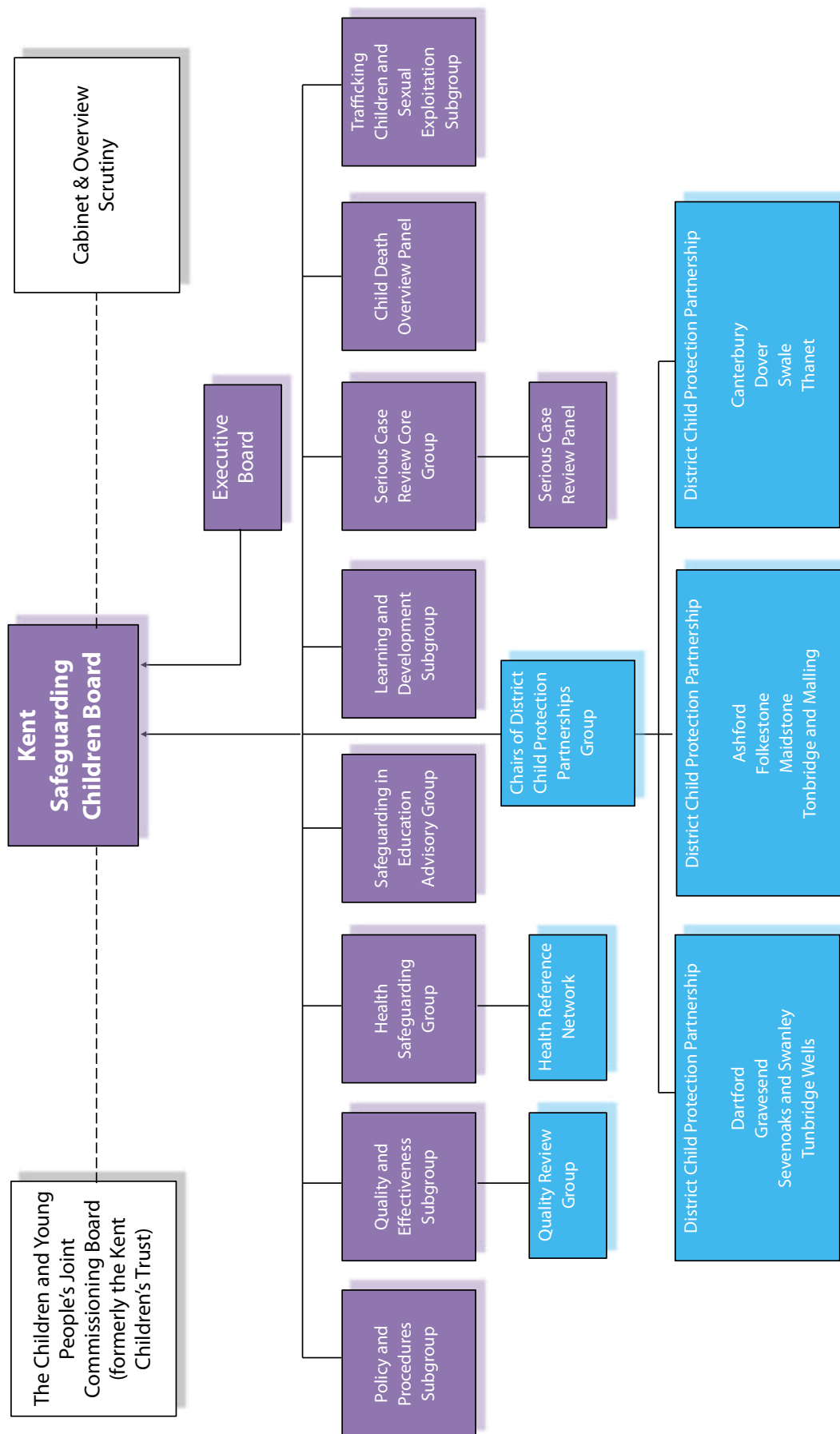
Appendix A

Membership of KSCB as at June 2011

Name	Role
Maggie Blyth	Independent Chair
Alan Dowie	Director Kent Probation Trust
Andrew Ireland	Corporate Director Family and Social Care
Angela Slaven	Director of Service Improvement
David Hughes	District Councils representative - Chief Executive
Donna Marriot	Head of Safeguarding Children's Services
Jean Imray	Interim Director Children's Specialist Services
Lorraine Goodsell	Commissioner Representative Health - Director
Maria Shepherd	Superintendent Kent Police
Mark Shepperd	Provider Representative: Director Community Health
Meradin Peachey	Director of Public Health
Mike Stevens	Lay Member
Nick Sherlock	Head of Safeguarding Adult Services
Patrick Leeson	Corporate Director Education
Roger Sykes	Lay Member
Rowena Linn	Head Teacher (Primary)
Sarah Andrews	Director of Nursing and Quality, NHS Kent and Medway
Sean Kearns	Chief Executive Connexions
Steve Dabrowski	Voluntary Sector Representative
Steve Hunt	Head of Service CAFCASS
TBA	Early Years Manager
TBA	Head Teacher (Secondary or primary)

PARTICIPANT OBSERVER

Jenny Whittle	Lead Member for Specialist Children's Services
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Appendix C

Budget Statement 2011/12

Expenditure	Projected
Salaries	£284,167
Mobile working	£1,098
Travel	£2,283
ICT consumables, hardware and software and equipment	£10,877
Direct business unit staffing costs	£298,435
Printing and publications	£1,814
Room hire & refreshments (including training events)	£26,997
Stationery	£3,598
Grants to 12 District Child Protection Partnerships	£6,000
Independent Chair	£36,204
Total Board and sub group support	£74,613
Serious case reviews	£26,178
Implementing Munro and immersive learning	£21,918
E-learning, external trainers and annual conference	£23,119
Total Learning and Development	£45,037
Total Expenditure	£444,253

Income	Projected
CAFCASS	£550
Connexions	£10,000
Eastern and Coastal Kent PCT	£39,664
Kent County Council – Education Safeguarding	£40,167
Kent County Council – Specialist Children’s Services	£101,000
Kent Police	£50,000
Kent Probation	£6,276
West Kent PCT	£50,170
Youth Offending Service	£8,000
Total from contributing partners	£305,827
Child Death Grant	£96,741
Income from training	£38,449
Residual funds brought forward from 2010/11	£457,173
Total variable income	£592,363
Total Income	£898,190
Balance available to carry forward into 2012/13	£453,937

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Written by Penny Davies, Kent Safeguarding Children Board Manager

