

# Kent Safeguarding Children Board



## Summary of Annual Report 2006-07

## Forward

March 2007 saw the conclusion of a challenging but successful first year for the Kent Safeguarding Children Board. This report summaries some of the key activities that took place during 2006-7.

Like all LSCBs across England, we have had to manage the transition from the Kent Child Protection Committee remit to the much wider safeguarding agenda, as set out in the Children's Act 2004 and in the government guidance of *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006*.

Members of the KSCB have worked hard this year to ensure that the membership and structures required for an effective and robust KSCB are in place. Whilst some of the KSCB structures will continue to evolve, there are firm foundations in place to ensure that the KSCB will serve children, young people and families within Kent well.

Kent's very good performance in safeguarding is being enhanced by improvements in infrastructure, addressing service developments in high-risk areas, as well as further improving an informed and skilled workforce.

Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility and requires a co-ordinated multi-agency response. A diverse range of agencies are involved in the work of the Kent Safeguarding Children Board ; some are specialist services, working with particular groups of children and families, and others are universal services, working across all age groups and communities. The Board would like to thank everyone for their hard work and commitment throughout this year which has contributed to the successful transition from KCPC to the new KSCB. I am confident we can build on this very positive start and embrace the challenges ahead.

*Penny Davies*  
Kent Safeguarding Children Board Manager

## Introduction

A range of skills and expertise from a variety of professions and voluntary organisations are required to safeguard children. The Kent Safeguarding Children Board and its member agencies are responsible for ensuring these essential services are co-ordinated, directed, and developed in an effective safeguarding service for the children of Kent. In doing this, the Board prioritises protecting children from abuse and neglect and following a clear set of values based upon current human rights and children and families legislation, guidance issued by central government, and the best standards of professional practice. In respect of its child protection work the Board upholds the following principles.

- In all cases the child's welfare will be the paramount consideration
- Staff will actively work to develop relationship with parents that will promote working in partnership and take account of their views and those of their children. Information will be shared with parents, and children (when their age and understanding permits), unless this would place a child at risk or prejudice a criminal investigation or prosecution
- Where the continuing welfare and safety of a child can be secured by informal means, this will be the preferred option
- Where informal assistance is not appropriate to safeguard a child, the formal child protection process will be invoked, including any necessary legal actions
- Wherever possible, the child's welfare will be safeguarded within the family
- Where it is necessary to remove a child from a family, priority will be given to returning the child to the family's care wherever this is compatible with the child's best interests.
- Consideration will be given to the possible negative effects of any intervention and the least intrusive option compatible with safeguarding the child's welfare and safety should be chosen after a proper assessment of needs and risks
- In all decisions and services, full regard will be given to the child's age, ethnicity, culture, language, religious background, gender, or disability.
- The right the confidentiality of parents, carers, and children will be respected and information only shared in the interest of the child
- With the exceptions detailed in the Kent County Council Children Families and Education Directorate's 'Client Access to Personal Records' policy (i.e. where the safety of the subject may be compromised, where information relates to a third party, or where a detection or prevention of a crime may be compromised), the subject of the information will be allowed access to computerised and paper records held by the Kent County Council

The Board's purpose of providing a framework for protection when individual children are at risk of abuse, and for preventing abuse, is achieved through its main areas of activity:

- Establishing agreed inter-agency procedures and policies for responding to cases of child abuse and co-ordinating the work of professionals in its member agencies
- Promoting and reviewing the effective operation of the child protection process through its three Local Child Protection Co-ordinating Committees and subgroups
- Improving standards of practice by means of its extensive inter-agency child protection training programme
- Identifying important trends and problems by analysis of statistical and management information
- Identifying learning points for improving procedure and practice from the review of individual cases of very serious abuse
- Raising awareness to specific child protection matters, through a programme of public information campaigns

The safeguarding responsibility of the KSCB includes work to safeguard and promote the welfare of groups of children who are potentially more vulnerable than the general population:

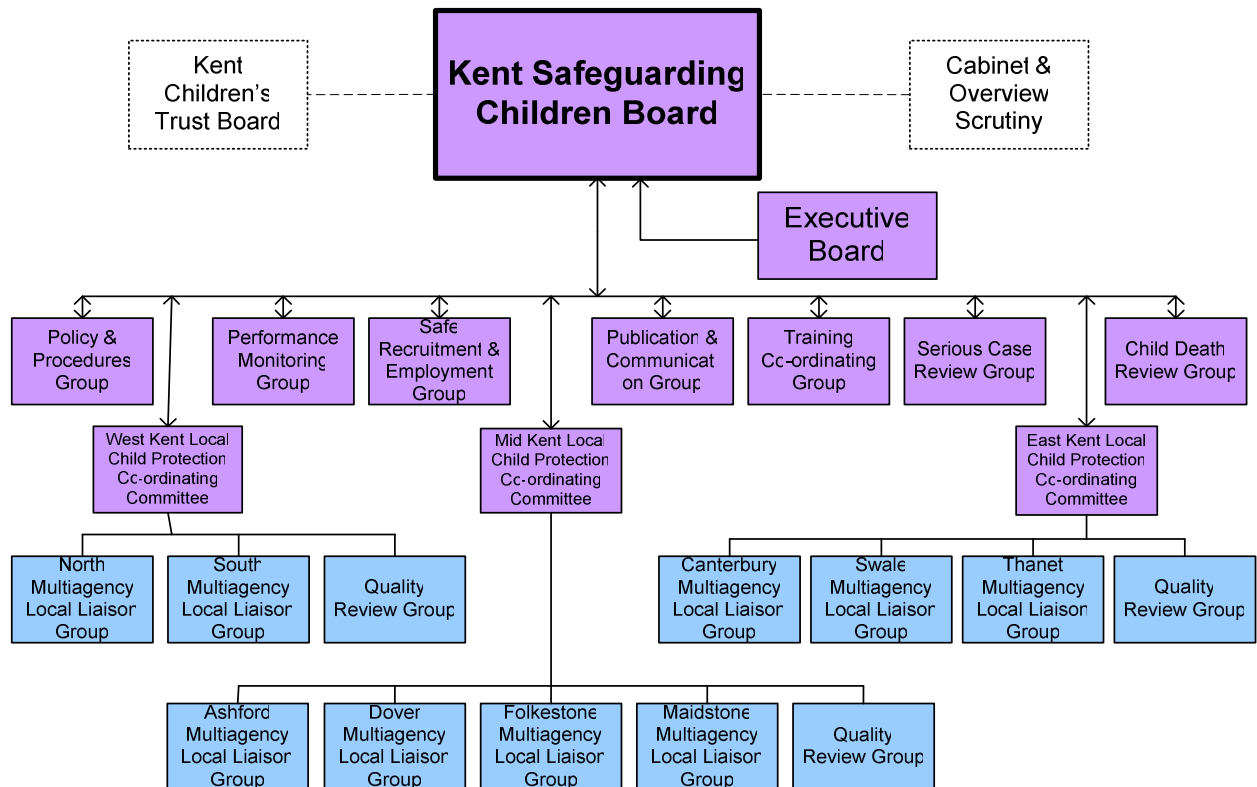
- Children who are privately fostered
- Disabled children
- Looked after Children
- Children who run away from their families or institutions

Those whose health/well-being may be impaired due to:

- Misuse of drugs and alcohol (by themselves or by their parents)
- Early sexual activity with the accompanying risks of becoming a teenage parent or of contracting sexually transmitted infections
- Bullying
- Mental health problems (including self harming)
- Factors such as obesity, cigarette smoking or poor take up of immunisation
- Injury or death as a result of traffic accidents or house fires etc.
- Gambling
- Forced marriage

## Kent Safeguarding Children Board

The Board meets four times a year and is assisted in its work by the eleven multi-agency subgroups which drive the operational work of the KSCB. For membership of Board see Appendix 1



In discharging its responsibilities, the Kent Safeguarding Children Board ensures that:

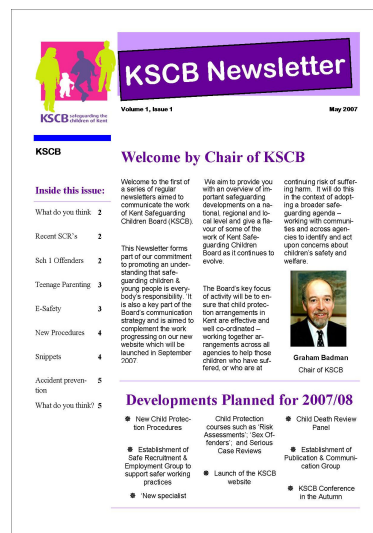
- The welfare of the child is central to the work of the Board;
- All policies, procedures and guidance and service provision incorporate principles of equal opportunities, are non-discriminatory, values cultural diversity and facilitate the involvement of children and families wherever possible;
- The independence of the Board is maintained, as it is essential to fulfilling its purpose.

The post of Board Manager, Board Support Officer, Independent Chair of the Serious Case Review Panel, the Training Manager, Training Administrator, CRB Officer and Custodian of the CPR are financed by the Board and these officers ensure the wide range of the Board's work is completed and they assist member agencies and the

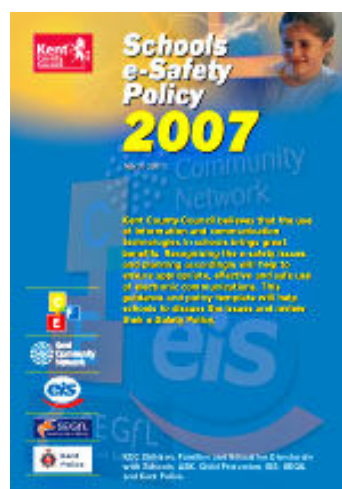
public with information about policies and procedures, public information campaigns, and training events.

**Key KSCB achievements in 2006 - 2007:**

- In May 2006, KSCB created the post of the KSCB manager to act as a driver for the Board's work. This post was successfully appointed to in January 2007.
- Kent Safeguarding Children Board has agreed its Constitution and sub-group structure arrangements as well as introducing rigorous action planning. It has undertaken focussed discussions and briefings to Board members in relation to Working Together 2006, Private Fostering, Safe Recruitment and Allegations Management, Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), Children Missing from Foster Care and Residential Homes, E-safety and Domestic Violence.
- Development of the Kent Safeguarding Children Board Newsletter



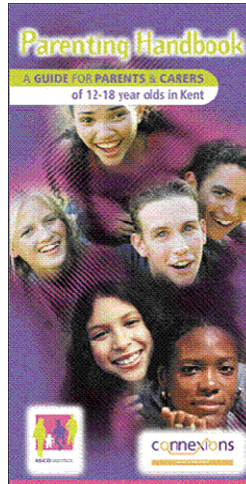
- E-Safety Strategy Group produced an e-Safety Policy which includes a template to help schools write their own e-safety policy



- Two Safeguarding Children Online conferences, in partnership with Kent Police, for head teachers, e-Safety and child protection co-ordinators which coincided with the release of these posters.



- Private Fostering leaflets have been produced and distributed widely to parents, carers, children; and professionals.
- A Trainers pack has also been developed regarding Domestic Violence in partnership with the Kent & Medway Domestic Violence Strategy Group,
- The Board has delivered in excess of 1500 training places to practitioners across Kent covering core competencies and more specialised learning modules, particularly around Children with Disabilities.
- The KSCB has produced and distributed 70,000 copies of a 'Teenage Parenting Information Handbook' which includes information on – adolescence & puberty, bullying, sexual exploration, domestic violence against parents, parental substance misuse, living away from home, teenage parents and Young carers. The handbook has had wide distribution through member agencies of the Kent Safeguarding Children Board.



- Procedural Amendments regarding siblings being placed on the Kent Child Protection Register.
- Three serious case reviews have been carried out and completed with clear actions plans to address the lessons learnt.
- A national event for Local Safeguarding Children's Boards and their partners was held on the 13<sup>th</sup> March at the National Motorcycle Museum, Birmingham. A workshop was facilitated by KSCB, CFE and CEOP on On-line exploitation. Positive feedback was received from the audience on what work was being done in Kent in this area.
- "What to do if you are worried a child is being abused" booklet was updated in December 2006 and distributed to organisations working with children.

### **Initial & Core Assessments**

Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007 Children Social Services received a total of 10516 referral request to provide assessment and services for children in need. Of these referrals, 89.9% progressed to an Initial Assessment. This assessment is one regulated by Guidance, and is a critical process of professional intervention and family support.

Improvement in initial assessments completed within timescales increased during the year from 66.7% to 75.3% and in core assessments within timescales increased from 70.3% to 84.3%. *.Fig 1*

Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) C64 measures the percentage of Core Assessments completed within 35 working days. Core Assessments are an in depth assessment of a child and their family, which are of themselves also a tool of intervention. Kent's performance in PAF C64 has improved year on year, to the current performance of Band 5, the highest band achievable.



PAF C64 - Core Assessments Completed				
	Total	Completed Within 35 Days	% Completed Within 35 Days	PAF Banding
KCC (inc Asylum)	3,341	2,818	84.3%	●●●●●
East Kent	1,069	866	81.0%	●●●●●
Mid Kent	1,281	1,073	83.8%	●●●●●
West Kent	657	567	86.3%	●●●●●
Disability	145	129	89.0%	n/a
Asylum	189	183	96.8%	n/a
Ashford	242	204	84.3%	●●●●●
Canterbury	420	369	87.9%	●●●●●
Dartford	167	139	83.2%	●●●●●
Dover	613	561	91.5%	●●●●●
Gravesham	267	250	93.6%	●●●●●
Maidstone	86	67	77.9%	●●●●
Sevenoaks	52	44	84.6%	●●●●●
Shepway	340	241	70.9%	●●●●
Swale	230	195	84.8%	●●●●●
Thanet	419	302	72.1%	●●●●
Tonbridge & Malling	67	45	67.2%	●●●
Tunbridge Wells	104	89	85.6%	●●●●●
EK Disability	68	59	86.8%	n/a
MK Disability	29	23	79.3%	n/a
WK Disability	48	47	97.9%	n/a

Fig 1

## Child Protection Activity in Kent

The duty to protect children from abuse and neglect is a special aspect of the Children's Social Services responsibility under the Children Act 1989 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need. It is therefore helpful to place child protection within the context of the substantial numbers of children and families who are assisted by the Children Families and Education Directorate each year. Services provided for these children are frequently aimed at preventing the risk of abuse by supporting families in times of stress and other difficulties. Although Children's Social Services is the agency with primary responsibility for assessing and co-ordinating services for children in need and for children in need of protection, this task would be impossible without the skills and services of other agencies. The Kent Safeguarding Children Board provides the forum for co-ordinating these vital services for safeguarding children. Statistical reports of child protection activity are an important element in formulating strategies to protect individual children from abuse and to reduce the overall incidence of abuse.

## Child Protection as a part of all Children's Social Services referrals

Of all referral received during 2006/7, 2164 concerned children where there was the possibility of abuse or neglect. This represented 20.6% of children referred to Social Services in the year. In addition to new referrals, Children's Social Services has a substantial number of active cases. Of these, an average of 8.2% are designated as child protection cases. Child protection work therefore represents a substantial element of all children and families work undertaken by Children's Social Services. As other agencies are involved in risk assessment or in providing elements of agreed multi-agency child protection plans, this is a significant component of all children's services within the county.

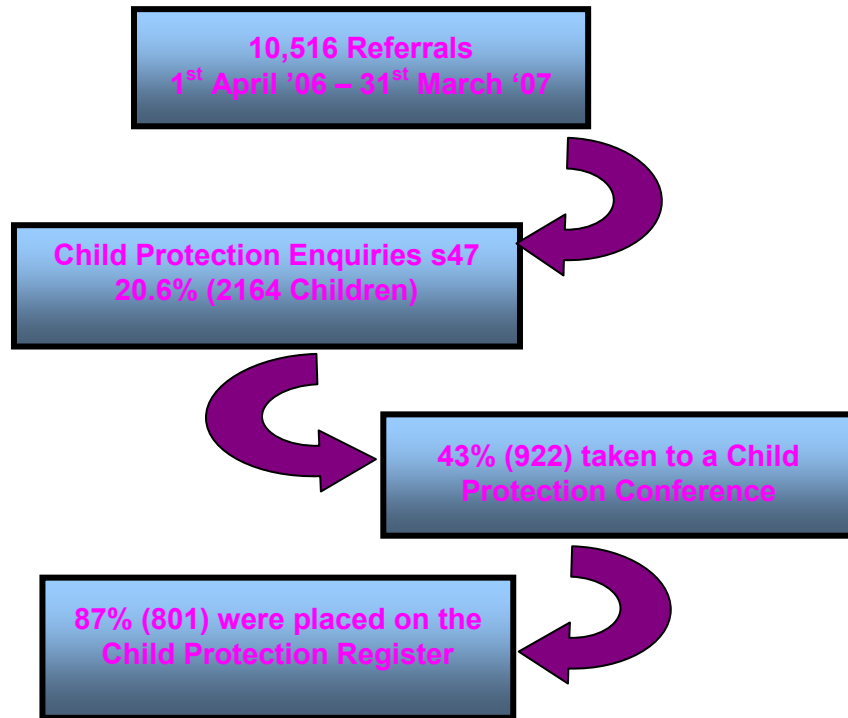


Fig 2

Of the 922 cases subject to the child protection case conference process, over 87% were confirmed to be at continued risk of significant harm and their names placed on the Kent Child Protection Register and detailed multi-agency protection plans agreed.

The rate of Registrations during 2006/07 of children on the Child Protection (CP) Register per 10,000 this year was 32.2, up from 28 last year and above England's average of 30.2.

The rate of children on the register is now 27.9 compared to 24 last year (25.3 nationally last year). In any one year, some variation around this level will be expected, and the graph (Fig 3) details proportional levels over the past 7 years.

### Children on CP Register per 10,000

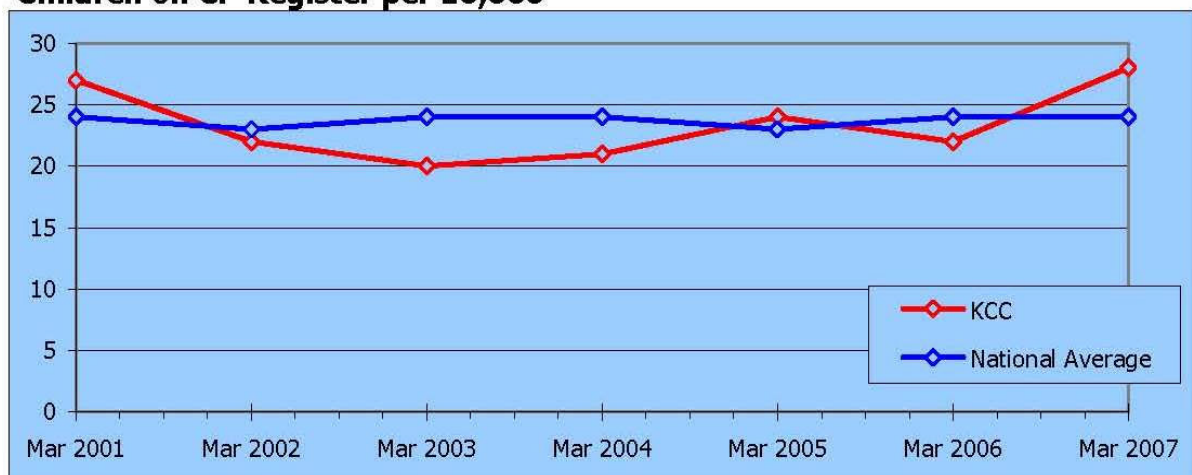


Fig 3

Kent, when compared to both the National average and the comparator 'Basket of Authorities' (Fig 4) does show a higher proportion of children on the CP register, and a lower level of children looked after. This does indicate a correlation between the management of risk and good outcomes in a community, and the cohort whose needs are so extensive that they become looked after.

Region / Authority	CP Per 10,000	LAC Per 10,000
England	24	55
South East	20	42
London	29	72
KCC	28	38
Medway	31	58
Buckinghamshire	14	28
Essex	17	44
Hampshire	16	38
Oxfordshire	20	31
Surrey	11	31
East Sussex	27	44
West Sussex	21	46

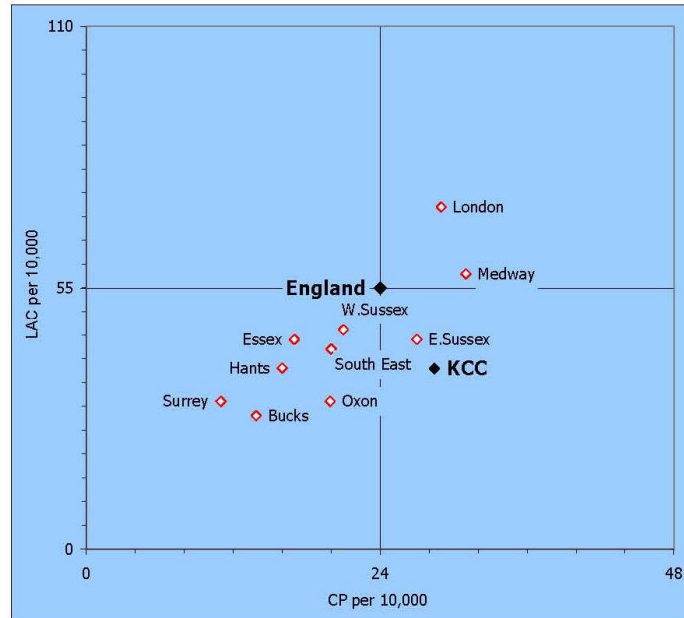


Fig 4

Registration takes account of the types of abuse to which each child is considered to be at risk. The four categories used on the Kent register are identical to those used in all other local authority registers and follow the requirements of central government. They are:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

Children may be registered as being at risk of more than one type of abuse. Fig 5 indicates registrations by the main category of abuse of each child.

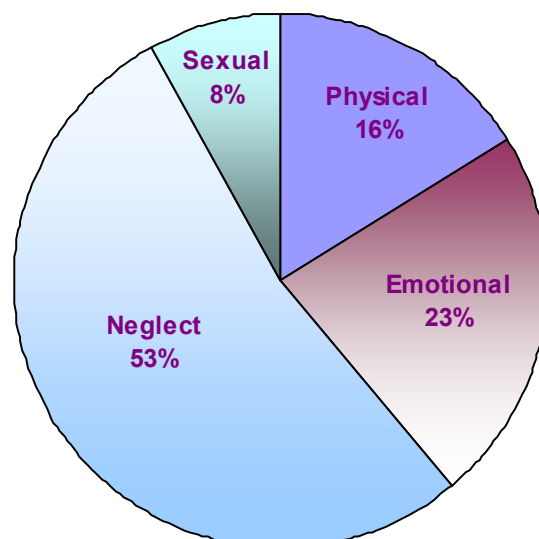


Fig 5

The total number of children on the Kent Child Protection Register will vary from day to day and year on year, comparisons are normally made for 31<sup>st</sup> March in each year. There is however a considerable amount of activity during the year with new registration being added to the register and children's names being removed when risk has been resolved.

Neglect continues as in previous years to be the main reason for children being registered under this category. Physical and sexual abuse has decreased over the last three years.

### **Next Steps**

The Board is aware that there remains much work to be done and particular areas of priority have been identified and are already being progressed e.g.

1. Continuing development of KSCB as a strategic board to influence, lead and performance monitor the work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Kent; and, developing its links with the Kent Children's Trust Board
2. To ensure there are adequate resources for the functioning of the Board.
3. Reducing the incidence and impact of domestic violence on children and families.
4. To undertake serious case reviews, child death reviews (from April 2008) and other related reviews into practice and ensure that lessons are learnt and there are improvements in arrangements and practice accordingly
5. To review 'Kent & Medway Child Protection and Children in Need Interagency Procedures', protocols and practice guidance to ensure effective safeguarding
6. Promoting and implementing safe-recruitment & allegations management practice within all sectors.
7. Developing and maintaining an informed social care workforce.
8. Reducing the proportion of children and young people who feel unsafe in schools and their local area, by developing tailored multi-agency responses to issues identified through further analysis of the Children and Young People of Kent Survey.
9. KSCB's Newsletter for all Kent children's social care workforce includes the independent sector ([http://www.kcpc.org.uk/kscb\\_newslettermay07.pdf](http://www.kcpc.org.uk/kscb_newslettermay07.pdf)).
10. Website to be completed revised to reflect the wider safeguarding remit of the Kent Safeguarding Children Board and this is currently in development.

11. To develop and review inter-agency training.
12. Undertake a section 11 audit
13. Ensure a strong focus on safeguarding is an integral part of all integrated working processes that are being put in place e.g. Common Assessment Framework, ContactPoint, Lead Professional, Information Sharing, integrated service delivery during 2007/8.
14. Continue to raise the public awareness of safeguarding and encourage them to seek assistance at the early stages of any difficulty by alerting them to the wide range of services available for support and help. In particular, the board will:
  - Continue the publicity of the dangers to children from domestic violence
  - Continue to raise awareness of what to do if you are concerned a child may be being abused
  - Rewrite the child protection conference leaflets for children and their families

## Membership of the Kent Safeguarding Children Board

The Board's membership follows central government guidance in 'Working Together 2006' and represents the principal agencies and professions engaged in child protection in Kent. Mr Graham Badman, Managing Director of Kent Children Families and Education, chairs the Board. Strategic managers represent the following organisations:

Adult Mental Health Services  
Adult Social Services  
Children & Families Court Advisory Support Service  
Children Social Services  
Children, Families & Education  
Crown Prosecution Service  
District Councils in Kent  
East Kent Coastal Kent Primary Care Trust  
Health Trusts  
Kent & Medway Connexions  
Ofsted  
Police  
Probation Service  
Public Health  
South East Kent Coastal Ambulance Service  
West Kent Primary Care Trust  
Youth Justice Service

All members who sit on the Board have a strategic role within their agency, and are of a seniority to enable them to:

- Speak for their organisation with authority;
- Commit their organisation on policy and practice matters;
- Hold their organisation to account;
- Influence the development of their agency's practices;
- Ensure that child protection and safeguarding services within those agencies are adequately resourced;
- Contribute to the development of robust and effective monitoring and performance functions.

