

By: Peter Oakford, Cabinet Member for Specialist Children's Services
Andrew Ireland, Corporate Director, Families and Social Care
Gill Rigg, Independent Chair of Kent Safeguarding Children Board

To: County Council – 20th October 2016

Subject: Kent Safeguarding Children Board – 2015/16 Annual Report

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This attached annual report from Kent Safeguarding Children Board describes the progress made in improving the safeguarding services provided to Kent's children and young people from April 2015 until March 2016, and outlines the challenges ahead over the next year.

Recommendation: County Council is asked to COMMENT on the progress made and NOTE the 2015/16 Annual Report attached.

1. Introduction

(1) This report presents the 2015/16 Annual Report produced by Gill Rigg, the Independent Chair of Kent Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB) and is endorsed by members of that Board. Current Government statutory guidance contained in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015) issued by the Department for Education, sets out the requirement introduced through The Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2006 for Local Safeguarding Children Boards to produce and publish an annual report. This report provides a rigorous and transparent assessment of the effectiveness of local child safeguarding arrangements and has been designed for circulation to all stakeholders interested in the safeguarding of Kent's children and young people.

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

(3) The Annual Report includes lessons learned from management reviews, serious case reviews (SCRs), multi-agency audits and child deaths within the reporting period.

(4) In Working Together 2015, it specifies that once the report is published it should be submitted to the Chief Executive (where one is in situ), the Leader of the Council, the local Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board. Within Kent, it has been the practice to present this report to a meeting of the full Council

2. The 2015/16 Annual Report

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

(2) The Independent Chair of KSCB, Gill Rigg has built on the previous year's significant reorganisation of the Board's structure, with greater contributions being made by the Board's Sub Groups. It has been recognised by Board members, Business Group members and Sub Group members, that this is having a significant impact on how the Board conducts its business.

(3) One of the key challenges for the period covered by this report has been the development of the KSCB's continued response to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). A Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) Group has been established which oversees and reports on how partners are working to identify and respond to cases of CSE. MASE have enhanced the CSE Strategy and Action Plan and partner agencies have undertaken a CSE self-assessment; the outcomes of which have been used to evidence for the Action Plan. In addition, the Board has established a cohort of over 100 multi-agency CSE Champions, who are operational staff and managers who share CSE messages and updates with their colleagues. Wider CSE training has been produced and District Councils are leading on the training of Taxi Drivers and Hoteliers. This is in support of the public facing CSE awareness programme known as Operation Willow. The ongoing challenge relates to how to engage with young people to use their knowledge and networks to broaden young people's awareness of CSE. Progress will be reported next year.

(4) The second key challenge for the Board was how it captures and uses the voice of children and young people in Kent. It has been seeking different ways of ensuring that their voice is heard, how it influences the Board priorities and partner agency activity that is undertaken. The Board has continued with how it promotes the work and experiences of young people through its standing Young Person agenda item at the beginning of each KSCB meeting. The presentations by young people have been informative and popular with Board members. As well as showcasing some of the great work around the county, these sessions have provided significant challenges to Board members from some young people who have experienced services as clients. This has been supported with Young People being directly involved in the delivery of the KSCB Annual Conference by way of presentations, workshops and co-chairing. The Board still have the on-going challenging of evidencing the 'So What?' This features in the Board's Business Plan.

(5) With regard to the question 'how safe are children in Kent?' the report indicates, the number of children with a Child Protection Plan (CPP) that at year end, 2015/16, the number of children on CP Plans was 1049. This compares to 1240 at the last year end, a decrease of 191. KSCB will continue to monitor this to see if this continues to be in line with those of our statistical neighbours. KSCB will make sure that the focus remains on ensuring that all agencies have a common understanding of thresholds for child protection intervention.

(6) The year on year figures for Children in Care, (CiC), excluding Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC), show a reduction of 48, from 1502 to 1454. On the 31st March 2016, excluding Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, there

were 1283 CiC placed in Kent by other Local Authorities, an increase of 72 on the previous year.

(7) At year end, 2014/15, there were 1052 Children In Need (CIN) cases that had been open for 12 months or more, this compares to 992 in 2015-16, a reduction of 60 cases. For CIN cases open for 6 months or more, the figures were 1472 for 2015/16 against 1633 for 2014/15, a decrease of 161. The figures include cases open for 6 months or more – not those open between 6 and 12 months.

(8) The Kent Family Support Framework (KFSF) was launched to ensure the highest quality service delivery and improved outcomes for children, young people and families who need Early Help. The Early Help Triage team receives around 800 Early Help Notifications (EHNs) per month. During 2015/16, there were 10292 cases of children and families being supported by EHPS. As at 31st March 2016, there were 3143 open cases of children and families being supported by Early Help Units. The percentage of cases closed with a positive outcome has increased from 68.8% in March 2015 to 83.4% in March 2016. The percentage of cases stepped up from Early Help to SCS has reduced from 9.4% in March 2015 to 5.5% in March 2016. These are cases that originally did not meet the Threshold Criteria for Children in Need (CIN) or Child Protection (CP), but following support from, and further assessment, by EHPS staff, the needs of the child has been deemed to have met the criteria and has been 'stepped up' to Specialist Children's Services (SCS).

(9) The issue of asylum seekers continues to receive high profile media and political attention. At 31st March 2016, there were 866 UASC Children in Care in Kent. This is an increase of 498 from 368 at 31st March 2015.

(10) KSCB is committed to publishing the findings from all Case Reviews. One Serious Case Reviews (SCR) was commissioned during the 2015-16 financial year, however, due to ongoing criminal proceedings; the case has not yet been able to be published. Other reviews have been undertaken and the lessons from all of these and from other National SCRs have influenced the focus of KSCB's multi-agency learning and development strategy and training programme.

(11) During this reporting period KSCB has undertaken a number of multi agency audits to understand what is happening across different front line settings in protecting children. The follow up to the Section 11 audit on 'The Voice of the Child' was undertaken with statutory agencies across Kent providing evidence to the Board on how they are meeting the many aspects of their action plans following their original submissions. Where specific action has been required by certain agencies to improve their contributions, KSCB is closely monitoring this to ensure all agencies are discharging their safeguarding duties. The outcomes of this and other multi-agency audits undertaken throughout the year has been used to inform the KSCB training programme to ensure that learning is shared with frontline operational staff. An enhanced multi-agency audit programme has been planned for 2016/17 and the outcomes of these audits will be reported next year.

3. Conclusions

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

accountability. The Board's Groups have established a more consistent and stable membership which has allowed them to be more focussed on the key issues, for example, Early Help, 'children who go missing', 'On-Line safety' and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). All of these continue to feature in the Board's Strategic Priorities for 2015-18, alongside, Child Sexual Exploitation, Radicalisation, Domestic Abuse and working with parents with mental health and/or substance misuse issues.

4. Recommendations

(1) County Council is asked to:

- (a) COMMENT on the progress and improvements made during 2015/16, as detailed in the Annual Report from Kent Safeguarding Children Board
- (b) NOTE the 2015/16 Annual Report attached.

5. Background Documents

None

6. Contact details

Mark Janaway, Programme and Performance Manager
Kent Safeguarding Children Board
03000 417103
mark.janaway@kent.gov.uk