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To: County Council – 19<sup>th</sup> October 2017

Subject: Kent Safeguarding Children Board – 2016/17 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 2016 until March 2017, and outlines the challenges ahead over the next year.

**Recommendation:** County Council is asked to COMMENT on the progress made and NOTE the 2016/17 Annual Report attached.

## 1. Introduction

(1) This report presents the 2016/17 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 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) Through its review of last year's key priorities, this Report identifies progress across Kent in the improvement of child safeguarding practice. It also identifies areas of vulnerabilities and what action is being taken to address challenges where they remain.

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

(4) Working Together 2015, 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 2016/17 Annual Report**

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

(2) The Independent Chair of KSCB has continued to build on the on the work of the Board, its Business Group and sub groups. It has been recognised by members of all groups, that this is having a significant impact on how the Board conducts its business. This Report highlights the work of each of the Board's Sub Groups, exploring their achievements, challenges and next steps. The Report acknowledges the significant steps made throughout the year and recognises the challenges ahead.

(3) Following the Ofsted Review of the LSCB in March 2017, (undertaken concurrently with the inspection of the Local Authority), Inspectors reported that the Kent Safeguarding Children Board (KSCB) 'requires improvement to be good'. The Inspectors recognised areas of good multi-agency partnership working and safeguarding, but made recommendations around the need for the Board to have a wider understanding of multi-agency performance information and to have greater oversight of the key risks that might reduce the ability of partner agencies to safeguard children. This Report includes a summary of the Ofsted Review findings and their full recommendations.

(4) One of the key challenges for the period covered by this report has continued to be the development of the KSCB's response to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). The Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) Group continues to oversee and report on how partners are working to identify and respond to cases of CSE. The Group, together with the Board's work around children who go missing, received favourable reports from the Ofsted Inspectors. The multi-agency Child Sexual Exploitation Team (CSET) has been established with multi-agency staff from KCC Specialist Children Services (SCS), KCC Education and Young People's Services (EYPS) and from Health. Members of this team support front line operational staff in multi-agency working with CSE cases. They also provide a bi-monthly CSE briefing paper that highlights the number of reported CSE cases, current investigations and emerging CSE patterns and themes. MASE also presents a quarterly CSE Profile for Kent to the full Board. In addition, the Board's cohort of multi-agency CSE Champions now exceeds 160 and these operational staff and managers share CSE messages and updates with their colleagues. CSET and MASE are currently challenging partners to increase the amount of CSE information and intelligence that is being shared with CSET, as this will assist in the development of a more detailed picture of CSE and potential CSE across Kent. This will be a focus in the forthcoming year.

(5) 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. The Board still have the on-going challenging of evidencing the 'So What?' This features in the Board's Business Plan.

(6) With regard to the question: 'how safe are children in Kent?' the Report indicates, that during 2016/17, approximately 11,000 families (around 24,000 CYP)

were supported by Early Help Units (EHU). At the end of March 2017, there were 3,008 cases open to EHU. This equates to nearly 7,000 children and young people aged 0-18. In March 2017, 79.6% of EH cases were closed with outcomes achieved, down from 83.4% in March 2016.

(7) At year end, 2016-17, there were 2,023 children with Children In Need (CIN) plans in place. This is a reduction of 68 cases.

(8) As at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017, the number of children with a Child Protection Plan (CPP), was 1,185, an increase of 136 on last year. KSCB will continue to monitor this to see if this continues to be in line with those of our statistical neighbours. KSCB will make sure that the focus remains on ensuring that all agencies have a common understanding of thresholds for child protection intervention.

(9) The number of Children in Care, (CiC), excluding Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC), at year end was 1,893, a reduction of 427 from year end 2015-16. Excluding UASC, there were 1319 CiC placed in Kent by other Local Authorities, an increase of 36 on the previous year.

(10) The issue of asylum seekers continues to receive high profile media and political attention. At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017, there were 481 UASC Children in Care in Kent. This is a decrease of 385 from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015. The Report highlights the impact of the introduction of the National Dispersal Scheme.

(11) KSCB is committed to publishing the findings from all Serious Case Reviews, (SCR). In addition to the ongoing SCRs from last year, the Board has commissioned two new SCRs during 2016-17. Due to ongoing criminal proceedings, the 2015-16 SCRs have not yet been published, however, the lessons from these and from other National SCRs have been embedded in the KSCB's multi-agency learning and development strategy and training programme. The Board has delivered a number of multi-agency SCR Workshops where the learning has been shared with frontline staff. The ongoing cascading of learning from SCRs remains one of the Board's key focus areas for 2017-18.

(11) In order to understand what is happening across different frontline settings in protecting children, during this reporting period, KSCB has undertaken a number of multi-agency audits, (children who go missing, harmful sexual behaviour and domestic abuse). The outcomes of the 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 agreed for 2017-18 where it is planned to have a greater focus on those topics that have been identified as themes from previous audits and SCRs. The outcomes and learning from these audits will be reported next year.

### **3. Conclusions**

(1) The Board has continued with its scrutiny and challenge role through the Business Group and the stricter governance and lines of accountability. The Board's Sub Groups are now more consistent and stable.

(2) The Board has updated its Strategic Priorities, and the Business Plan for 2017-2020, includes Partnership Working, the Voice of the Child, Learning from Serious

Case Reviews, Child Sexual Exploitation, Neglect, Modern Slavery, On-line Safeguarding, Disabled Children and the Toxic Trio (Domestic Abuse, Parental Mental Health and Parental Misuse).

#### **4. Recommendations**

(1) County Council is asked to:

- (a) COMMENT on the progress and improvements made during 2016/17, as detailed in the Annual Report from Kent Safeguarding Children Board
- (b) NOTE the 2016/17 Annual Report attached.

#### **5. Background Documents**

None

#### **6. Contact details**

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