



COUNCIL CABINET 29 NOVEMBER 2005

Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Safeguarding Children – Progress Report

SUMMARY

- 1.1 Following the death of Victoria Climbié in February 2000 an Inquiry led by Lord Laming produced 108 recommendations. Derby Social Services produced an Action Plan to ensure these recommendations were carried out in Derby. The Action Plan has been worked on, regularly reviewed and monitored by Cabinet. The DfES and CSCI no longer formally require Cabinet to consider the report in future, so this will be the last report in this format.
- 1.2 Subject to any issues raised at the meeting, I support the following recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To note the progress of the arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Derby, in this final report on the Climbié action plan.
- 2.2 To agree the proposal for an annual report to Council on safeguarding children in Derby.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Children Act 2004 received Royal Assent in November 2004. The Act put in place a series of requirements to ensure Children and Young People are Safeguarded and their welfare is promoted. The key requirement is to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board by April 2006.
- 3.2 The revision of Working Together to Safeguard Children was issued for consultation in August 2005 with a closing date of 28 October 2005. The final document is expected in December 2005.
- 3.3 In the absence of a requirement to report to Council and externally to government on a Climbié Action Plan, but given the key nature of the council's responsibilities towards safeguarding children, it is recommended that in future Children's and Young People's Services produce an annual report to the Council on safeguarding progress and issues. The annual report will also be presented to the governing bodies of partner agencies.

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1.1 The report of the inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié was jointly published by the Department of Health and the Home Office on 28 January 2003. The Inquiry had been chaired by Lord Laming. The report contained 108 recommendations, many of which were for immediate implementation to address organisational failure.
- 1.2 The self audit undertaken in early 2003 identified that Derby Social Services and the range of agencies involved in the provision of services to vulnerable children had not got the basics wrong. The Social Services Inspectorate (SSI) at that time concluded that Derby provides a Safe Service with effective management and governance.
- 1.3 The Social Services department was subject to a Children's Services Inspection in October 2004 by the Commission for Social Care Inspection. The Inspection report was very positive in its outcome. It stated that 'The Council has a very strong record of compliance with the recommendations from the Inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié'. There were no specific recommendations in relation to the Climbié Inquiry arising from the inspection of Children's Services.
- 1.4 The Climbié audit tool established seven standards for services to children in need.
 - Referral
 - Assessment
 - Allocation, service provision and closure
 - Guidance
 - Training and development
 - Organisation and management
 - Governance

The Standards have continued to be addressed through our Climbié Action Plan, which was routinely monitored and progressed by Children's Services senior managers. A regular programme of file audits by Heads of Service and Senior Managers is undertaken to review practice in key areas and issues are highlighted for ongoing monitoring. Current performance in each of these standards is assessed as being good in all areas. All of the recommendations

from the Inquiry are now implemented into practice and monitored through routine management.

- 1.5 As stated, the Children Act 2004 requires that Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) are established by 1 April 2006.

In Derby the planning for the Derby Safeguarding Board began in April 2005 with a development involving key partners who had previously been involved in the Area Child Protection Committee.

- 1.6 The Core objectives of the LSCBs are as follows:

- 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 area of the authority by which it is established; and
- To ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for that person.

- 1.7 The newly issued guidance broadens out the safeguarding remit of the old Area Child Protection Committees (ACPC) to include the promotion of welfare, further to Section 11 of the Children Act 2004. The guidance confirms that the work of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) fits within the wider context of children's trust arrangements which aim to improve the overall wellbeing of children in their area (achieving the five outcomes). The LSCB will have a particular focus on aspects of the staying safe outcome which aims to ensure that children are:

- Safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation
- Safe from accidental injury and death
- Safe from crime, anti-social behaviour in and out of school
- Have security, stability and are cared for.

- 1.8 The first meeting of the Derby Safeguarding Children Board (also acting as the Area Child Protection Committee) was held in July 2005. A Steering Group and range of working groups has also been established (see Appendix 2 for details). There has been good engagement from all partner agencies.

- 1.9 The LSCB remit is broad and must address the five outcomes from Every Child Matters, the key outcome for focus being Staying Safe. One of the key tasks for the Board will be to revise the multi-agency procedures which operate to Safeguard Children. It is intended that these procedures will be completed by 1 April 2006.

- 1.10 A range of Performance Targets are in place in Social Services to measure our performance in work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. At the present time all indicators are performing to their targets. A Performance Management system will also be established for the LSCB.

- 1.11 It is essential in a time of unprecedented changes in Children's Social Care that safety is high on the agenda of all those who have any contact with children. Safe systems are in place and these are supported by a multi-agency approach to training not only for staff in statutory agencies, but in the

private and voluntary sector. Training and awareness raising is also provided to parents and carers through partnership and neighbourhood working.

- 1.12 At the present time funding is being negotiated both within the Council's budget making process and that of partner agencies in relation to LSCB activities and functioning. It is anticipated that a realistic budget will be in place by April 2006.
- 1.13 Services to vulnerable children continue to be a high priority for the Council. Work is continuous in terms of improving standards of service and practice. Social Services has a very committed workforce who work hard, often in difficult circumstances and their continued efforts are to be supported and commended.

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Background papers:	None
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 - Implications Appendix 2 - Document describing current progress in development of the Safeguarding Board for Derby

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

- 1.1 Appropriate funding needs to be made available by all partner agencies to support the work of the Derby Safeguarding Children Board.
- 1.2 Derby ACPC/ DSCB has a current annual net budget of £54,495 for 2005/2006. It has been acknowledged by all the partners to ACPC that the budget is inadequate for the new requirements (see 1.7).

The basic expenditure requirements were identified by the Shadow DCSB. The key areas of expenditure are: staffing; workforce development; translation of materials; advocacy for children; basic equipment/stationery; website maintenance; serious case review contingency fund, of which the main element will be staffing.

- 1.3 The partnership has agreed a basic budget requirement for the DSCB is £134,172. This is a very significant increase of almost 150% and reflects the enhanced requirements.

Contributions to the ACPC budget have been proposed from partner agencies which comprise the Local Authority, Health, Police, Probation, Community Safety Partnership and Connexions.

The DSCB has agreed funding contributions for 2006/07 in principle, with the exception of the Community Safety Partnership where discussions are ongoing. In proportioning the funding contributions to the DSCB an attempt has been made to follow the national average. Partners are currently seeking to secure funds through their budget making processes. The Council's proposed contribution of £56,700 is being considered as part of the 2006/07 budget process.

Legal

2. Services to children in need are provided under the Children Act 1989. The Children Act 2004 requires local authorities to establish Local Safeguarding Children Boards by April 2006. The implementation of Integrated Children's Services is in progress, subject to separate reporting to Cabinet.

Personnel

3. The provision of services to vulnerable children particularly with child protection concerns relies upon the availability of suitably qualified, trained and supported staff who are competent to undertake the complex tasks involved. Recruitment and retention of social work staff is problematic in all councils. A local Integrating Children's Services Workforce Development Group is considering these issues.

Equalities impact

4. This report concerns the social care services provided to the most vulnerable children in Derby. The Social Services department is undertaking a specific review of services to children from black and minority ethnic communities. Existing policy guidance requires that the needs of disabled children and children from black and minority ethnic communities are specifically identified in assessments and addressed in care plans including protection plans .

Corporate Themes and Priorities

5. This accords with the Council's objective of healthy, safe and independent communities and furthers the priority of modernising social care.