

Report To: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 24th June 2014

Lead Member / Officer: Cllr Bobby Feeley

Report Author: Gabrielle Heeney, Project Manager, Safeguarding

Title: Regional and Local Arrangements to Safeguard Children and Adults

1. What is the report about?

1.1 To inform members of regional developments in relation to Safeguarding Children

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1 To ask members to agree the proposed structure for the regional SCB, to be known as the North Wales Safeguarding Children Board.

3. What are the Recommendations?

3.1 To agree the structure for the regional SCB, to be known as the North Wales Safeguarding Children Board, as shown in Diagram 2 of the attached report; this to take effect as soon as possible.

4. Report details.

4.1 Local Safeguarding Children Boards are statutory partnerships. The objective of Local Safeguarding Children Boards, to co-ordinate and ensure the effectiveness of partners' safeguarding activities, was established in the Children Act 2004, and is confirmed in the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014. Regulations further expand on the functions of an LSCB, and specify membership of the board.

4.2 Three sub-regional Safeguarding Children Boards have been in place for some time across North Wales: Gwynedd & Mon LSCB, Conwy & Denbighshire LSCB, and Flintshire & Wrexham LSCB. In addition, a regional Policies & Procedures Group has been producing North Wales policies for over ten years. Following announcements from Welsh Government in the autumn of 2011, the three sub-regional LSCBs have taken steps to promote greater integration and collaboration, and to move towards a regional structure, ahead of the Social Services & Wellbeing Act.

4.3 The Social Services & Wellbeing Act will require agencies to establish regional safeguarding boards. The regions are defined according to the Local Health Board foot print: North Wales is the defined region for our area.

- 4.4 A two-tier system of Safeguarding Boards has been in place across North Wales since early 2013. A Regional board was established, but the statutory functions remained with the three sub-regional LSCBs. The two-tier system has had successes, but there have also been tensions.
- 4.5 A regional approach has been adopted throughout most of the other regions across Wales, although many have proceeded to regional boards in their totality and have ceased to convene local boards. The two-tier model and the fully regional model have both been evaluated by Sheffield University and a detailed report is available on request.
- 4.5 In response to the lessons learned from the operation of the two-tier system, it is now proposed that a structure is put in place which maintains a strong local presence whilst also resolving the tensions between the regional and local boards. It is proposed that statutory functions will rest with the North Wales Safeguarding Children Board (NWSCB), and that sub regional groups will ensure that local practice meets local need.
- 4.7 The report attached as Appendix 1 expands on this summary.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

- 5.1 Safeguarding Children is a high priority for everyone. An effective Safeguarding Children Board contributes to this aim by ensuring agencies work together to keep children safe from abuse and neglect. This area of work contributes to Denbighshire's Big Plan outcome 7: keeping people safe.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

- 6.1 The Safeguarding Children Board is a statutory partnership and is funded by contributions from its partners. This will continue to be the case with the regional board.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report.

- 7.1 Any changes to services arising as a result of Safeguarding Children Board activity or decisions are implemented by constituent agencies, where the equality impact assessment will be made.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

- 8.1 The report attached at appendix 1 was presented to the North Wales Regional Leadership Board on the 25th of April. The board is supportive of the approach.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1 Safeguarding Children Boards are statutory partnerships, funded by contributions from statutory partners. The cost implications of actions emerging from business plans will have to be considered separately.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

10.1 Clearly the risk that we fail to safeguard children is paramount and is sighted in the corporate risk register and service risk register. It is essential we seek solutions that ensure we deliver the most secure and suitable safeguarding services to the authority's children and families. We must also recognise the strength of the regional agenda particularly working alongside our regional partners such as the Police and Health who also have clear responsibilities to protect and safeguard children.

11. Power to make the Decision

11.1 Section 134 of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014 requires that a Safeguarding Children Board is be set up for the Safeguarding Board area. Regulations specifying the area and lead partner are to follow.

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