

Report to: Partnerships Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 27th September 2012

Lead Member: Lead Member for Social Care and Children's Services

Lead Officer: Head of Children & Family Services

Report Author: Local Safeguarding Children's Board Business Manager

Title: Conwy & Denbighshire Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) Annual report 2011-12 and first quarter update (April – June 2012)

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1 Conwy & Denbighshire Local Safeguarding Children Board's (LSCB) annual report is attached as Annex 1, Appendices 1-5. The Annual Report provides a brief overview of the functioning of the Conwy and Denbighshire Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), including its governance and financial arrangements. The report also provides a summary of the LSCB's key priorities for 2011-12, and its achievements against those priorities. Sections 4.2 to 4.5 of this report summarise the key points from the Annual Report.
- 1.2 The LSCB's Business Plan, June 2012 update, as reported to the LSCB Executive Board, is attached as Annex 2. The details of the LSCB's progress from April to June 2012 can be found there, and a brief summary is given in section 4.6 of this report.
- 1.3 Annex 3 provides contextual information by way of a structure chart which shows the LSCB's relationship to other partnerships and organisations.
- 1.4 Annex 4 provides a glossary of terms and abbreviations used in the report and its annexes.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1 This report provides the local authority with the information it needs in order to be able to discharge its responsibility for ensuring that the LSCB is properly established and working effectively. Section 4.24 of the Welsh Assembly Government's guidance 'Safeguarding Children: Working Together Under the Children Act 2004' states:

"Each local authority should take lead responsibility for the establishment and effective working of Local Safeguarding Children Boards, although main constituent agencies are

responsible for contributing fully and effectively to the work of the LSCB.”

3. What are the Recommendations?

That Members:

- 3.1 consider and scrutinise the Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report and make recommendations as appropriate; and
- 3.2 consider and scrutinise the Local Safeguarding Children Board first quarter update and make recommendations as appropriate

4. Report details.

4.1 Background information

- 4.1.1 The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is the statutory body responsible for protecting children and young people from significant harm and for promoting their welfare, and is a multi-agency forum for agreeing how local child protection services should be planned, delivered and monitored.
- 4.1.2 The LSCB is funded by contributions from statutory agencies. The LSCB is supported by a business manager and part-time administrator, and consists of an Executive Board, Strategic Management Group, Serious Case Review Sub-committee and four sub-groups which deliver against the LSCB's business plan. Annex 1, Appendix 1 shows the LSCB's structure.

4.2 Key priorities (Annex1, section 3): the LSCB decided to focus its attention on achieving against four key priorities during 2011-12. In brief, these were:

- Through early intervention, to prevent families where the parents/carers have drug & alcohol, mental health or domestic violence problems escalating from safeguarding concerns to child protection issues.
- To ensure that the results of mapping work on vulnerable families are shared with partners; and to also ensure that the services that are planned in response to those results are shaped from a safeguarding perspective.
- Through early intervention, to prevent children exhibiting inappropriate sexualised behaviour becoming perpetrators of sexual offences.
- To ensure that the direction, work and review of the LSCB is informed by consultation and participation with children, young people, their parents and carers.

4.3 Governance and Accountability (Annex 1, section 4) : Membership of the LSCB is good, and membership has been stable over the past year. At 73%, attendance by Board members or their deputies was just below the 75% target. Attendance at the sub-groups was below target at 61%. Attendance is monitored and reported on regularly in order to identify and resolve any attendance issues.

4.4 Financial arrangements (Annex 1, section 5) : The LSCB asked for contributions of £61,060 from partners during 2011-12, and received £60,755. Wales Probation limited their contribution to a nationally set percentage of the LSCB's budget, and contributed £305 less than the £1,832 requested from them.

4.5 Key areas of Progress/achievement 2011-12: details of the LSCB's progress can be found in the business plan 'actions' section, which is given in as Annex 1, Appendix 4. Key achievements are highlighted in Annex 1, sections 6 and 7. A taster is given below:

- Two large events on 'Inappropriate Sexualised Behaviour' were delivered to wide audiences in September 2011 and March 2012.
- A joint Conwy & Denbighshire Children and Young People's Partnership/Voluntary Sector Council and LSCB 'Safeguarding in the Voluntary Sector' event took place on 6th March 2012
- The LSCB's first conference, featuring two highly regarded speakers and several workshops, took place as planned

4.6 Six month update: The LSCB's priorities for 2012-13 are as follows:

- 1 Children exhibiting Inappropriate Sexualised Behaviour are identified early and offered help, and children at risk of harm from other children are protected
- 2 The LSCB is assured that all available actions have been taken to reduce risks to children from unsafe staff
- 3 A common understanding of thresholds for intervention supports vulnerable families and helps identify children in need of protection
- 4 Children are safer because partnerships with safeguarding responsibilities work together to safeguard children

And, continuing from 2011-12

5. Children experiencing difficulties due to their parents'/carers' drug & alcohol, mental health or domestic violence problems are identified so that concerns do not escalate from safeguarding to child protection issues

6. To ensure that the direction, work and review of the LSCB is informed by consultation and participation with children, young people, their parents and carers
- 4.6.1 The LSCB is monitoring its achievement against nineteen indicators in 2012-13. At the end of the first quarter, 9 actions (47%) were not yet due to start; 6 actions (32%) were underway and 4 (21%) were behind schedule.
- 4.6.2 Two of the actions behind schedule related to tasks to be undertaken by the Practice Development Group. The actions had been delayed due to the cancellation of a meeting because of problems with the venue. Both tasks are now underway.
- 4.6.3 The remaining two actions behind schedule relate to LSCB partner agencies' annual audit of their arrangements to safeguard children. Some partners responses were delayed due to the audit now being aligned with the other North Wales LSCB's audits: the other NW LSCBs had a June deadline for the return of their audits, whilst Conwy & Denbighshire set a February deadline. The exercise is now complete.

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

The Local Safeguarding Children Board is a statutory requirement and contributes to the delivery of the Council's responsibilities for vulnerable children.

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

There are no specific financial obligations as a result of this report. Section 4.4 of this report outlines the funding arrangements for the LSCB, and further detail is provided in the Annual Report (Annex 1, section5)

7. What consultations have been carried out?

Preparations for consultation with children and parents on the child protection register were made during 2011-12, and the consultation is now underway during 2012-13. A questionnaire on wider safeguarding issues was also developed for use in schools: the questionnaire will be implemented during 2012-13. Eighteen staff teams were consulted during 2011-12, and their responses fed into the business planning process in October 2011.

8. Chief Finance Officer Statement

Not relevant

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

- 9.1 The biggest risk for the LSCB and the local Authority is the danger of a serious incident which finds that the LSCB or one or more of its partner agencies have failed in their duty to safeguard children. Whilst in social care there is no such thing as zero risk, the work of the LSCB is directed at ensuring that partner agencies take all reasonable steps to safeguard children. The LSCB's Risk Log can be found at page 40 of Annex 1, Appendix 5.

10. Power to make the Decision

Article 6.3.4(d) of the Council's Constitution

Contact Officer:

Local Safeguarding Children's Board

Tel: 07768 043315