

## MESSAGES BULLETIN

### FROM THE DARLINGTON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD

ISSUE 6 – March 2017

Welcome to the sixth bulletin from the Darlington Safeguarding Children Board. The Board is made up of leaders from a range of organisations such as the Local Authority, police, public health, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), providers of health care, social care, housing, voluntary services and the Probation Services all of whom have an interest in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. On a bi-monthly basis the board meets to ensure safeguarding practice is well coordinated and meeting the safeguarding needs of children in Darlington.

The Board met on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2017 and the headlines from the meeting are:



***'The local authority has made good progress'***, quoted by Ofsted, March 2017

The Director for Children's and Adult Services provided Board with an update on the recent [Ofsted Monitoring visit](#). The council continues to make improvements and has achieved lots over last six months including; continuing to prioritise children; improvement in outcomes for vulnerable children and families; robust performance framework; a continued area for development - good social work practice and securing experienced social workers. Some areas of further development are required and work is ongoing to strengthen this. The progress is continuing to be supported by all the Board partners and overseen by the Children's Services Improvement Board, which meets on a bimonthly basis.



***Developing a co-ordinated approach across partnerships in Darlington***

Darlington Safeguarding Children Board is currently reviewing a co-ordinated approach across the strategic partnerships to develop a more effective contribution to safeguarding and community safety in Darlington, which will include Darlington Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board and the Darlington Community Safety Partnership. Strong local partnership working is crucial and key to this is clarity about how each of the groups relate to each other to strengthen partnership arrangements in respect of themes of common interest such as child sexual exploitation, domestic abuse and human trafficking.



***Update on current position on the Legal Planning process – children subject to section 20***

The Board were updated on the current position regarding the legal planning process and work completed to date. All children subject to section 20 of the Children Act 1989 were reviewed which identified a small number had been subject to s20 for an unprecedented amount of time. A full audit review was undertaken and robust processes are now in place with proceedings being issued appropriately and the timescales for the conclusion of cases within the 26 weeks expected.



### ***Children Missing from home or care – multi-agency response***

Board received a report which gave an overview of the current position and to give Board an understanding of the children who go missing from home or care. All children who go missing receive a return home interview to gather information to support agencies to safeguard them and to reduce further episodes of missing. Of the children who went missing in the period July to December 2016, a quarter of the children that went missing were placed in Darlington from other local authorities. A large proportion of children who went missing were children looked after. Development work has been undertaken to make the recording process more robust and enable Board to have more qualitative information. This information will be shared with the [ERASE team](#) who will undertake some further analysis.



### ***Approved policies and procedures to support practitioners***

The following procedures have been approved and are available from the [Safeguarding Boards' Website](#) in the professional's area:

- [Child Sexual Exploitation Procedure and Practice Guidance](#) has been updated to reflect the new CSE definition as produced by Department for Education (February 2017)
- [Self-Harm pathway and guidance](#) to support practitioners with referral pathways for children who self-harm or are at risk of suicide.



### ***Children and Social Work Act 2017***

The Children and Social Work Bill received royal assent in April 2017. The [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#) will transform the arrangements to support, safeguard and promote the lives and life changes of vulnerable children.

Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Children Board is:

*Simon Hart*

The Safeguarding Children Board is supported by a joint business unit which also supports the Darlington Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board.

For further information you can contact a member of the team on: 01325 406452 or visit our website: [www.darlingtonsafeguardingboards.co.uk](http://www.darlingtonsafeguardingboards.co.uk)