

**MESSAGES BULLETIN**

**FROM THE DARLINGTON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD**

ISSUE 7 – May 2017

Welcome to the seventh 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 **16<sup>th</sup> May 2017** and the headlines from the meeting are:



**Practitioner Forum**

The Independent Chair hosted a Practitioner Forum recently the aim of the event was to seek views and experiences from frontline practitioners on safeguarding in Darlington to establish what they felt was working well and what is not working so well. A number of practitioners attended from eight agencies across Darlington. A number of themes were identified which included: Support from other agencies was good; improvements seen within agencies around raising awareness of safeguarding; improvements to multi-agency processes being more robust; financial pressures impacting on the provision of some services; concerns over workforce stability and the impact that is having on children and young people; and information sharing continues to be a barrier despite multi-agency information sharing protocol.



**Chair presentation to Children's services Improvement Board**

CSIB are satisfied with the progress DSCB has made to address the recommendations identified in their improvement plan, however identified that the Board now needs to further strengthen and demonstrate the impact of its work. A number of challenges were identified that Board must be sighted on which included; whether our multi-agency policies and procedures allow practitioners to do their job; does Board engage well with children and families and does Board understand what makes children feel unsafe. Board to consider how these challenges can be progressed.



### Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse

This [inquiry](#) will investigate whether public bodies and other non-state institutions in

England and Wales have taken seriously their responsibility to protect children from sexual abuse. A North East stakeholder event is taking place on 25<sup>th</sup> May, 2017. The event will give senior leaders across the North East the opportunity to meet the Panel and the North East Team. Durham Constabulary are attending and will feedback at the next Board Meeting.



### Biennial Safeguarding Audit

The Board received a report where they were asked to endorse the strengthened approach to the Boards biennial safeguarding audit. The audit will seek assurance that partner agencies, including education, voluntary sector, faith groups and GPs, are fulfilling their statutory obligations. This is an opportunity for organisations to be transparent, and to recognise their own safeguarding strengths and weaknesses. Following the audit there will be a moderation process to further scrutinise a sample of the submitted audits. Findings will be presented in a thematic report setting out the common findings.



### Mental Health Provision for Children and Young People in Darlington

A presentation was given to Board outlining the mental health provision for children and young people in Darlington, including key developments which have or are about to take place. Highlights were:

- Rapid Improvement Workshop held to identify reasons why children and young people were experiencing long waits to access Darlington CAMHS. The outcome of this workshop cited the implementation of a single point of access offering open access and a choice of assessment which included face to face and telephone.
- Early Intervention and Prevention initiatives implemented as well as enhancements at the crisis end of the pathway which will provide specialist services for those who self-harm or are at risk of suicide.
- Improvements have been seen in waiting times to access CAMHS with current performance at 100% seen within 4 weeks and no child having to wait longer than national timescale of 9 weeks.
- Work to be undertaken to map the whole pathway of CAMHS, obtaining the experiences of children and young people and exploration of opportunities for working with other agencies.
- Board felt it was a good oversight and some reassurances given and there is now greater sight on the data across the region.



### Accommodation for Care Leavers

A report was presented to Board on the current arrangements regarding pathway planning and accommodation for children leaving care in Darlington. Pathway planning progresses from a young person reaching the age of 15 years and six months and continues up until the age of 25. There is also supported living provided for those young people aged 16-25 who are at risk of homelessness as well as supporting independent living, where young people are provided support on living skills, attending college or finding employment. In addition the Housing Department sources properties close to in house residential homes to provide taster flats, based on the 'staying close' model. Board were assured to see strong arrangements in place and good quality accommodation on offer



## Policies and Procedures

Board were informed the revised [multi-agency child protection procedures](#) are due to be launched on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2017. The procedures are applicable to all those working in the Darlington Locality, whether paid or unpaid in private or voluntary sector organisations with responsibility for children.

Other additional procedures launched in this period include: [Organised and Multiple Abuse Procedure and Practice Guidance](#); [Fabricated and Induced Illness Practice Guidance](#) and [Child Death Overview Panel Procedures](#).

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)