

MESSAGES BULLETIN

FROM THE DARLINGTON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD

ISSUE 9 – October 2017

Welcome to the ninth 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 **24th October 2017** and the headlines from the meeting are:



Children's services Improvement Board Update

Children's Services Improvement Board (CSIB) are satisfied DSCB has made strong progress on Ofsted recommendations and no longer require DSCB to submit an action plan. The CSIB has requested DSCB provide examples of where DSCB has demonstrated effectiveness in respect of impact and challenge for future meetings. The Local Authority advised the CSIB focussed on quality and practice and the refreshed improvement plan and are now preparing for its re-inspection which is due imminently. The 5th Ofsted monitoring visit has taken place and focussed on looked after and through care teams.



Practitioner Forums

The Independent Chair has hosted 5 practitioner forums over the past 12 months. The chair hosts the forums to give practitioners the opportunity to have informal and honest discussions about what works well in practice for them and what they feel needs to change. These sessions allows the Independent Chair to obtain a stronger perspective on practice issues and hopefully create the opportunity for practitioners to understand more about the Boards work and its influence. The Independent Chair will be providing a thematic report based on the messages from the past forums at the next Board meeting.



Local Authority Early Help Offer

The Local Authority updated the DSCB on the Early Help arrangements in Darlington. The Early Help Strategic Group has drafted an Early Help Strategy, which is currently being consulted on. It was agreed for the Strategy to be presented to DSCB in November. Members were assured by the local authority approach with partners on their understanding of Early Help including the impact of this work. It was agreed for a report setting out the multi-agency support for Early Help offer to be presented to DSCB.



CAFCASS Assurance Report

The role of CAFCASS (the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service) within the family courts is to not only safeguard and promote the welfare of children but to provide advice for court and make provision for children to be represented. An

assurance report was presented to DSCB which highlighted an 18% increase in demand, there were 16.8 care applications per 10,000 children in Darlington which was higher than the national average. Case duration is currently 26 weeks which is lower than the national average of 31 weeks. CAFCASS is to offer all their social workers training for Section 7 report writing which is an independent evaluation and assessment of a situation and reports the findings to the Court.



Single Agency Training and Evaluation

A report was presented to Board providing an overview of the single agency core training delivered to practitioners in Darlington for the Period April 2016 to March 2017. Members wanted clarity on the information provided and to remind partners of the Boards role to 'monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of training' as identified in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015. Members agreed for further work to be undertaken to evidence the impact of safeguarding training.



Strategic Partnerships Working Arrangements

DSCB has endorsed a Darlington Protocol which sets out the key roles of each of the Strategic Partnership Boards in Darlington and how they link with each other and the means by which they will ensure that leadership and accountability for issues of common interest are clear. The Protocol is available on Safeguarding Boards [website](#).



Annual Reports

The DSCB was presented with three annual reports for consideration and all three reports were endorsed by the Board; the Multi-agency Training Annual Report; the Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report and the Managing Allegations and Concerns against staff, carers or volunteers Annual Report, all three reports are available on the [DSCB](#) website.

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