

## Safeguarding

### Briefing for chief executives and senior leaders on children's safeguarding in the light of Lord Laming's review (2009)

This guidance has been put together by the West Midlands Children and Young People's Forum and is primarily aimed at supporting local authority chief executives in carrying out their responsibilities for the safeguarding of children and young people in their area.

It covers four key areas:

1. Governance
2. Organisational culture
3. Accountability
4. Performance

### 1. Governance

How is the chief executive providing leadership in developing partnership arrangements for safeguarding and improving outcomes for children?

Statutory guidance for lead members and Directors of Children's Services states that the chief executive 'should ensure the importance of improving outcomes for children and young people is reflected across the full range of both the local authority and the Local Strategic Partnership...(and) that children's issues are given the right level of priority in the Sustainable Community Strategy, the Local Area Agreement and the local authority's corporate plan'. **(paras 1.4 and 1.6: DCSF 2009)**. Furthermore PCTs and SHAs have a statutory duty to co-operate with safeguarding.

Evidence could include:

- Robustness of Children and Young People's plan and the adequacy of the needs assessment underpinning it (statutory guidance on this is expected to be available for consultation from November 2009 and in force by April 2010);
- Triangulating views of the robustness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the ChildrenTrust arrangements;
- CEO engagement with the Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and the Chief Constable;
- CEO engagement with the Children Trust Board including the chief executives of PCTs and specialist health provider trusts, and with headteacher representatives;
- Leadership of the political climate and member engagement – especially in the role of Corporate Parent - and arrangements for participation and scrutiny (Guidance available from IDeA – see overleaf).

[See also 'Narrowing the gap in outcomes: governance' [www.c4eo.org.uk](http://www.c4eo.org.uk)]

## 2. Organisational culture

How does the chief Executive lead?

- Engagement with young people – especially those in care;
- Openness and a no-blame culture (For example, is the whistle-blowing policy known and used?);
- Corporate awareness of child safeguarding issues across all departments, especially HR and ICT;
- Workforce development planning – including development of child workforce and compliance with Child Workforce Development Council (CWDC) standards;
- Corporate joint working – especially in relation to transition planning for children with disabilities:
  - » other joint working between Children and Adult services, e.g. in respect of vulnerable adults, adults who may represent a risk to children;
  - » other areas such as transport policy, leisure, arts and culture ;
- Visible support of front line staff;
- Supporting the continuing professional development of the Director of Children's Services (DCS) (see DCSF Statutory Guidance for DCSs para 3.19) and PCT Director responsible for Safeguarding.

## 3. Accountability

Evidence includes:

- The LSCB holding member agencies to account – including the local authorities own children services (especially where the DCS also chairs the LSCB) and PCT Community services;
- Director of Children Services and Commissioners of services fulfilling managerial responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people;
- Adequacy of line management and supervisory functions within the Children Service:
  - » suitability and clarity of structures (including coherence with partner agencies);
  - » review of reports of visits by senior managers and elected members to intake teams (Laming recommendation 41).

## 4. Performance

- Performance against the national indicator set and quarterly profile;
- Feedback from the annual strategic review with Government Office and SHA Safeguarding Review;
- **Performance in Serious Case Reviews**  
The CEO may wish to be aware of overview reports and action plans, and of OFSTED judgments on SCRs especially where several have been judged to be inadequate;
- Compliance across the organisation with the vetting and barring regulations;
- Value for money and comparative spend per head of population (in context of partnership contributions and total resource);

- Resource pressures, including provision, especially the efficiency of commissioned services and provision for vulnerable young people and those in care;
- Workforce profile, including the numbers of temporary and agency staff, and recruitment, training and retention issues.

## Background

Guidance is available through the LGA. The IDeA 'Must know' for lead members on safeguarding for children is available at: [www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=8346778](http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=8346778)

Additional advice on the role of the corporate parent is at: [www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/pagedo?pagelid=8330120](http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/pagedo?pagelid=8330120)

These links will also take the reader to the DCSF statutory guidance for lead members and DCSs. The government's response to the Laming report – published 5 May 2009 – emphasises the role of members, the Lead Member for Children, and the CEO and council leadership.

Local authority chief executives and council leaders also have critical roles to play. Chief executives are responsible for satisfying themselves that the Directors of Children's Services are fulfilling their managerial responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, in particular by ensuring that

- The relationship between the Children's Trust and the LSCB is working effectively;
- That clear responsibility has been assigned within the local authority and among Children's Trust partners for improving services and outcomes; and
- That targets for improving safeguarding and progress against them are reported to the Local Strategic Partnership.

Every year, as part of the Children's Trust annual report, the chief executive and the leader of the council should make an assessment of the effectiveness of local governance and partnership arrangements for improving outcomes for children and supporting the best possible standards for safeguarding children. (para 47)

Descriptions of the roles and responsibilities for DCSs and lead members were published in revised statutory guidance in June 2009.

Revised statutory guidance for Children's Trust Boards and on the scope, structure and content of Children and Young People's Plans will be prepared following the passage of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill and will be published in spring 2010. (para 49) and was made available for consultation in November 2009.

The Strategic Health Authority has a statutory requirement (Children Act 2004, section 31) for performance managing Primary Care Trusts' arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. This includes:

- Senior Management commitment;
- Clear lines of accountability;
- Service developments include safeguarding;
- Safe staff recruitment;
- Staff training of safeguarding;
- Effective interagency working;
- Information sharing.

This role includes the participation of a SHA representative on each of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards (14 in the West Midlands).