

# Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee 11/6/15

## Safeguarding

**Objective: for the committee to understand, and make any recommendations in relation to, the Council's responsibilities and arrangements for the protection of children.**

### Witnesses

David Jacobs

Head of Social Care Fieldwork

Tina Wilson

Head of Safeguarding

Brenda McInerney

Head of MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub)

Sue Hadley

Independent Chair of LSCB

Det. Supt. David Cutler

Suffolk Police

Barbara McLean

CCG chief nursing officer

Bronwen Whittaker

Clinical Services & Chief Nurse SCC

## Overview of the current approach and the key issues (1)

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined within Working Together 2015 as:
  - protecting children from maltreatment;
  - preventing impairment of children's health or development;
  - ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
  - taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- SCC has a number of statutory duties including in relation to children in need and children suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. Social Work teams are at the forefront of delivering this
- Early Help teams provide a range of prevention and early intervention services at all ages
- Safeguarding children and protecting them from harm is everyone's responsibility. Local agencies, including the police and health services, also have a duty under the Children Act 2004
- Local safeguarding managers, who have independent accountability through the Head of Service to the CYP Director, work with operational managers on Child Protection Plans and Looked After Child plans.
- Lead strategic and operational managers for Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Children
- A specialist multi-agency Make A Change team works to prevent/reduce abuse through sexual exploitation and developing expertise in wider specialist areas (Female Genital Mutilation / Honour Based Violence / Forced Marriage / Trafficking etc)
- The Youth Offending Service Challenge for Change service targets young people at risk of offending and intervenes to prevent them entering the Criminal Justice System . It also hosts the SSABs service which works with young people with harmful sexual behaviours, helping to safeguard future victims..
- The multi-agency LSCB is a statutory partnership body accountable for co-ordinating the arrangements across partners to safeguard children. It is also accountable for ensuring the effectiveness of partners safeguarding practice, both individually and collectively.

## Overview of the current approach and the key issues (2)

### Snapshot of current caseload

- 753 Looked After Children
  - 415 Child Protection Plans
  - 2086 Children in Need
  - 348 Care Leavers
  - 2759 Open Early Help CAFs
- 
- At 31/3/14 in Suffolk 39.9 per 10,000 were subject to a Child Protection Plan. Among our statistical neighbours the rate per 10,000 varied from 24.4 (Lincolnshire) to 58.5 (East Sussex).
  - Over the past year the number of children subject to Child Protection Plans has fallen steadily to 415, equivalent to 27 per 10,000.

### Key Safeguarding Issues include

- Nationally, and in Suffolk, neglect is the most common initial category of abuse under which children became the subject of a Child Protection Plan. Emotional abuse is the next most common category followed by physical abuse and sexual abuse. The vast majority relate to parental neglect and abuse caused by family conditions. Domestic violence, mental health and drug and alcohol abuse are prevalent conditions. Other more specific safeguarding issues include
  - Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) / Grooming
  - Children missing from home and care
  - Gangs and groups
  - Trafficking
  - e-Safety increasing risks of sexting, cyberbullying and self-harming

## Current status of the issues raised in the Ofsted report published in July 2013

In the 2013 OFSTED inspection of arrangements for child protection, they found the service to be 'Adequate'. We continue to work towards securing a 'Good' judgement from the next inspection.

- Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub was fully implemented October 2014. Generally decisions are timely
- Social Worker average caseloads reduced in 2014/15 despite increased demand, monitored monthly.
- Social workers are receiving regular supervision. This should be monthly as a minimum
- A recruitment and retention strategy has been implemented for social workers (turnover remains similar to overall CYP workforce at around 16%, but a little better than it was)
- Case file audit indicates evidence of more consistent oversight and recording of decisions by managers
- Collecting, recording and using the views and experiences of children is now more embedded
- Locality practice workshops used to promote consistency of standards in assessments
- A MASH professional consultation line is now in place to provide access to advice on making a referral
- Improved monthly performance reports have been introduced. Regular QA activity takes place incl. new "Peer Support and Challenge Reviews"
- A Quality, Engagement and Performance Board reviews performance reports and audit findings
- Collection and use of feedback from children and families is strong in Early Help services and getting stronger in Social Care Services
- Signs of Safety training has improved the clarity and focus of plans for children and families
- More consistent practice is needed around ensuring child's identity and cultural needs are fully incorporated within assessments and reflected in their plans
- Advocacy is available and promoted for to support children to participate in their child protection plans
- Further support is needed from partner agencies to take on the role of Lead Professional for Team Around the Child Work. (Across Suffolk 7% of current open CAFs are held by external agencies)
- Coaching and development work has taken place with Child Protection Conference Chairs

## Progress on items highlighted in the June 2014 Cabinet Report (1)

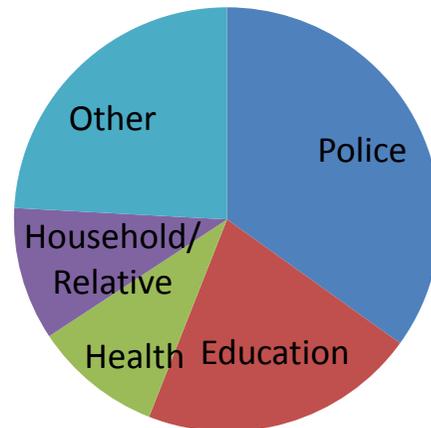
- The introduction of **Suffolk Signs of Safety & Wellbeing** is being well received by families and practitioners. It is acknowledged as an exemplary implementation by Terry Murphy - an international leader in this area. *“Suffolk is gaining more momentum and getting earlier results than I have seen anywhere else internationally with their implementation of Signs of Safety. By applying it to all children’s services and taking a strong and comprehensive approach to implementation, they are setting a great example for how to bring about better outcomes for children and families in England.”*
  - 1587 people have attended the core 2 day training sessions. Of these approximately 10% of these places have been taken by staff from partner agencies
  - Since October 2014 we have been provided 36 half day workshops for partners designed to introduce the Signs of Safety way of working and enable staff from other agencies to contribute effectively to joint working with children and families. 358 staff from partner agencies have attended in total, including staff from 140 different schools.
  - Feedback from these sessions has been very positive. Even better feedback has come from when partners see first-hand the impact on families of working in this way, though for example, skilful chairing of team around the child meetings.
- A **reduced social worker caseload** has been maintained. Currently 12 social workers hold more than 25 cases and none with more than 30. There are no practitioners with more than 15 Child Protection cases. As part of the MEIC model Consultant Social Workers roles should not, following case transition, hold cases directly but bring added support to supervision, workflow and the quality of practice in both Social Care and Early Help Teams.
- **Suffolk Family Focus** (Troubled Families) has been successful in turning round 100% of the 1150 families that was the target set by DCLG.

## Progress on items highlighted in the June 2014 Cabinet Report (2)

- **Suffolk MASH** is located in Landmark House Ipswich, there are around 70 staff from SCC CYP and Adult Services, Police, CCGs, Youth Offending\*, probation\* and district/borough housing teams\* (\*not co-located with the MASH)
- Contacts are received via contact centre Customer First and all agencies in the MASH use a common IT system: Guardian
- Overall volume of contacts for children remains higher than in 2014; the MASH professional consultation line and better quality referrals and feedback to referrers will aim to reduce demand
- Contacts to the MASH have continued the upward trend over the past 4 years. In March 2015 a record number of contacts were received. (19% increase on March 2014).



Source of Enquiry



Outcome



- 16% of all contacts became referrals to Social Care in April this has varied between 12% and 16% since 2014
- Timely, proportionate decision taking in the MASH will continue to be essential. The Professional Consultation Line will increasingly provide guidance on the appropriateness of referrals. More multi-agency work is needed with partners to locally address more issues where this is appropriate.

## **The recommendations in the Suffolk Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) annual report for 2013/2014**

- Reflecting that Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, key messages from the LSCB 2013/14 annual report were for the range of agencies, multi-agency groups, politicians and the community
- CYP Progress against these recommendations:
  - CYP continues to actively support the LSCB work programme
  - The CYP workforce continues to benefit from a high level of multi-agency training including safeguarding training. A dedicated Practice Development and Quality Assurance Team support the development of best practice
  - On-going audits demonstrate that thresholds are applied appropriately
  - Within the restructure of CYP as part of the MEIC programme the impact of staff reductions on front line practice was minimised as far as possible. There was no net reduction in the Social Worker establishment.
- The 2014/15 LSCB annual report is currently being prepared

## Early Years – identification and targeted intervention of children at risk, 0-5 years

- As part of the Making Every Intervention Count Programme we have integrated Children's Centres and Health Visiting to provide a more joined up service for children aged 0-5
- Ante-Natal Collaborative meetings provide an effective joint approach between Children's Centres, Health Visitors and Midwives to identify pre-birth where additional support may be needed.
- All new babies and children transferring in to Suffolk from outside of the county have a detailed Health Needs Assessment from the Health Visiting team which includes an assessment of risk.
- Where risk of harm is identified, and routinely where a sibling has been subject to Local Authority intervention, Pre-birth assessments are carried out by Social Workers and relevant action taken
- The Positive Choices/Mpower service is working with women who have had a previous child removed to support them making positive choices including access to contraception. Early results show a low number of further pregnancies resulting in child removal. The University of Essex has confirmed the impact of this work.
- The pilot Perinatal Infant Mental Health group (PIMHS) in Lowestoft provides an integrated approach to supporting children to remain safely in their families where adult mental health presents a risk to their children's short and long-term emotional and physical safety and wellbeing. Early evaluation indicates less need for multiple referrals, an improved prognosis with some of the families and is supporting an effective court process for those in care proceedings
- Family Nurse Partnerships in Lowestoft and Ipswich provide intensive Health visiting support to teenage mothers.
- Early Years providers access safeguarding training

## Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) – in light of the 2014 Casey report, what is the Council now doing differently?

- CSE Toolkit being used in MASH to identify CSE and assess risk
- CSE “screening” tool circulated to all assessors and assessment tool being embedded as part of revised Statutory Assessment
- Working with Police to review operational processes in respect of CSE (22/5/15 event)
- Multi-agency CSE audit which has involved modelling a data set to establish the prevalence of CSE

*From research into groups of children at higher risk of CSE in Suffolk some of the children were linked to each other – for example going missing together, involved in drug related activities, however, there is no evidence at this stage of organised CSE (victims passed through networks, coerced into sex with multiple adults / the ‘buying and selling’ of young people by perpetrators)..*

- Identifying services/ resources for young people who have been sexually exploited / at risk of CSE
- “Make a Change” team has increased resources with an additional Consultant Social Worker. New team service and processes being developed
- Peer learning with Essex planned for July 2015
- Early Help staff attending training in early identification of CSE
- Early Help focusing on improving quality of return interviews
- Review of arrangements for independent return interviews for children who go missing from home and care taking place through Engagement Hub /QA team
- CYPS support a monthly Tasking & Coordination Group with Police & Health to review children who have been missing from home or care/ or at risk of CSE
- Support, through LSCB of delivery of ‘Chelsea’s Choice’ to schools (Autumn 2015).
- PCSO (Police & Community Support Officer) attached to each Children’s Home
- Packs on CSE missing and return interviews to be sent to all internal and external foster carers, children’s homes and any hostels with a young person resident
- All Looked After Children reviews cover risky behaviours and what to do if worried

# **Making Every Intervention Count – What service improvements, or challenges, will the MEIC programme have on council services that relate to safeguarding?**

## Key Changes from April 2015

- Teams working with children and young people of all ages rather than split 0-11 & 12+ to support more consistent work with the whole family
- Social Care team and Early Help teams working together across 13 locality based areas
- 4 Looked After Children's Teams working closely with LAC Health, Education and Leaving Care services
- Integrating Health Visiting (except Lowestoft & Waveney) and Children's Centre teams
- Merging Fostering & Adoption to support achieving permanency for children in care at the earliest point and improve the recruitment & support for foster carers and adopters.
- Investing in IT and mobile working to help practitioners spend more time with families
- Creation of an Engagement Hub and an Intelligence Hub to bring together our expertise
- Generic Job Descriptions supporting a more multi-skilled integrated workforce. Non case-holding Consultant Social Workers
- Enhanced 'Make A Change' team service. Services for children on the 'edge of care' mainstreamed into local teams. Family Group Conferences assimilated into "Family Network Meetings"

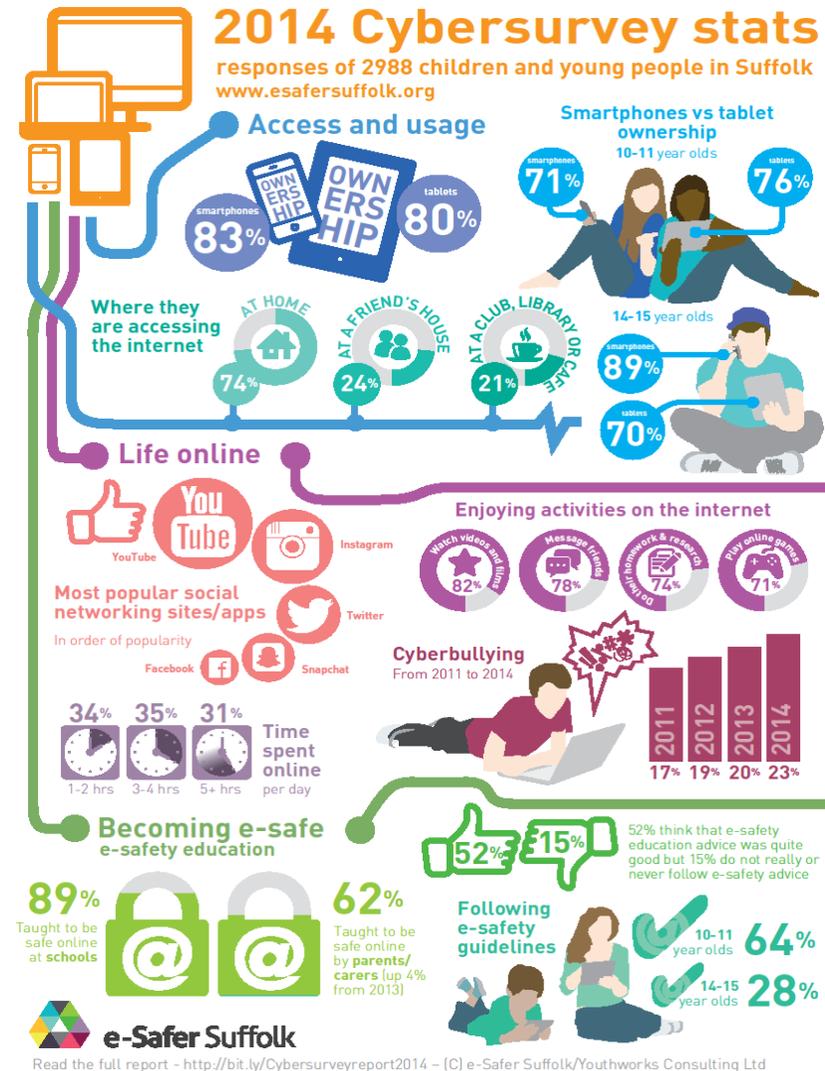
## Key Principles

- Children, young people and families at the heart of what we do
- Suffolk Signs of Safety & Wellbeing at the heart of how we practice
- Effective early help and, where needed, intervention
- One Family, One Plan, One Lead Worker
- Making the best use of community assets and universal services
- A strong local network of professionals and a skilled and confident workforce
- Building resilient families and communities

CYP need to achieve £12m year in savings by 2017/18 from Children's Services, (outside of Education & Learning), compared to 2014/15. £5.1m of savings have been achieved through the restructure that took effect in April 2015.. Achieving the required savings in 16/18 will be very challenging and is reliant on reducing demand through effective early help for families and children.

# What processes for safeguarding children apply in schools, and how are these reviewed?

- Statutory guidance applies to schools: Keeping Children Safe in Education (2015). This includes a requirement for all schools to have a designated safeguarding lead, a designated teacher for LAC, a lead governor and e-safety training for all staff and pupils
- After the Police, Education & Schools are the largest source of contacts to the MASH with an average of 350 contacts per month over the past 6 months.
- Schools/academies currently complete 45% of all current open CAFs (Early Help through Common Assessment Framework). 15 schools have 10 or more currently open CAF assessments
- Schools are required to complete a safeguarding self-assessment annually and currently 95% share these with the LA which is reported to DMT and the LSCB.
- An annual e-Safety audit forms part of the self-assessment and has been added to the LSCB section 11 reporting process for all other agencies.
- From the 2014 CyberSurvey, 23% of CYP (out of 2988 respondents) reported being Cyber-bullied. (Bullying stats are no longer reported to the LA consistently by all schools.) Further focus group work, particularly in respect of responses from more vulnerable children, is needed to understand what further actions can be taken to support safeguarding
- An analysis and evaluation of the delivery, sufficiency of safeguarding & e-Safety training, and impact is also reported and reviewed by both DMT and the LSCB as part of the LSCB performance report.



## **What early intervention takes place in cases of children suffering from mental ill health and/or being bullied, including racist incidents?**

- Schools are typically the first point of contact and are often best placed for addressing bullying through pastoral support. Additional early Intervention support is provided by the CAF process which can harness wider multi-agency resources and by the School Nursing service via their confidential drop in service and PSHE. The Local Authority provide training materials.
- Many schools commission a counselling service for pupils
- A jointly funded Primary Mental Health Support Worker Service provides a preventative service that offers advice, consultation and training for professionals who are supporting children, young people and their families with joint assessment and some direct interventions for those children and young people who are experiencing mild to moderate mental health difficulties with associated low levels of risk.
- Specialist CAMHS teams (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services) provide services where there is a higher level of concern
- The Connect Service provides mental health services for Looked After Children.
- Timely effective access to the level of mental health services required remains a challenge both locally and nationally. As part of the further development of multi-agency working a review of 'high demand' cases from various agencies identified mental health issues as a common underlying feature in a significant proportion. The government announced funding for CAMHS services at the end of last term. The NHS are awaiting details of this funding.
- The Primary Care Mental Health Service is being recommissioned from July 2016 with the aim of improving access, waiting times and outcomes.
- School nurses have developed a self-harm pathway
- Along with parental substance misuse and domestic abuse, poor parental mental health remains a key focus of work by the multi-agency Hidden Harm Steering group

## Evidence

- Existing reports / reference documents that can be attached or linked: *[included as Evidence Sets 2-5]*
  - The June 2014 Cabinet Report (17 pgs) on 'Annual Report on Children's Social Care and Safeguarding Services' [http://committeeminutes.suffolkcc.gov.uk/meeting.aspx?d=10/Jun/2014&c=The Cabinet](http://committeeminutes.suffolkcc.gov.uk/meeting.aspx?d=10/Jun/2014&c=The+Cabinet)
  - The Foreword (1 pg) and Key Messages (3 pgs) from the Suffolk LSCB Annual Report 2013/ 2014 <http://suffolkscb.org.uk/assets/files/2014/SuffolkAnnualReport2013-14.pdf>
  - The Ofsted summary report (3 pgs), 'Suffolk Local authority – Inspection of child protection 3 -12 June 2013', published on 12 July 2013. <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/local-authorities/suffolk>
  - Extract of section '14. Annual Report on Children's Social Care and Safeguarding Services' from the [Minutes of the 10 June Cabinet](#)
- Background / Reference :
- Ofsted Annual Report for 2013-14 on children's 'Social Care', published in 2015, <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>
- Ofsted Report 'Early help: Whose responsibility?', March 2015, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications>
- Ofsted Report: 'Joining the dots... Effective leadership of children's services', March 2015, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications>
- Article in C'llr magazine 'Suffolk's signs of safety', April 2015, <http://www.lgiu.org.uk/cllr-magazine/>

