



Staffordshire Children's Trust
Working together to improve the lives of children and young people

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STAFFORDSHIRE
CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD HELD ON TUESDAY 2 JUNE 2009
IN OAK ROOM, COUNTY BUILDINGS, STAFFORD**

Members Present:

Charlotte Bailey	Staffordshire's Commissioner for Parents'
Dr Judith Bell	Director of Public Health
Cllr Peter Beresford	(Chair) Member for Children and Young People
Karen Dobson	Chair of Association of Staffordshire Principals
Anna Halliday	Partnership Director, Staffordshire Learning Skills Council
Neil Hemmings	Detective Superintendent, Staffordshire Police
Mike Hovers	Children's Lead for East Staffs
Graham Hunt	Vice Chair, Cannock District Trust Board
Roger Graham	Interim Lead Children & Maternity, North Staffs PCT
Carol Jones	Chief Executive, Connexions
Tove Lindgren	Partnership Manager, Lichfield District Trust Board
Robert Mitchell	Children's Lead for Tamworth District Trust Board
Cllr Mary Oates	Chair of Tamworth District Trust Board
Deborah Ramsdale	Assistant Director, Area Based Services, Vulnerable Children's Division
Sally Rees	Chair of Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board, & Chair of Staffordshire Children's Trust Executive
Sally Rowe	Assistant Director, Partnership & Service Development
Cheryl Sherratt	Head of Service Development, South Staffs PCT
Gill Stanford	Staffordshire Commissioner for Children
Peter Traves	Corporate Director of Children & Lifelong Learning
Rose Vakis	Director Staffordshire & Stoke Consortium Infrastructure Organisations (SCIO)

Advisors / Observers Present:

Simon Ablewhite	Central Services Finance Manager, Staffordshire County Council
Jim Brady	Assistant Director, Integrated Services
Cate Crawford	Children's Trust Support Officer (Minute Taker)
Georgina Davies	Children's Trust Manager
Mark Hewitt	Representing Robert Flinter
Simon Craythorn	Central Risk Reduction Manager, Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service
Vonni Gordon**	Staffordshire Safeguarding Board Manager
Sally Rowe*	Assistant Director, Disability & Safeguarding

Apologies:

Mike Allen	Chair of Stafford District Trust Board
Katie Beards	Children's Lead for South Staffs
Lesley Bovington	Children's Lead for Lichfield District Trust Board
Kevin Byrne	Children's Lead for Newcastle District Trust Board
Keith Cackett	Deputy Corporate Director (Quality Assurance / Resources)

* attended to present reports/presentations

Nina Dawes	Chief Executive, Lichfield District Council (Rob Mitchell Representing)
Barbara Dundas	Head of Early Years and Childcare, Government Office West Midlands
Jean Evans	Assistant Director of Law & Governance
Chief Inspector Ricardo Fields	Staffordshire Police
Robert Flinter	Director of Strategy and Performance, Social Care & Health (Mark Hewitt representing)
Christopher Leach	Chair of Secondary Head Teachers' Forum
Kevin Lowe	Chair of Lichfield District Trust Board
Cllr Robert Marshall	Chair of South Staffs District Trust Board
Cllr Mary Maxfield	Chair of Newcastle District Trust Board
Kent Parson	Chair of Cannock District Trust Board
Mike Prescott	Primary Head Teachers' Forum Representative
Phil Pusey	Chair of East Staffs District Trust Board
Mick Readman	Chair of Staff Moorlands District Trust Board
Tracy Redpath	Children's Lead for Stafford District Trust Board
Chief Inspector Mark Riley	Staffordshire Police
Chief Inspector Adrian Roberts	Staffordshire Police
Eric Robinson	Corporate Director Social Care & Health
Ged Rowney	Director of Children and Young People's Services, Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Yvonne Sawbridge	Director of Quality & Performance, South Staffs PCT (Cheryl Sherratt representing)

1. BUSINESS MATTERS (Cllr Peter Beresford)

a) Introductions

Cllr Beresford explained this was a joint meeting between the Children's Trust Board and District Trust Boards Chairs to discuss in depth the implications of the Laming Report for Staffordshire Children's Trust and its working arrangements, and explore the relationship between the Children's Trust Board and Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board. Safeguarding is the responsibility of all agencies.

b) Apologies

Noted as above

c) Declarations of Interest

None made on this occasion

d) Correspondence

None raised

e) Minutes of the last meeting (30.04.09)

Agreed as an accurate record

f) Matters arising

There were no matters arising

2. LAMING REPORT - THE BACKGROUND

(Sally Rees, Chair of the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board)

Action: Presentation to be circulated with Minutes (Cate Crawford)

For a summary of the presentation, please see [Appendix 1](#), however the following main points were covered:

- Working Together - legislation structure and guidance due to be amended by November 2009.
- Detailed government response's to Lord Laming's 58 recommendations is now available:
http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2009_0052
- Headline recommendations around Leadership, role of Director of Department for Children's Services (DCS) and Children's Lead for Council, and introducing a new qualification to ensure they have consistent and adequate knowledge.

Karen Dobson & Mike Hovers arrived at the meeting.

- Children's Trust Board holds Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board to account, and vice versa.
- Membership and seniority is required at Local Safeguarding Children Board's.
Action: Members asked to identify all local Boards / Partnerships they sit on and who they represent in these forums.
- Annual Child Protection spend is to be published, and the Trust Board will be responsible, and scrutinised on, the Needs Assessment, on which joint financial safeguarding initiatives are based.
- Challenges:
 - Effective Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
 - Joined up approach
 - New National indicators
 - Increased scrutiny
 - Agencies in isolation
 - Morale
 - Time lag for implementing change
 - Relationship between Children's Trust Boards and Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board.
 - Capacity

3. DISCUSSION (All)

- Although Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board has clear statutory responsibilities set out in 'Working Together', Government guidance on the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board and Children's Trust Board holding each other to account is still vague.
- Major initiatives in the Trust are: Integrated Service Delivery; Integrated Youth Support Service; therefore anticipated challenge from Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board will be to ensure that Safeguarding implications have been considered and covered.
- Need to be more pro-active as a Trust and not re-active, with a stronger leadership role via the Children & Young People's Plan.
- Management of commissioners within own agencies also needs to be addressed, with more scrutiny of provision.
- Feel there are limited links at present between District Trust Board and Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board. The Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board are currently working with each lead from each District Council on how to improve links and clarify their roles, but it is a two way relationship.
- Future statutory guidance will place a stronger emphasis on safeguarding / child protection with schools; however we need to be aware of those who are not in mainstream provision e.g. educated at home. (The local authority has responsibility for these children but has no say over the quality of education, and due to lack of contact with mainstream agencies can have serious safeguarding issues.)

- Role of the CAF is critical and further consideration is needed that all agencies that make a referral have initiated a CAF with an understanding it is not used as a barrier.

Action: Further consideration at a future Children's Trust Board meeting's around referrals and the accessibility of making CAF a referral criteria for some services. Child Protection concerns however should always be referral with immediacy.

4. LOCAL AGENCY RESPONSES TO THE LAMING REPORT & STAFFORDSHIRE'S POSITION (Sally Rowe, Assistant Director, Disability & Safeguarding)

Action: Presentation to be circulated with Minutes (Cate Crawford)

Peter Traves arrived at the meeting.

For a summary of the presentation, please see [Appendix 2](#), however the following main points were covered:

- All agencies asked to respond to the recommendations in the latest Lord Laming review and a draft action plan has been written in response, this will be presented to the June Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board for consideration.
- Two Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board serious case reviews deemed inadequate in 2008; however this was appealed and one is now deemed adequate.
- Individual Management Review Training provided, crucial that those invited do attend.
- Complete S11 compliance audits; next year will be scrutinising the reports and requiring evidence. This is included as a core indicator to Council, however recorded red due to lack of response from all eight district councils, hence work is underway to move this on.
- Rob Mitchell confirms Tamworth has completed their S11 form, but it has not yet been returned.

Action: Rob Mitchell to liaise with Vonni Gordon outside this meeting regarding procedure / systems in place for S11 returns.

- Suggestion that this and similar issues should be raised at the District Trust Boards as this is a national indicator and therefore affects all partners, and so is a Trust issue.
- Recent file audits have identified areas of strength and weakness and these will be shared.
- What next? Need to anticipate what will be required, and everyone to agree how we will do it. Immediate issues are adult / children links, improved links with District Councils, and a joint approach.

5. DISCUSSION (All)

- Community Partnership Officer support to Children's Trust is a key priority therefore very keen to provide any support.

6. LAMING / GOVERNMENT RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLANNING (Vonn Gordon, Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board Manager)

The draft Action Plan written following Laming Report circulated with the Agenda (due to go to Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board in June).

Action: Circulate presentation with Minutes (Cate Crawford)

For a summary of the presentation, please see [Appendix 3](#), however the following main points were covered:

- Staffordshire is involved in a learning review and a serious case review (led by another local authority), with children who have similar injuries to Baby Peter.
- Staff capacity is an issue
- Concern raised by Laming is quality of training, however feel Staffordshire's training is good quality; although concern is over who attends i.e. have regulars who attend and regulars who do not.

Action: All members to ensure their staff are receiving adequate training (All)

- Laming gives Children Trusts a commissioning role, challenges to the Children's Trust Board commissioning arrangements would come from the SSCB.
- Six core areas for action are: leadership and accountability; support for children; children's workforce; improvement and challenge; organisation and finance and legal.
- Needs Assessment must inform and review the needs of children and those in need of protection.
- Revision of 'Working Together' - anticipate emphasis on hidden harm due to adult's behaviour, due out in October 2009.
- Reform to integrated children's system with a simplified set of national requirements - currently being developed in Staffordshire and will have capacity issues when it goes live another challenge is lack of I.T inter-connectivity between agencies.
- Local implications:
 - Referrals going to initial assessment
 - Increased attendance at core groups
 - Conflict resolution procedures

7. CORE DISCUSSION (All)

- Keen and pleased to see a spread of leadership throughout the action plan.
- Need to separate / clarify responsibilities of different agencies and between commissioners / providers.
- Action plan does not look directly at resource issues as this was due to be examined via separate report to Staffordshire County Council, however this is a partnership issue and so should be addressed by the Trust via the Needs Assessment. Believe Integrated Service Delivery and co-location will address some resource / efficiency issues.
- Good use of the CAF should ensure appropriate referrals are made.
- Georgina Davies confirmed that she is happy to co-ordinate responses for the Needs Assessment, but the Children's Trust Board need to be directive about what data / information they require for each. Currently the lead for the Needs Assessment for the Children & Young People's Plan is Judith Bell.
- Links with adult commissioners to be made around unmet need.
- The Board will need to be able to agree as a whole when looking at resource allocation. No extra funds will be provided and so other areas will receive lower funding.

Proposal: Agree to draft action plan in principal on understanding Leads are to be further discussed and agreed by Children's Trust Executive, with endorsement by the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board.

Decision: Agreed

Action: Action Plan to be further raised and discussed at Children's Trust Executive in more detail.

Action: Members asked to forward any comments / gaps identified for the proposed action plan to vonni.gordon@staffordshire.gov.uk tell: 01785 277151

Dr Judith Bell left the meeting at this point.

Summary of Outcomes & Recommendations of Meeting

The Children's Trust Board agreed to:

- Note and action the DCSF 'Working Together' guidance when published in November 2009.
- Invite newly appointed Staffordshire Safeguarding Children's Board Independent Chair to be a member of the Children's Trust Board (CTB).
- Agree in principal to the Laming Recommendations and endorse the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children's Board to complete further work around them.
- The CTB will ensure that the local needs assessment (Children's JSNA) is fit for purpose and challenge it where appropriate.
- The Trust Board shall ensure children's services are adequately resourced to respond to all children and families identified as vulnerable or 'in need'.
- CTB members are to
 - Be sure they have the right staff attending the right training courses (specifically Child Protection) and monitor attendance to maintain the right and appropriate level of commitment and expertise in their organisation.
 - Those that commission services are to ensure their commissioning arrangements meet Safeguarding requirements.
 - Those that have close affiliation with other service providers (e.g. housing service) are to apply influence to ensure they too meet Safeguarding requirements.
- To confirm the intention to make compliance with CAF implementation a requirement pre referral to children's social care, Date of implementation to be confirmed. (NB this will not apply to Child Protection referrals)
- District Trust Boards responsibility following today's meeting to be revised at the next Chairs & Leads group (links to safeguarding board, and particular issues that can be raised / resolved at a District level).
- Executive summaries of high level case reviews and serious case reviews (lessons learnt) to be shared with the Children's Trust Board and District Children's Trust Boards.
- Accept and drive forward the development of links between adult services and children's services generally, but more specifically in the area of protection of children as a result of inappropriate behaviour of adults. In particular in respect of domestic violence, substance misuse and mental health issues.
- To confirm and sustain the formal links between the children's safeguarding board and the adults safeguarding board.
- Members to review their representation at the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children's Board, Children's Trust Board and Staffordshire Children's Trust Executive ,in order to ensure that appropriate seniority enables decision to be made and actions taken.
- Members to be aware of the importance of Common Assessment Framework feeding into safeguarding processes (and consider the subsequent financial implications)

NOTE: All CTB members and District Children's Trust Board Chairs and Leads are to ensure all the above messages are effectively communicated within the organisations and to the Boards they are here to represent.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Date: Wednesday 22nd July 2009
Time: 2:00pm - 4:00pm
Venue: Oak Room, County Buildings

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(Matters which arise under this heading will be deferred for discussion at the next meeting unless there is a clear and urgent need to deal with the matter without delay as determined by a majority of those members present at the meeting)

None raised

Meeting concluded at 11:50am

Agenda item 2. Laming Report – the Background

Main points raised in presentation:

- Victoria Climbié and more recently baby Peter both suffered long, drawn out and very painful deaths. Both had been seen by several agencies.
- Recommend the Board reads the most recent Lord Laming Report, which identifies barriers to good practice. Report can be found at: <http://publications.everychildmatters.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=HC+330>
- Many children have been protected as a result of interventions that have recently been implemented.
- Emphasis on lower tier services.
- Input following Staffordshire County Council elections on 04.06.09 will be required, to ensure all Members are fully conversant.
- Co-location of key workers within social work departments is recommended in the Laming Report.
- National Safeguarding Delivery Unit will inform Cabinet and feedback to Local Safeguarding Children Boards and Children's Trust Boards.
- Protected budget for staffing and child protection services - no extra funds will be provided, but will be monitored via Performance Management by Central Government.
- New safeguarding targets are awaited and a revision of inspection and improvement regimes, under the Education Act.
- Systems and training are in place to ensure accident and emergency and all the other health service staff recognise when a child is subject to a Child Protection Plan or recently presented to accident and emergency.
- Case loads in children's social care have increased by more than a third since the death of baby Peter, with over 700 unallocated cases in Staffordshire. Many staff are working beyond their capacity which cannot be maintained. It's difficult to recruit safeguarding positions due to poor morale, bad press and work load pressure.
- All referrals to children's services from other professionals lead to an initial assessment - capacity and training issues. (This is a Laming Recommendations)
- Representation and attendance at Core Group meetings, is crucial.
- Common Area Assessment (CAA) inspections and un-announced safeguarding inspections - affects all agencies. No notice given for CAA inspection.
- Review of delays and childcare court fees, which will now fall to the local authority to fund, is underway by Lady Plowden.
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Agenda item 4. Local Agency Responses to the Laming Report and Staffordshire's Position

Main points raised in presentation:

- A draft action plan has been written in response to the latest Lord Laming Safeguarding Report.
- Individual Management Review Training provided, crucial that those invited do attend.
- Complete S11 compliance audits; next year will be scrutinising the reports and requiring evidence.
- Recent file audits have identified areas of strength and weakness and these will be shared.
- Areas considered to local Safeguarding Stock take, identified several key headlines:
 - Policies and procedures are in place in all agencies but are not always effective e.g. Information Sharing Protocol. Rapid response training process model will be used to deliver information sharing training.
 - GP training, low take up and paediatric nurse liaison (reinforced in second Laming Report) still not in place in all Trusts.
 - Identified need for specific report to district councils
 - Response from adult services limited, although positive change over last few months especially since introductions of Adult Safeguarding Board; (which has a focus on adult exploitation, not the effect of adults on children)
 - Appointment of Head of Adult Safeguarding from July will look at cross cutting issues and links between boards e.g. substance misuse (critical issue of the 400 case file audit)
 - Support to teenagers, changes in safeguarding provision via Integrated Youth Service Support.
 - Propose that recent Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board learning review is brought to the Board.
 - Safeguarding training is not being taken up by all agencies, who have a responsibility to ensure their staff are adequately trained.
 - 400 file case audit has highlighted the following:
 - Issue of attendance at core group meetings, notable absence of key agencies
 - Quality of Child Protection Plan's needs to be addressed with more focus on outcome / action plan / not all agencies are signed up
 - Voice of the child to be heard in the child protection process, which is absolutely fundamental
- What next? Need to anticipate what will be required, and everyone to agree how we will do it. Immediate issues are adult / children links, improved links with District Councils, and a joint approach.

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Agenda item 6. Laming / Government Recommendations and Action Planning

Main points raised in presentation:

- Two key serious case reviews are under way in Staffordshire, with children who have similar injuries to Baby Peter, Staffordshire is involved in a learning review and a serious case review (led by another local authority).
- Progress over the last five years has been very slow
- Staff capacity is an issue, need to not only be aware of what procedures are in place, but have the time to build a relationship with children to gain trust.
- Concern raised by Laming is quality of training, however feel Staffordshire's training is good quality; although concern is over who attends i.e. have regulars who attend and regulars who do not.
- Laming gives Children Trusts a commissioning role, and driving safeguarding forward is the responsibility of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards, therefore challenges to the Children's Trust Board would be made on commissioning arrangements.
- Six core areas for action are: leadership and accountability; support for children; children's workforce; improvement and challenge; organisation and finance and legal.
- Think Family focus e.g. when presented with adult substance misuse case, are children in the family being considered?
- Needs Assessment must inform the children and young people is planned regularly and review the needs of children and those in need of protection.
- Social work reform programme
- New school inspection framework with greater prominence on child protection / safeguarding arrangements.
- Reform to integrated children's system with a simplified set of national requirements - currently being developed in Staffordshire and will have capacity issues when it goes live another challenge is lack of I.T inter-connectivity between agencies.
- Local implications:
 - Referrals going to initial assessment
 - Increased attendance at core groups
 - Conflict resolution procedures
- Revision of 'Working Together' - anticipate emphasis on hidden harm due to adult's behaviour, due out October 2009

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Members of the Trust Board

Members	
Representing	Name
Staffordshire County Council	Councillor Peter Beresford, Chair Lead Cabinet Member Children and Young People
Director of Children's Services	Peter Traves, Corporate Director Children & Lifelong Learning, Staffordshire County Council
Connexions Staffordshire	Carol Jones, Chief Executive
District/Borough Councils	Nina Dawes, Chief Executive, Lichfield District Council
Primary Care Trust (PCT) National Health Service (NHS)	Yvonne Sawbridge, Director of Quality & Performance, South Staffordshire Primary Care Trust Judith Bell, Director of Public Health, NHS North Staffordshire
Staffordshire Consortium of Infrastructure Organisations	Rose Vakis, Director Staffordshire & Stoke Consortium Infrastructure Organisations
Staffordshire Police	Adrian Roberts, Chief Inspector (North Staffs), Ricky Fields, Chief Inspector (Trent Valley) Mark Riley, Chief Inspector (Chase)
Children & Young People	Gill Stanford, Staffordshire's Children's Commissioner
Parents & Carers	Charlotte Bailey, Staffordshire's Parents' Commissioner
Learning Skills Council	Anna Halliday, Partnership Director, Staffordshire
Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board	Sally Rees, Deputy Corporate Director, Vulnerable Children
Head Teachers' Forum	Christopher Leach (Chair of Secondary Head Teachers' Forum) Mike Prescott (Primary Head Teachers' Forum Representative)
Association of Staffordshire Principals	Karen Dobson (Chair of Association of Staffordshire Principals)
Advisers / Observers	
Government Office West Midlands (GOWM)	Barbara Dundas, Head of Early Years and Childcare, Advisor
Stoke on Trent Children's Trust Board	Ged Rowney, Director of Children and Young People's Services, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Advisor
Staffordshire Children's Trust	Georgina Davies, Children's Trust Manager, Advisor Cate Crawford, Children's Trust Support Officer (Minute Taker) Michelle Davies, Children's Trust Clerical Assistant (Minute Taker)
Staffordshire County Council	Keith Cackett, Deputy Corporate Director (Quality Assurance / Resources), Advisor Jean Evans, Assistant Director, Law & Governance, Advisor Robert Flinter, Director of Strategy and Performance, Advisor Simon Ablewhite, Central Services Finance Manager, Advisor Eric Robinson, Corporate Director, Social Care & Health, Advisor