

		AGENDA ITEM 4
		CYP/13/10
Committee:	Children and Young People Policy and Scrutiny Committee	
Date:	13 May 2010	
VCYP Response to CYP P&S Committee Review of Safeguarding		
Report by:	Councillor Sarah Candy, Cabinet Member for Children's Services	
Enquiries to:	Barry Hope, Project Manager, Safeguarding 01245 436103 barry.hope@essex.gov.uk	

Responses to specific recommendations are as follows:

Recommendation 4

This is now a specific statutory responsibility of the LSCB under the revised 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (March 2010):

'4.23 Induction and training for LSCB members, including lay members, independent chairs and any employees of the LSCB should be provided to support them to fulfil their responsibilities effectively.'

As part of the induction process for LSCB officer members, VCYP is planning to run a half day orientation seminar for new members, in partnership with the LSCB business manager. This will focus on the role and functions of the LSCB (and in particular the recent changes to Chapter 3 of 'Working Together'), with particular reference to the need for members to communicate with all parts of the organisation. These will be run during the last two weeks in June and be open to all partner agencies.

Recommendation 5

The recently issued consultation paper, 'Local Safeguarding Children Boards: Practice guidance for consultation' (March 2010) reports the finding that while effective communication channels between LSCBs (nationally) and partner agencies were 'essential', generally the links and mechanisms needed to ensure the effective dissemination of information to inform operational practice were relatively weak. The document recommends that, as part of the new duty to produce an Annual Report, the LSCB includes an evaluation of membership and attendance (p23) and includes the % of members attending regularly as a proposed indicator for LSCB effectiveness and efficiency. It is also worth noting that the Lead Member for Children's attendance at LSCB meetings as 'participatory observer' is now set out in Working Together; this has been the case in Essex for some time.

Recommendation 7

The revised Working Together now helpfully distinguishes between local and national voluntary organisations (paragraph 3.81). The communications function of the Children's Trust Board also provides a useful way of reaching voluntary sector organisations, particularly locally.

Recommendation 8

We are aware that the LSCB training for designated persons is available to all organisations and that responsibility for level 2 safeguarding training is being transferred to the Children's Trust from September 2010. In addition the LSCB is exploring an e-learning solution for safeguarding training which would provide a cost effective approach, enabling roll out to a large number of organisations. This is being considered at the next LSCB training workgroup meeting.

Recommendation 9

Responsibility for external communications is being transferred to the communications function of the Children's Trust Board. It is sensible to use the CTB networks to disseminate learning to a wider raft of organisations working with children and young people.

Recommendation 10

The attached paper outlines the progress made within VCYP and further plans to continually improve the dissemination of learning from Serious Case Reviews to VCYP staff.

Recommendation 13

There has been considerable progress made in this area:

- A new tracking tool has been devised to track all enquiries and foster carer assessments;
- There are monthly meetings between the Head of Service and the recruitment team to monitor progress;
- Additional fostering panels are being held in order to reduce delays;
- Closer links have been established between fostering panels and the recruitment team.

The results are promising; in April 14 new foster care households were approved, so at this early stage, we are on course to meet our target of 100 new households this financial year.

Barry Hope
Children Safeguarding Service
May 2010