

Calderdale Safeguarding Children Board

Local Safeguarding Children Boards: A Review of Progress (Department for Education and Skills, 2007)

This is available at www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

Summary of Main Points

1. LSCB's have been in place since April 2006.
2. The DfES undertook a 'Priority Review' of LSCB's between September and December 2006. It was aimed at finding out whether there were effective partnerships between the member agencies, the scope to improve the effectiveness of delivering objectives and how to measure this.

Key Findings

3. Evidence of an improving understanding of the safeguarding agenda and the importance of the strategic role of the Boards in making the transition from operational safeguarding concerns to the wider role of promoting the well being of children and young people.
4. Practice issues about the role played by Lead Members for Children's Services which need to be increased in terms of scrutiny and challenge.
5. In some LSCB's, agencies had successfully challenged other agencies decisions.
6. LSCB chairing arrangements varied eg, the most common arrangement is for the Director of Children's Services to chair. In Calderdale, we have an Independent Chair. This is preferred by the Government because it avoids conflicts of interest and provides independent scrutiny.
7. On the whole, statutory partners are demonstrating commitment to LSCB's. Although, the Review found that in some areas, some statutory partners are not yet committed to their LSCB.
8. The majority of LSCB business plans looked at by the Review, appeared to be consistent with the local Children and Young People's plan.
9. Many LSCB's were spending a lot of time writing their own policies and procedures. There are some examples where groups of LSCB's have joint procedures. This includes Calderdale, who formed a consortium with Kirklees, Wakefield and Leeds to produce a set of procedures.
10. There were variations about how Serious Case Reviews were managed. LSCB's and partners were not always confident about their capacity to conduct these reviews which were very resource intensive. Some were taken after a long delay and took a long time to complete. Interviewees said that the recommendations from SCR's were not always followed up by the agencies concerned and that, consequently, in some cases lessons had not been properly learned.

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Recommendations

11. Relationships between LSCB's and Children's Trusts needs to be clarified. Effective scrutiny by elected members should be encouraged.
12. Joint responsibilities of partner agencies should be emphasised.
13. LSCB's need to be adequately resourced with less time discussing budgets. Greater commitment of partners to robust financial arrangements with Government support to increase leverage on less willing partners.
14. Models of effectiveness and good practice to be shared and outcome measures to be agreed.
15. Support to manage the transition to a strategic safeguarding role across partner agencies with less time spent on developing individual protocols.
16. LSCB's should carry out SCR's when required. Government should consider whether further guidelines are required.

Andrew Crabtree
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